

# Community Cohesion and the accessing of Council services

## Report of the Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview Committee 2012/13



Week of Peace 2012, Schools Community Choir, Hillingdon Inter Faith Network, Metropolitan Police and LBH working together





### **Members of the Committee 2012/13**

- Cllr Richard Lewis (Chairman)
- Cllr Michael White (Vice-Chairman)
- Cllr Beulah East
- Cllr Neil Fyfe
- Cllr Lindsay Bliss
- Cllr Raymond Graham
- Cllr Richard Mills
- Cllr Carol Melvin



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# Chairman's Foreword

Hillingdon is an ever increasing diverse Borough, which has been reflected in the initial findings of the 2011 Census. The challenge for the Council and its strategic partners is to ensure that we communicate as effectively as possible with all groups and individuals in the Borough, to enable increased interaction and engagement.

To enable the Council to achieve positive community cohesion outcomes it is vitally important that all Council services work in a joined up and co-ordinated way to enable greater engagement.

The Committee was encouraged by the number of initiatives and schemes which many of the Council services provided which greatly enhanced even greater promotion of community cohesion within the Borough.

The recommendations of the review will hopefully add further to this work and enable services to be even more accessible to all our communities.

I would like to thank officers for their support and advice and the witnesses that attended our review meetings, without whose input this report and the recommendations contained within, would not have been possible.



**Councillor Richard Lewis – Chairman of the Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview Committee**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R.A. Lewis".

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATION 1:

**That the work of the Partnerships Team, in conjunction with the Schools Community Cohesion Partnership, be praised for how it has achieved the integration and increased participation of children and their parents from all community groups within the Borough. This work has helped further strengthen the relationships between different groups in the community and has enabled children and parents to interact and engage in community activities.**

## RECOMMENDATION 2:

**That the Council's Adult Learning, Libraries and Sports & Leisure services be congratulated for the wide ranging initiatives and schemes which are provided to engage and interact with all residents of the Borough.**

## RECOMMENDATION 3:

**That information on Council events and initiatives be communicated on a regular basis to community contacts via a Council central list. This will enable such information to be communicated and promoted more widely and to those groups who might not access it from other sources.**

## RECOMMENDATION 4:

**Consideration be given to the Mayor of the London Borough of Hillingdon utilising social media to inform residents and share their experiences of the many diverse community activities and events that take place across the Borough.**

## RECOMMENDATION 5:

**That Council services such as Sports & Leisure and Adult Learning be asked to consider undertaking user surveys to ascertain the view of all users, on how well the services are communicated and what more, if anything, could be done to increase participation of all the community in these services.**

# BACKGROUND

## What is community cohesion?

Community cohesion is not a precise term and can be interpreted in many ways. Broadly speaking it is about creating a sense of belonging, valuing diversity, tackling inequalities and promoting interaction to develop positive relationships within a community.

The Institute of Community Cohesion uses the definition: -  
*“community cohesion is widely used to describe a state of harmony or tolerance between people from different backgrounds living within a community. Linked to the concept of social capital and the idea that if we know our neighbours and contribute to community activity then we are more likely to look out for each other, increase cohesion and minimise cost of dependency on institutional care”.*

Hillingdon has become more diverse with many areas seeing the proportion of white and ethnic minority communities more evenly spread. At the same time the Borough is experiencing increases in the number of young people and a growing older population.

The initial results of the 2011 Census provides evidence of this and a summary of the initial results are attached as an appendix to this report.

The impact of the economic downturn has inevitably placed a strain on families and communities as resources are reduced and opportunities for employment and prosperity become more limited. Threats from extremism and terrorism are still real and can cause conflict, tensions, prejudice and misunderstanding within communities.

## Hillingdon’s approach

Hillingdon’s approach has been not only to understand what our community cohesion challenges are and where in the Borough risks to community cohesion are greatest but also to recognise where the positive contributions to community cohesion are taking place and promote greater opportunities for building on those positives and underpin the resilience within communities.

Improving our knowledge of what works and what helps can reduce risks to community cohesion.

## **Positive contributions**

From the work which has taken place within the Borough in collaboration with the Council's partners, the following positives can help combat the risks to community cohesion.

- Strong local leadership (political, community etc).
- Strong communication activity/strategy to engage with local communities.
- Visible local initiatives.
- Developing a local sense of civic pride.
- Uniting local people on issues affecting the Borough.
- Strong partnership approach to local solutions.
- Capacity building and sustainable approach to community engagement and community development which is inclusive and embraces the diversity of the Borough.

In 2007, the Council's External Services Scrutiny Committee carried out a review of community cohesion and made a number of recommendations including the importance of the Council in taking a leadership role in promoting community cohesion in the Borough with the involvement of local partners.

In April 2009, the Strong and Active Communities Partnership was established as a theme group of the Local Strategic partnership –Hillingdon Partners, responsible for delivering upon the key priorities around strong and active communities, setting out a vision for Hillingdon to be:  
"A Borough where communities are strong and cohesive and local people have a real opportunity to take an active part in local life, leisure and culture."

The partnership has established strong working relationships between the Council and its partners in responding to local community cohesion issues and developing pro-active and positive models of community development activities and engagement.

The lead for facilitating the work of the partnership sits within the Partnerships Team in the Chief Executive and Administration Directorate and the work very much relies upon the relationships established with local communities, the voluntary sector and other statutory partners as well as other departments within the council to deliver this agenda.

# OBJECTIVES

Initially, the Committee commenced the review with the aim of examining how Council services are working in order to mitigate against the potential risk factors that can impact upon community cohesion and building upon the positives that underpin resilience in communities. This had a particular focus in relation to perception of fairness, transparency and equality of access.

However after the first meeting of the review, the scope of the Committee agreed to focus on how the Council could reach out to more individuals from all backgrounds, particularly those groups and sections of the community who were difficult to engage with. How could the Council improve the communication of its services to all groups and individuals within the Borough to ensure further interaction and integration? How well did these groups and individuals access Council services?

The Committee wanted to assess how Council services communicated with residents, beyond the promotion of services. Also what steps were taken to break down barriers to engage with groups which would enable the interaction and integration with the rest of the Borough's community.

The **Terms of Reference** of the review were as follows:

- To learn about community cohesion in Hillingdon.
- To understand the risk factors that undermine community cohesion.
- To assess the effectiveness of the positive work undertaken to promote community cohesion in Hillingdon.
- To identify whether there are any particular issues or challenges that undermine community cohesion in Hillingdon.
- To identify any measures that would address any issues identified above and would promote community cohesion in Hillingdon.

## **Supporting the Cabinet & Council's policies and objectives**

The review supported the work of the Council as part of its Equality Duties to ensure promotion of good relations.

To deliver upon the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy with partners.

To deliver excellent services to our residents and achieve our aim of putting our residents first.



# INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

The Committee's first meeting on the review took place on 24 July 2012 when Members received a presentation from the Council's Stronger Communities Officer. This meeting set the context for Members in terms of what is Community Cohesion and what the Council is doing in terms of enabling all its residents to access Council services and also be more active within the Borough and therefore promoting greater community cohesion.

As previously mentioned there is no standard definition of community cohesion, however, community cohesion is about relationships within communities and about addressing differences between people, that may sometimes cause division, misunderstanding or tensions that, in turn, affect the way that communities interact with one another and see themselves. This is not exclusive to ethnic or faith groups but can also include, for example, the perceptions of young people and anti-social behaviour or socio-economic differences and how they can influence social interactions and involvement in community life.

## **Risk Factors**

The Committee was informed that some of the challenges (or risk factors) to community cohesion include:

- Rapidly changing demographics and diversity within localities.
- The perception of the fairness of allocation of resources and provision of services to meet the needs of the whole community.
- Socio-economic pressures on individuals, families and localities.
- Inequality of opportunity for individuals to achieve in education and employment.
- Perceptions of crime and anti social behaviour within communities.
- The influence of extremist groups within communities that can promote tensions and influence individual's perceptions of fairness and inequalities in communities.

## **Positive Factors**

Conversely, positive factors can build and strengthen community cohesion and these include the following:

- Knowing and understanding who makes up our community and what their needs and concerns are.
- Positive engagement through social, sport and cultural activities.

- Ensuring local people have a voice and a say in how services are delivered.
- Ensuring fair access to services.
- Open and transparent decision-making.
- Designing services that enable individuals to take responsibility for their own well-being.

## **National Policy Context**

The Government in February 2012 published its integration strategy: *“Creating the conditions for integration”*

This strategy outlines the Government’s aim in promoting an integrated society, where everyone can play a full part in local and national life. Where people from different backgrounds treat each other with respect and contribute together. : *“integration is achieved when neighbourhoods, families and individuals come together on issues which matter to them”*

The strategy has outlined the key factors for integration as:

Common Ground: a clear sense of shared aspirations and values which focus on what we have in common rather than our difference.

Responsibility: a strong sense of our mutual commitments and obligations, which bring personal and social responsibility.

Social mobility: people able to realise their potential to get on in life.

Participation and empowerment: people of all backgrounds have the opportunities to take part, be heard and take decisions in local and national life.

Tackling intolerance and extremism: a robust response to threats, whether discrimination, extremism or disorder that deepen division and increase tensions.

The Government highlight the link between community cohesion and integration, but issues relating to inequality and individuals’ experiences are also important in enabling positive interaction and relationships in communities.

## **Advantages of community cohesion**

The benefits of positive outcomes in terms of community cohesion can influence and make an impact upon the following:

- *Increased sense of belonging*
- *Increased participation in community activity*
- *Increased satisfaction with services*
- *Increased participation in sports, leisure and cultural activities*
- *Reduced community tension*
- *Increased community interaction*
- *Reduced health inequalities*
- *Increased aspirations*
- *Reduced isolation*
- *Increased health and well-being*
- *Reduction in crime*
- *Pride of place*
- *Reduction in fear of crime*
- *Increased educational attainment*

Therefore the promotion of community cohesion and building upon positive outcomes will greatly benefit the Council and its residents.

### **The Role of the Council's Stronger Communities Officer**

A central role to community cohesion for the Council and its strategic partners is played by the Stronger Communities Officer, who co-ordinates and drives forward many of the initiatives. This officer helped the Committee during the review.

The Stronger Communities Officer was involved in the development and managing of the Strong and Active Communities partnership and supporting partners in delivering the action plan. Evidence of this was shown throughout the witness sessions, whereby the officer worked very closely with the Council's Strategic Partners in the delivery of community cohesion and integration related projects.

Some of the projects the officer was involved in included English for Speakers of other languages (ESOL), Hayes Carnival, Junior Citizens, Hayes and West Drayton and Yiewsley community engagement programmes, Peabody estate multi-agency partnership and Schools community cohesion partnership.

# EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY

For the witness sessions meetings were held on 18 September 2012, 16 October 2012, 13 November 2012 and 26 February 2013. The Committee received evidence from:

Fiona Gibbs – Stronger Communities Officer, LBH  
Carole Jones – Chairman of Strong and Active Communities Partnership  
Lisa Dancer - Curriculum and Quality Manager for Adult Learning, LBH  
Debbie Hunn - Curriculum and Quality Manager for Adult Learning, LBH  
Howard Griffin - Sports Development Officer - Sports and Leisure, LBH  
Daniel Waller - Arts and Libraries, LBH  
Khalida Obeida - Afghan Women's Group, Women in the Community Network and Refugees in Effective and Active Partnerships (REAP)  
Duncan Struthers - Chairman of Hillingdon Inter Faith Network  
John Seekings – Head of Corporate Communications

## **Strong and Active Communities Partnership**

Both the Council's Stronger Communities Officer and the Chairman of the Partnership provided the Committee with an overview of the work of the Partnership at the first witness session.

The Strong and Active Communities Partnership was established in April 2009, as a theme group of the Local Strategic Partnership and was responsible for developing and monitoring actions to deliver the key priorities within the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy around strong and active communities.

The Committee was informed that the main aims of the partnership were:

- Building stronger communities;
- Delivering through community partnerships with an emphasis on building relationships and working with young people, schools and communities; and
- Strengthening communities and promoting models of good practice as well as ways of working.

The Partnership has established strong working relationships between the Council and its partners in responding to local community cohesion issues and developing pro-active and positive models of community development activities and engagement.

The work very much relies upon the relationships established with local communities, voluntary sector and other statutory partners as well as other departments within the Council to deliver this agenda.

The main priorities of the partnership were:

Targeted local area partnership working around:

- Participatory approaches to partnership working including identifying synergies with other theme group priorities e.g. reducing health inequalities and promoting health equalities, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, improving outcomes for young people and economic development.
- Bringing local agencies and organisations together to work in partnership for benefit of the local community.
- Working with faith communities through Hillingdon Inter Faith network to build relationships and promote understanding.
- Work with schools to promote involvement of young people and families.

To promote and increase residents involvement in leisure and cultural activities across the Borough.

- Sports & Leisure, e.g. Olympics.
- Culture & Art, e.g. Jubilee Celebrations, Hayes Carnival, Arts Week
- Learning & Development, e.g. Adult Learning, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision

Monitoring of community tensions and local issues, working with partners to respond accordingly and appropriately and inform future priorities

- The prevention of violent extremism
- The monitoring of tensions - This work is required by the Home Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Council and Police share data and information and work together on tensions that impact on cohesion.

**The Schools Community Cohesion Partnership and The Yeading Junior Experience (Working Together for better outcomes for children)**

Carole Jones, Chairman of Strong and Active Communities Partnership and Head Teacher of Yeading Junior School provided the Committee with details of the work which had been carried out within many of the Borough's schools, and in particular at Yeading Junior School where she was Head Teacher.

It was acknowledged that this schools' partnership was the only one of its kind in the country and the work with schools on community cohesion has been recognised as good practice.

The Committee was informed that it was important for community cohesion work to take place in schools because:

- Schools had a duty to promote community cohesion.
- The sharing of best practice in local schools could be shared across the Borough.
- Schools and extended schools had the ethos of being community minded.
- Young people had an important role to play for the future.
- There was the opportunity to engage not only young people but also parents and the wider community.
- Sustainability.
- Partnership working.

The Committee was informed that the Schools Community Cohesion Partnership involved 23 schools working together to promote community cohesion within their local communities and improving parental engagement and raising aspirations of students.

Members were provided with a short film on the Community Choir which had been formed from 5 schools, which involved 120 children and around 30 parents. This project was one of the outcomes of the schools partnership in bringing schools, students and parents together on a community project. This project had been important in terms of integration of different groups and building relationships within communities and with local organisations. The choir rehearse in a local church which has enabled barriers to begin to breakdown within a diverse community.

Reference was made to the Yeading Community House, situated next to Yeading School, which parents and residents from different community groups used to build relationships with others, form friendships and celebrate each others cultures and participate in educational and community learning programmes. This scheme had proved very successful and provided an opportunity for people to engage in programmes that built confidence, explored cultures, shared values and encouraged healthy active lifestyles and break down barriers with local services and individuals.

### **Partnership Workshop to share best practice**

A conference took place in March 2013 in partnership between Strong and Active Communities and Hillingdon Community Trust which shared the learning from community cohesion programmes delivered and enabled local

community organisations, schools and other partners to work more effectively together to develop and deliver community cohesion outcomes for Hillingdon residents.

The Committee noted the excellent engagement which was taking place and the positive contribution the work with the schools had to community cohesion and integration within the Borough. Great credit must be given to the Chairman of the Partnership for energising such a large number of schools, particularly in the south and central part of the Borough.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1:**

**That the work of the Partnerships Team, in conjunction with the Schools Community Cohesion Partnership, be praised for how it has achieved the integration and increased participation of children and their parents from all community groups within the Borough. This work has helped further strengthen the relationships between different groups in the community and has enabled children and parents to interact and engage in community activities.**

The Committee was very impressed with the good work which was being carried out in many of the Borough Schools which would create the platform for strong community cohesion in the general environment of the schools which were involved.

After the first witness session the Committee asked the question how could the Council reach out to more individuals of all backgrounds, particularly those groups and sections of the community who were difficult to engage with. In addition, how did Council services communicate its services to the community, beyond the promotion of its services? What steps were taken to break down barriers to engage with groups which would enable them to interact and integrate with the rest of the community?

#### **The Promotion of Council Services to all the Community**

The next stage of the review involved seeking the views of the Council's Residents Services (Adult Education, Libraries and Sports and Leisure services) on how residents of the Borough accessed the many services which the Council provided.

## **Adult Learning**

The Committee was informed that this service played a key role in the Strong and Active Communities Partnership and participated in local events offering taster sessions and workshops where current learners were able to exhibit their work. The service worked in partnership with Children's Centres and schools to engage with typically "hard to reach" families in courses that include English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL).

A wide range of qualifications were offered in English, Maths and ESOL in community and adult learning venues. These ran as independent qualifications and provided learners taking wider vocational qualifications (such as Floristry and Childminding) with opportunities to develop functional language and study skills to support their achievement.

The Committee was informed that a wide range of provision was given for some 250 adults with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD). Reference was made to the Work in Supported Employment programme which was a 2 year qualification course which targeted young adults with LDD and which allowed residents to gain the skills and knowledge to equip them for work in the catering, business admin or horticulture sectors. These included vocational experience at the Disablement Association Hillingdon for Business Admin learners and volunteering at the Rural Activities and Garden Centre for Horticulture learners.

Work clubs took place in adult learning centres, libraries and at the Dotcom café in West Drayton, all open to all individuals from all community groups in the area.

There was a wide range of bespoke provision which targeted particular groups of learners in response to local and national priorities.

To engage with people from different ethnic and religious groups, a number of adult day classes took place, which were attended by a higher proportion of women. These were hugely popular and provided an opportunity for those women who for religious or cultural reasons preferred to attend single sex classes.

The service as mentioned got involved in a large number of community and partnership activities which took place with schools. Some of these enabled mothers to drop their children off at school, and then to attend adult education classes at children's centres.

There was a troubled family's programme which aimed at reaching out to this group. Programmes also took place with the Youth Offending Team to engage



with young people. These were all good examples of the service attempting to engage with groups of people and individuals who would often not consider engaging with a local authority.

The Adult Learning service worked closely with other partners such as Brunel University, Uxbridge College, Job Centre Plus and the volunteer centre in an attempt to be inclusive in who could access Adult Learning courses.

The volunteering service also worked with young people in creating charities and opening up vacant shop premises to open them as “pop up” shops.

Workshop courses also took place in community centres for the elderly which helped them develop their Information Technology skills and helped them interact and socialise with other people.

Reference was made to information sharing with other service areas of the Council but the Committee noted that there were restrictions on this because of Data Protection rules.

## **Libraries**

Reference was made to the hugely successful modernised library service of the Council and the wide ranging initiatives and programmes which were provided throughout the Borough.

The Committee was informed that there were 65,000 members of the Borough’s libraries and records were monitored on a monthly basis.

All the Borough’s libraries had free computers which could be used by all individuals throughout the Borough, even people who were not members of the libraries.

The Library service was an inclusive service and contributed greatly to community cohesion, with sessions and programmes appealing across the full ethical spectrum of the Borough.

The ethos of the library service was that the service was open to all people and to enable engagement with everyone and initiatives included:

- Providing books in different languages to appeal to the many different language speakers in the Borough. Providing large print books, talking books etc...
- Reference was made to the service reaching out to the young and old. Bookstart was a scheme whereby free books were given out to all children.

- Reference was made to the Summer reading sessions which took place throughout the Borough's libraries and which were fully inclusive.
- The service worked very closely with schools and all children had access to books at libraries within schools.
- There were close links with children's centres where there was a cross promoting of different Council services.
- "Coffee and Conversation" – This was where authors came into libraries to talk about their books and which gave the public, particularly the elderly, an opportunity to meet and interact in a social setting.
- The initial contact with one child did lead to other members of the child's family engaging with the service.
- The introduction of E books would be looked at due to the popularity of the computers in libraries.

Reference was made to the possibility of the PCs in Hillingdon libraries having their default page as the Council's home page ([www.hillingdon.gov.uk](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk)). This would provide PC users with an opportunity to see the latest news on the Council and forthcoming events in the Borough.

The Committee was informed that the Library Services managed the Borough's community notice boards and there was a charge to advertise on the boards. This would prove prohibitive in terms of costs of posters etc. However, A4 size posters are distributed free of charge to the libraries and these can be displayed within the library itself.

## **Sports and Leisure**

Another resident facing service was Sports and Leisure. The Committee was informed that monthly reports were prepared on leisure usage which contained information on age & ethnic origins. This provided good information of the composition of the users of the service and provided the necessary information on which individuals and groups needed to be targeted and engaged.

As with the library service, this Council had invested heavily in its leisure facilities which had had a natural uplift in participation in sports and leisure activities.

In 2009/10 it was recorded that there had been 800,000 visits to sports and leisure facilities. In 2010/11 this had increased to 1.5million visits. This was clear affirmation of how successful the Council's Sports & Leisure Service was.

The Back to Sport scheme encouraged residents to get back into sport with inexpensive sessions starting from £2. Activities took place in leisure centres and in parks and included badminton, archery fitness sessions. The aim of the scheme was to try and get people to make a lifestyle change

There were activities for people with disabilities, activities for the over 50s, activities for families which included grandparents which were examples of the service reaching out to all sectors of the community.

At the Botwell Leisure Centre a mum's fitness session took place straight after the school run and was targeted at those women who did not usually attend gym or fitness sessions. These sessions were well attended by women from different ethnic groups.

The Council provided free swimming for the over 60s which attracted large numbers of people. There was a Leisure Link scheme which was linked to the Hillingdon First Card and provided discounts for leisure and sports facilities for people on benefits which was an attempt to ensure that leisure activities were used by all.

Health links were made with the NHS, GPs and doctor's surgeries and organisations such as Parkinson's UK which were good examples of partnership working.

Social network media was used such as Facebook. Text messaging took place to promote the benefits of sports and leisure. Promotions took place on the Council's website, through Hillingdon People and with poster campaigns.

The evidence received from the Council's Residents Services Directorate was very encouraging and positive and indicated that the Council did encourage all people and groups within the Borough to access its services. This happened not just through formal written communication and promotion, but through face to face interaction and encouragement and building of relationships between services and the wider community.

A great deal of work was carried out by Council's services and there were many success stories.

The importance of building relationships and interacting face to face with residents is key to sustaining engagement, particularly with those groups who are less likely to access services through other means.

There is an opportunity for services to learn from each other what works and also to widen engagement through promoting more widely services from across the whole council not just their own service area.

The Committee believed that further efforts could be made to reach out to those individuals and groups in the community who were not aware of the facilities and services which the Council offered its residents.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2:**

**That the Council's Adult Learning, Libraries and Sports & Leisure services be congratulated for the wide ranging initiatives and schemes which are provided to engage and interact with all residents of the Borough.**

### **Hillingdon's Inter Faith Network**

The Chairman of this organisation provided the review with details of the organisation's work in relation to community cohesion, together with the aims of the Network. These were:

- To hold regular inter faith network meetings, with faith leaders and community representatives where common issues could be discussed.
- To develop a programme of inter faith activities and events.
- To work together, supported by the police and the local authority, to develop strategies to address misunderstanding and local tensions.
- Acting as a resource for information on different faiths in the Borough.
- Participate in consultation activities and events with statutory and voluntary services to influence service development and delivery.
- To provide support to different faith communities in Hillingdon for the furtherance of the Network's aims.

The Committee was informed that there were 110 faith buildings in the Borough. Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Jain, Muslim and Sikh faith buildings were documented in the database.

An audit which had taken place highlighted that 48% of the activities were run for the wider community in comparison to 52% that have a religious emphasis. This was broken down to well over 1,000 different activities which ranged from activities for religious services, for community groups, for groups specifically for older people, youth groups, children's groups, pre-school groups, activities where food and drink were sold or provided and self-support groups. This indicated the wide ranging community groups and activities which took place around the Borough.

Reference was made to the inter faith work which took place where people from different religions learnt about other faiths and religions and often went to

observe others at worship. This integrated people from different religions and gave an opportunity to learn more about other people and their religions.

Members were informed of some of the work of the Network which included:

- Regular themed network meetings bringing faith groups together with common concerns i.e benefits, housing, crime and safety, planning, young people.
- Work with schools and young people including faith in schools programme with volunteers from different faiths running workshops in local schools on social issues.
- A regular inter faith workshop in partnership with Swakeleys school that brings students from secondary schools from across the Borough together to discuss matters relating to building inter faith understanding and dialogue.
- Involvement in a research project with Brunel University in relation to young people and religion and creating a DVD with sixth form students.
- Bringing faith leaders together from across the borough to act as a resource for guidance and dialogue in times of difficulty or tensions in the Borough and to work in partnership with LBH and the Police as necessary.

### **Women in the Community Network**

Throughout the review, the Committee had acknowledged the good work of many Women's groups who are working in partnership with the Council and who support the work of the Strong and Active Communities Partnership. Members wanted to hear their views on the work which the Council did in relation to community cohesion and to assess whether there were any gaps in terms of communication from the Council, which would further improve access to Council services and encourage further integration of all groups within the Community.

Khalida Obeid from the Afghan Women's Group, who is part of the Women in the Community Network, provided the Committee with a summary of some of the activities of the groups she represented.

The aims of the Women in the Community Network are:

- To establish a network of women from different community groups and representatives from the diverse communities in Hillingdon to share and address the key issues facing women in the Borough.
- To empower women to make the difference they need within themselves, their families and communities.
- To promote a healthier understanding between women of different communities and backgrounds in Hillingdon.

The objectives of the Network were:

- To increase partnership working amongst the various existing community groups supporting women in the Borough.
- To promote women to foster healthier lifestyles.
- To support women to feel safe and secure in the community.
- To equip women with appropriate skills, confidence and self esteem.
- To disseminate and celebrate the achievements of women.
- To facilitate and encourage women from different communities to access and participate in mainstream services.
- To support and empower women with parenting skills.
- To facilitate an arena for women to share and learn about each other and common issues they faced. These included: religion, the environment, community, citizenship, children's education, health and employment.

The Committee was also provided with a summary of some of the work which took place within the Afghan Women's Group who support Afghan women in the Borough:

- Work took place with often isolated women from a male dominated culture
- Work took place on building trust with the husbands of Afghan women to enable the Group to work with these women
- Every Wednesday afternoon an English Language class was provided at a Children's Centre. This was important as this enabled women to learn the language and culture of the country and to integrate better and not to feel as isolated
- Work took place with the Council's Library Service, Adult Education, Sport & Leisure Services to provide various activities for these women. These included swimming classes, knitting classes and helping women access the many services offered in libraries.

Reference was made to the good use which the organisation made of the Council's libraries and Children's Centres. However, an area which the Group found difficult to access was after school clubs for children.

The Committee heard that the information which the Council communicated was not always accessed by the community and this was an area which could be further investigated. The representative reported that she provided an information link to Afghan Women in the community and she would ensure Council information on services would be passed onto this group.

The Committee noted that lots of information and communications was sent out to community groups that were part of the Network. In addition, residents

of the Borough also received Hillingdon People which was a source of useful information on Council services.

The point was noted that some people, regardless of how much communication came from the Council, would not access this information on the Council's many services.

The Council, through its Strong and Active Communities Partnership work, had the links of communication to a large number of community groups and their lead representatives. Greater information could be disseminated through these representatives, centrally from the Council, to enable up to date information on Council services and events to be communicated to a wider audience. This could further enhance community cohesion and the integration and participation of people who would not usually be aware of what the Council offers.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3:**

**That information on Council events and initiatives be communicated on a regular basis to community contacts via a Council central list. This will enable such information to be communicated and promoted more widely and to those groups who might not access it from other sources.**

### **Corporate Communications and Community & Resident Engagement**

The Council's website and Hillingdon People provided good opportunities for the Council to reach out to all people and to promote greater integration and interaction of all individuals.

The Committee was informed that Corporate Communications role is to help increase resident and other stakeholder understanding of the services and policies of the Council. This is done in three key ways:

Core activities - including media relations, publications (such as Hillingdon People), corporate branding, marketing (leaflets, posters and displays) and digital media.

Campaigns – these are linked to key service priorities and range from fully integrated campaigns (which includes some or all of the above) to event-based or public information campaigns.

Consultation and engagement – to help the Council understand current residents' views, satisfaction levels and thinking on specific policy issues or

services. Examples include the annual residents' survey or the recent consultation on changes to council tax benefits.

### **Engaging with all individuals and residents**

The Council works hard to ensure that it communicates effectively with all communities, helping to ensure integration and cohesion. Below are some examples of how the Council is engaging with individuals from different backgrounds and hard to reach groups, either through the Council's day-to-day activities or targeted projects.

#### ***Hillingdon People***

The residents' magazine is published six times a year and distributed door-to-door to all of the Borough's 113,000 households as well as libraries, leisure centres, nursing homes and public buildings to ensure everyone in the borough is kept well informed about the Council's services.

Large print and audio versions are also produced and delivered to residents requesting these services. For those that would prefer to read HP online the Council publishes a PDF and digital version. Plain English is used and adherence to Royal National Institute of Blind People guidelines to ensure wide accessibility. Finally, each edition carries a contacts list for key Council services so that residents have a ready reference for information.

#### ***Web and digital media***

The Council's public website has been overhauled with improved navigation, functionality and content to deliver a better customer services online. The site is DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) and Equality Act 2010 compliant and meets the accessibility guidelines issued by the Worldwide Web Consortium.

Over 40,000 residents are registered to report or request information online, which is a sizeable proportion of the Borough's population. In rolling out the self-service option the Council have been monitoring take up from across communities and it reflects the profile of the Borough well.

To further improve accessibility a mobile version of the website was launched at the end of November 2012. There is also a Young Hillingdon version of the website and the Youth Council of the Borough gets involved in making decisions for the site's content. Over the period of October 2012 to February 2013 there were just over 36,000 unique visitors to the site, which equates to just over 7,000 per month.



Residents of all ages follow the Council using social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, which is used to explain, advise and inform – as well as encourage residents to get involved in consultations.

Reference was made to the work which the Mayor of the Council did throughout the Borough, visiting many communities and representing the Council. Residents see the Mayor as the leading official of the Borough and the use of social media would provide all members of the Borough's community with the opportunity to engage and interact in this way, and to find out more about activities and services provided in the Borough.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4:**

**Consideration be given to the Mayor of the London Borough of Hillingdon utilising social media to inform residents and share their experiences of the many diverse community activities and events that take place across the Borough.**

#### ***Campaigns and marketing***

A wide range of marketing materials including posters and leaflets for services and events for older people and those with disabilities have been introduced. The Council support programmes for younger people such as FIESTA and the Kids in Care Awards and extensive campaigns for fostering and adoption to support children in need.

The majority of the Council's priority one campaigns are aimed at all residents and care is taken to ensure inclusion regardless of age, social background, gender, disability, ethnicity and sexuality. Recent examples include the Council's anti-social behaviour (ASB) campaign which had the potential to unfairly feature young people as the main perpetrators of ASB and to reinforce negative stereotypes. It was also important to ensure that older people weren't featured as the primary target of ASB as is often portrayed in the media. A campaign was therefore created using non age or gender specific characters instead of people and articles featured residents of all ages and backgrounds.

Change 4Life Hillingdon and Feel PROUD campaigns were also targeted at all residents and featured residents of all ages highlighting the campaign through their own unique perspectives to help all residents identify with the campaign.

All campaign and marketing work is designed to be accessible by the widest possible range of residents and Corporate Communications works hard with departments where specific tailoring is needed to meet specific residents'

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service needs. This approach is also adopted in service areas that reach out to all residents such as the Council's libraries and care is taken to ensure that these outlets are used as key communication channels.

### ***Branding***

The Council's branding guidelines call for all communications to be as clear and easy to understand as possible. Signage is designed to be uncluttered with a simple point of contact online or by telephone. The needs of visually impaired residents are considered, with DDA compliant signs where appropriate.

### **What more could be done?**

It was evident that the Council was good at communicating with its residents but reference was made to feedback which the Council received.

The Hillingdon survey provided very positive messages but the Committee asked about user surveys and whether they were used by Council services. Libraries did undertake such surveys and these could be viewed on the Council's website <http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/17243/Libraries>

### **RECOMMENDATION 5:**

**That Council services such as Sports & Leisure and Adult Learning be asked to undertake user surveys to ascertain the view of all users, on how well the services are communicated and what more, if anything, could be done to increase participation of all the community in these services.**

# CONCLUSION

Achieving community cohesion is dependent upon a complex set of factors that impact upon individuals and community interactions. These factors include: establishing a sense of belonging, pride and aspiration and identity with their local area and promoting a sense of fair treatment and equality of opportunity to achieve, in education and employment and wellbeing in life. Therefore, achieving community cohesion outcomes relies upon a joined up and co-ordinated approach across all aspects of the Council's services as well as with other local partners and local communities.

Hillingdon's approach reflects that complexity and draws together the wide range of Council services, other local statutory partners, voluntary sector and local communities with a shared set of actions based upon a core focus around promoting engagement, education, empowerment and active involvement.

## APPENDIX

### Hillingdon Profile – Census 2011

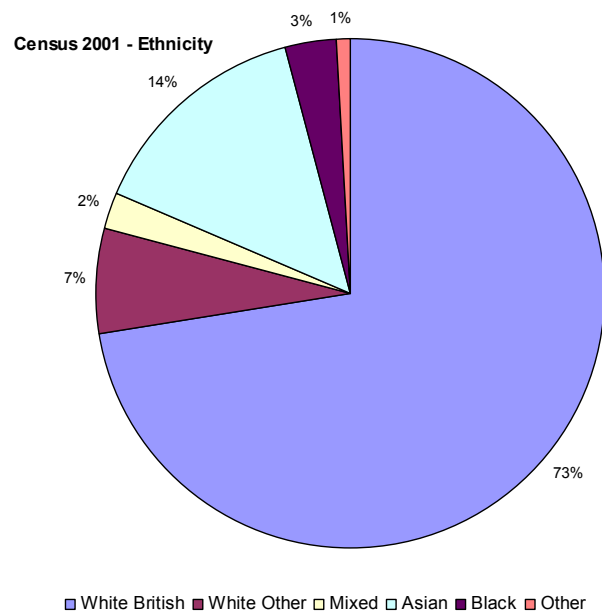
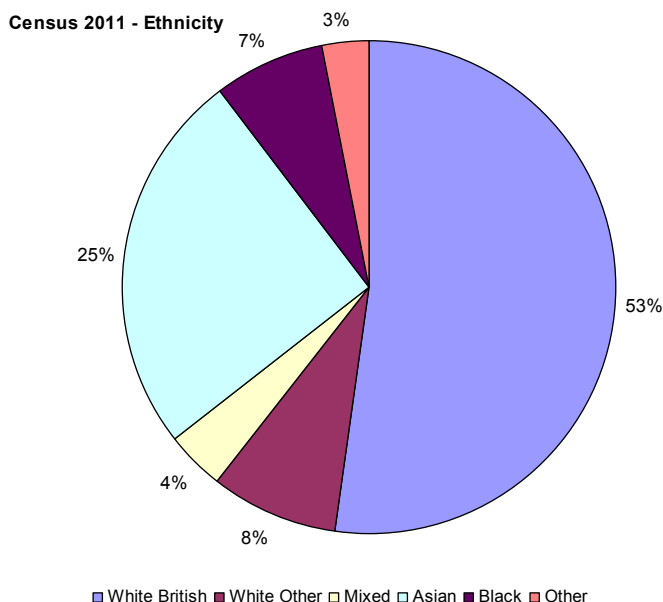
On 11 December the second release of Census data was published by ONS at local authority level. The data at ward level was released on 30 January. A number of key statistical tables were released which included data for usual resident population, age structure, living arrangements, marital and civil partnership status, country of birth, ethnic group, religion, health and provision of unpaid care, economic activity, hours worked, main language, passports held, household language, national identity and length of residency in the UK.

The headline information from this data release is as follows:

#### Ethnicity

Hillingdon's Black, Asian and Minority (BAME) community has increased from 27% in 2001 to 47% in 2011. This is lower than across London (55%) and considerably higher than across England (20%). In absolute figures the BAME population in Hillingdon has increased by almost 100%, 66,762 to 131,020. The BAME breakdown places Hillingdon in a group with Birmingham, Wandsworth and Greenwich with between 50% and 55% of the residents stating that they are 'White British' and in the bottom 10% of all authorities in England and Wales for the same group.

The charts below show the change in ethnicity demographics between 2001 Census and 2011 Census.

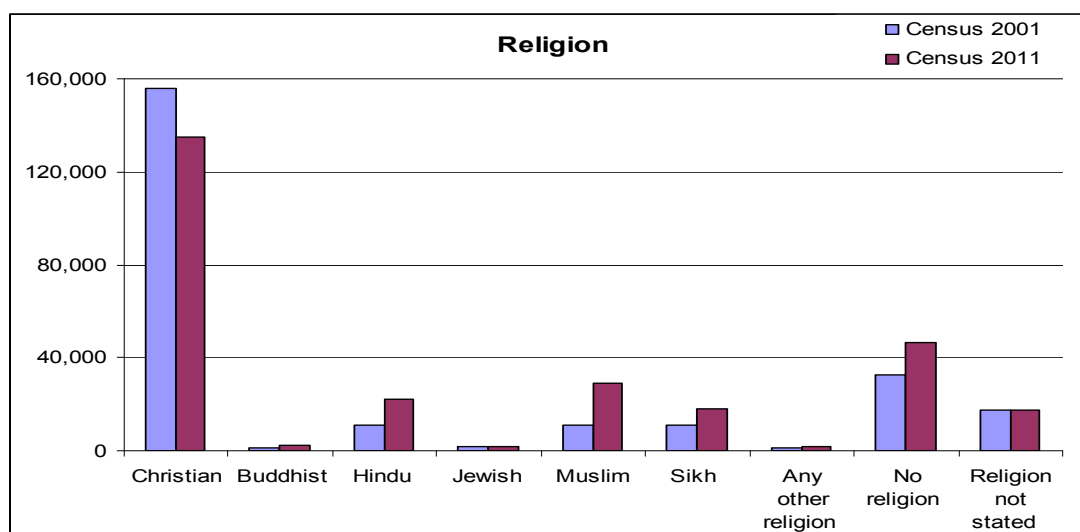


## Religion

The number of Christian and Jewish people in the Borough has fallen by 13.5% and 11.3% respectively. Muslim people have increased 11,258 to 29,065, Hindu from 11,197 to 22,033 and Sikh from 11,056 to 18,230.

The Borough is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> highest across London for the percentage of Sikh residents and 4<sup>th</sup> for the percentage of residents stating that they had another religion other than the 6 main religions identified on the form (Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu & Muslim).

This chart gives the comparison between Census 2011 and Census 2001



## **Ward Information**

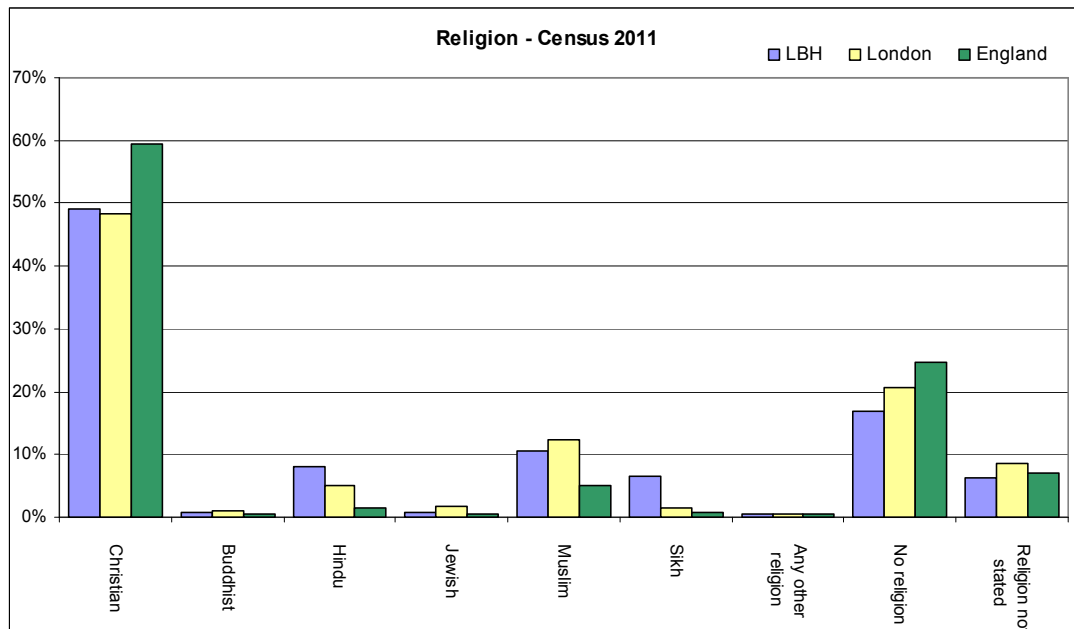
The predominant religions in the Borough are Christian – 134,826, Muslim – 29,090, Hindu – 22,025 and Sikh – 18,232, we also have a large percentage of residents stating ‘no religion’ – 46,467.

### **Religion, Ward information (highest and lowest)**

Religion	Ward	2001	2011	Variance
Christian (high)	Manor	8,015	7,506	-6%
Christian (low)	Barnhill	5,530	4,452	-20%
Muslim (high)	Townfield	1,156	3,075	+166%
Muslim (low)	Harefield	72	178	+147%
Hindu (high)	Barnhill	1,279	2,111	+65%
Hindu (low)	Harefield	105	163	+55%
Sikh (high)	Pinkwell	2,102	3,160	+50%
Sikh (low)	Harefield	14	44	+214%

Uxbridge South has the highest number of 'no religion' at 3,327 (1,962 2001) an increase of 73%. Barnhill has the lowest number of 'no religion' 1,210 (1,243 in 2011).

**This chart shows the comparison across Hillingdon, London and England**

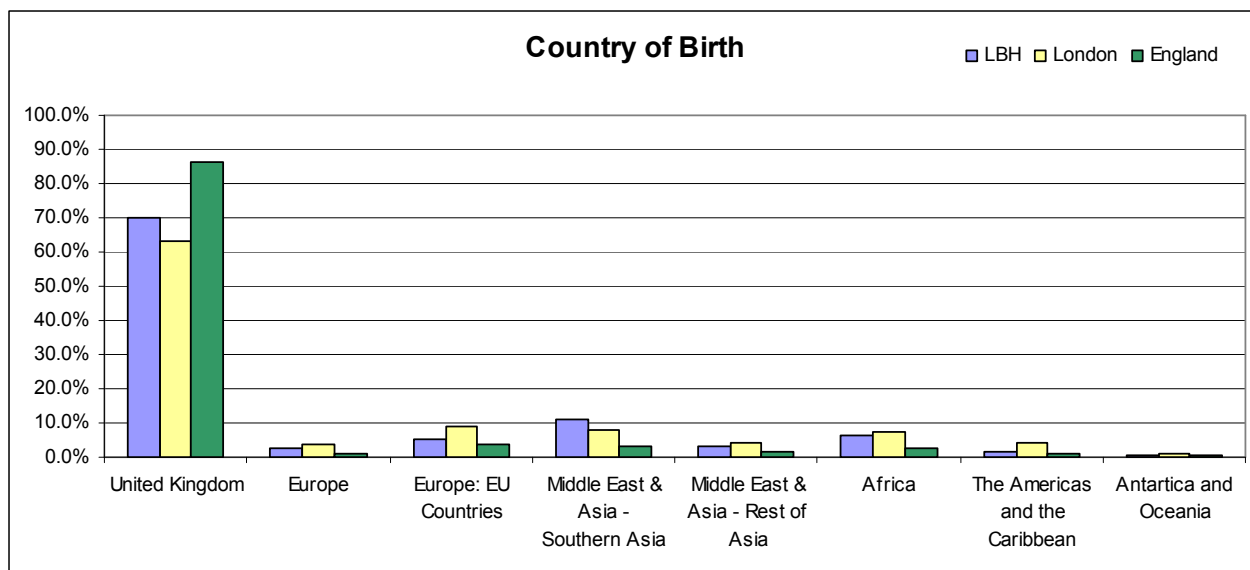


**Country of Birth**

This information was collected for the first time in the Census 2011 and shows that in Hillingdon **68.01%** of the population have Europe: United Kingdom: England as their country of birth. This is slightly higher than London (61.13%) and lower than England (83.46%).

186,308 Hillingdon residents gave England as their Country of Birth, followed by 39,339 giving Middle East and Asia, 17,226 giving Africa, 26,269 giving Europe (excluding England).

Initial analysis around the Country of Birth and language demonstrates that there is a close correlation between the two sets of data.



### Language Breakdown (statistics are for residents aged 3 and over)

Language was captured for the first time in the Census 2011. According to Census 2011 all 96 languages were being spoken in at least 1 ward across the Borough. 36 languages were being spoken in all the wards in the Borough. The remaining 60 languages were spoken at varying degrees across the wards.

The top 3 languages spoken in Hillingdon, London and England are

#### Hillingdon

English – 81%  
Panjabi – 3%  
Polish – 2%

#### London

English – 78%  
Polish – 2%  
Bangali – 2%

#### England

English – 92%  
Polish – 1%  
Panjabi – 0.5%

In Hillingdon the remaining 93 languages account for 36,324 residents (14%).

The predominant 'main or preferred' language in the borough is English – 212,834, followed by Panjabi – 8,837, Polish – 3,994, Tamil – 3,556 and Urdu – 3,344. 1,363 residents in the Borough have stated that they cannot speak English

### Ward Information

At ward level the number of residents with English as their preferred or main language is fairly evenly distributed across the borough with figures between 6,699 and 11,308, with West Drayton being the highest and Harefield being the lowest.

Language	Ward	Census 2011
Panjabi (highest)	Pinkwell	1,536
Panjabi (lowest)	Harefield	16
Polish (highest)	Heathrow	401
Polish (lowest)	Harefield	45
Tamil (highest)	Barnhill	661
Tamil (lowest)	Harefield	1
	Cavendish	15
	West Ruislip	16
Urdu (highest)	Townfield	474
Urdu (lowest)	Harefield	2
	West Ruislip	19

The highest number of residents stating that they cannot speak English are in the south east of the Borough, Pinkwell (168), Townfield (159), Botwell (157), Barnhill (134), Yeading (125), Heathrow Villages (82) and Charville (62). However the actual numbers are small.

### Language Proficiency

The majority of residents in the Borough aged over 3 are proficient in English or have it as their main language however there are a small number of residents (8,240) who are unable to speak English (1,363 or 0.5%) or their English skills are limited (6,877 or 2.6%). When compared to the figures across London and England and

English	Hillingdon	London	England
Main language	81.2%	77.9%	92.3%
Speak very well	8.3%	9.8%	3.2%
Well	7.3%	8.2%	2.9%
<b>Speaks English</b>	<b>96.9%</b>	<b>95.9%</b>	<b>98.4%</b>
Not well	2.6%	3.5%	1.3%
No English	0.5%	0.6%	0.3%
<b>Limited or no English</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>

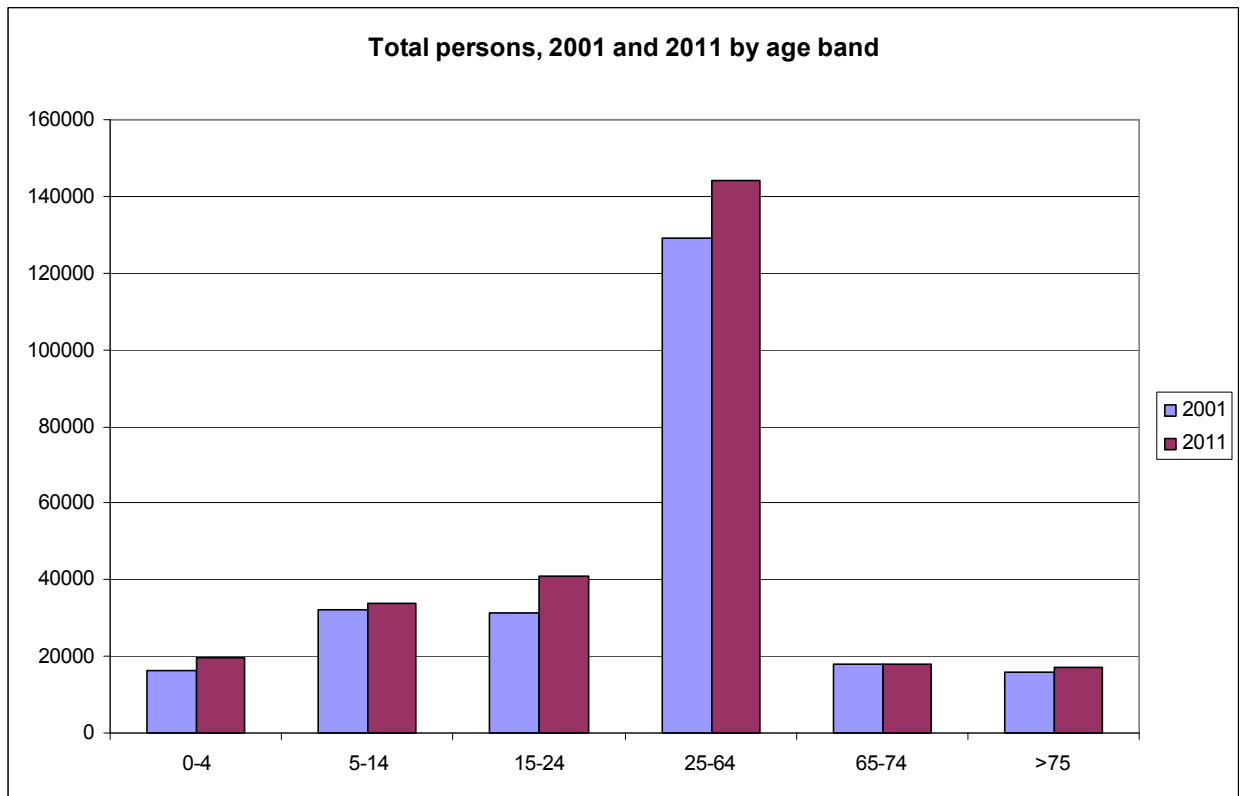
### Density

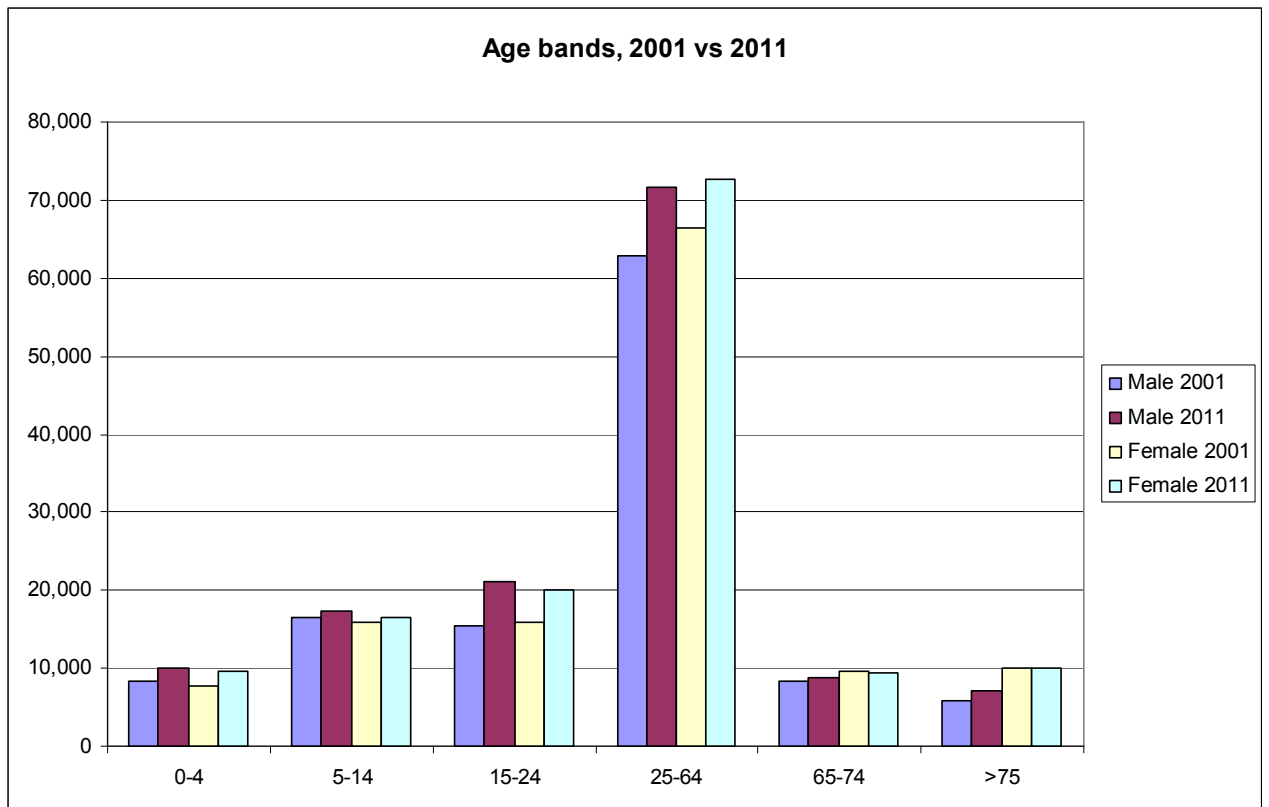
Hillingdon is a relatively dense Borough with an average of 23.7 people per hectare; this places Hillingdon in the top 25% of boroughs in England with regards to population density.

At ward level Barnhill is the densest ward in the Borough with an average of 63.5 people per hectare, followed by Yeading at 58.3, Manor at 58, Cavendish at 57.9 and Pinkwell at 53.8 which places them all in the top 10% of densest wards in England. Harefield is the least dense ward with only 4.9 residents per hectare.

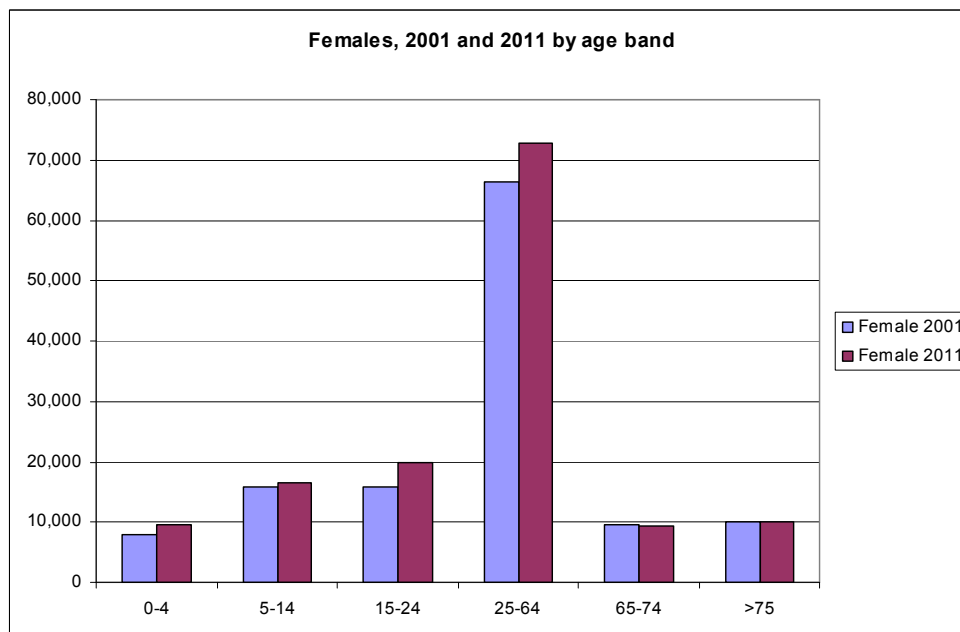


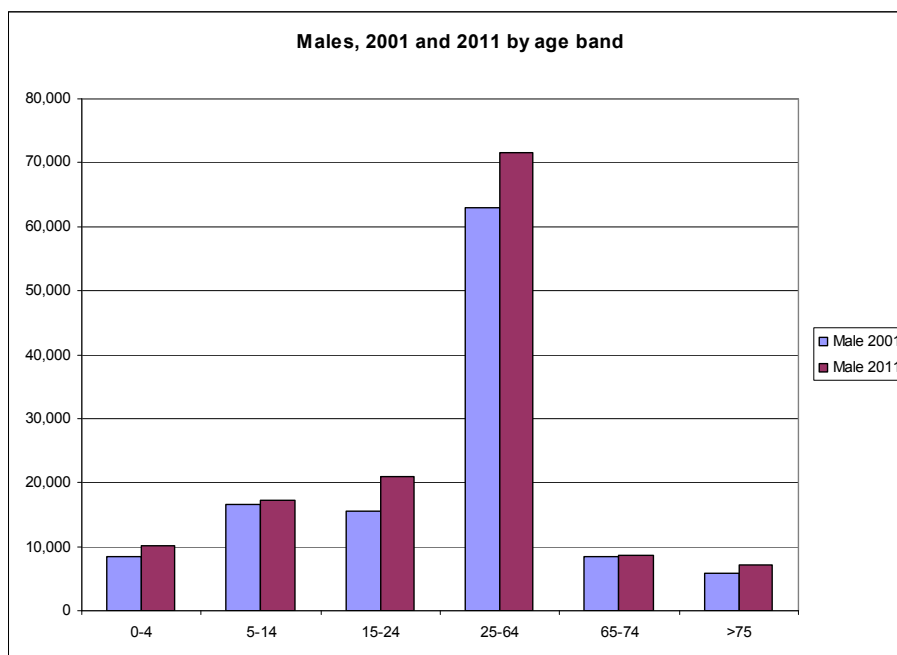
## Age





## Gender





**Economic Data** (Statistics are for the 16-74 age group)

**Economic Activity**

The figures for economic activity show that there has been very little movement in the % of the population in full time employment, from **80,180** in 2001 to **80,835** in 2011 a difference of **0.8%** (655).

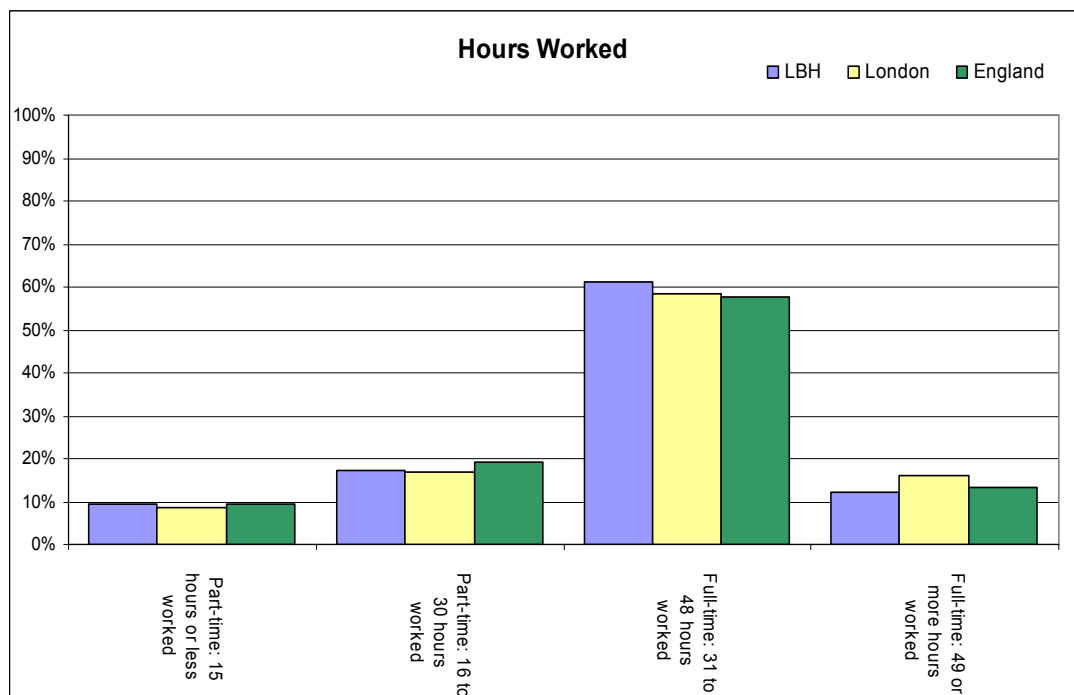
Sub Group	Hillingdon	London
Employee: Part-time	11.90%	10.90%
Employee: Full-time	40.40%	39.80%
Self-employed	9.30%	11.70%
Unemployed	4.30%	5.20%
Full-time student	4.80%	4.10%
<b>Total - Economically active</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>72%</b>
Retired	10.20%	8.40%
Student	8.40%	7.80%
Looking after home or family	5.20%	5.20%
Long-term sick or disabled	2.90%	3.70%
Other	2.50%	3.20%
<b>Total - Economically inactive</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>28%</b>

In comparison with London and England looking at the each area population Hillingdon is in line with both London and England when looking at economic activity there are no areas where there is a great variance. These statistics will becomes clearer when the multi variant tables are available between March and June 2013.

### **Hours Worked**

The data is showing that more people are working part-time. The number of residents (aged 16 – 74) working part time for 15 hours or less has increased by 46% (from 8,343 to 12,259). Residents working part time for 16 to 30 hours have also increased by 34.8% (from 16,669 to 22,475). When combined this shows an overall increase of 26.66% of residents working part time. In comparison there has been a small increase in residents working full time – 31 to 48 hours - 7.7%, (from 74,201 to 79,923) with a reduction of 12.3% of residents working over 49 hours.

This chart shows the comparison across Hillingdon, London and England



The biggest increase in part-time working appears to have been amongst men. When looking at the data for part time working it is showing that the number of men working part time (up to 30 hours) has increased by 108%, from 5,437 to 11,291. However, the number of women working part time up

to 30 hours has had a small percentage increase of 19.76%, from 19,575 to 23,443.

When looking at the data for full time, 31 hours or more, there an increase of 6.56% of women working full time with the lower increase of 2.19% of men.

Overall the number of residents working full or part time has increased by 11.3% since the 2001 Census.

### **Industry**

This category of data shows the industry in which a person aged 16 to 74 works as their main employment. The table below shows the top areas of employment along with comparisons with London and England:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Hillingdon</b>	<b>Hillingdon</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>England</b>
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	20,635	15.8%	13.10%	15.90%
Transport and storage	14,171	10.90%	5.00%	5.00%
Human health and social work activities	13,392	10.30%	10.70%	12.40%
Education	12,350	9.50%	9.60%	9.90%
Construction	10,567	8.10%	6.60%	7.70%

### **Industry, Ward information (highest and lowest)**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Wholesale or Retail (high)	Barnhill	1,128	1,247	+10%
Wholesale or Retail (low)	Harefield	587	502	-14%
Transport & Storage (high)	Heathrow Villages	1,356	1,443	+6%
Transport & Storage (low)	Northwood	343	218	-36%
Human Health & Social Work Sector (high)	Brunel	492	770	+56%
Human Health & Social Work Sector (low)	Heathrow Villages	268	394	+47%
Education (high)	Uxbridge South	407	752	+85%
Education (low)	Heathrow Villages	218	301	+38%

Construction (high)	South Ruislip	450	671	+49%
Construction (low)	Northwood	235	294	+25%

### Occupation Types

The predominant occupation types in the Borough are Professional – 22,237, Admin & Secretarial – 17,313, and Associate Professionals – 16,961, we also have a relatively high numbers working in Elementary Professions – 14,361 and Skilled Trades – 13,565.

Occupation, Ward information (highest and lowest):

Occupation	Ward	2001	2011	Variance
Professionals (high)	Northwood	977	1,547	+58%
Professionals (low)	Heathrow Villages	357	531	+48%
Admin & Secretarial (high)	Cavendish	1,018	994	-2%
Admin & Secretarial (low)	Harefield	495	505	-2%
Associate Professionals (high)	South Ruislip	950	1,180	+24%
Associate Professionals (low)	Harefield	618	472	-24%
Elementary Professions (high)	Heathrow Villages	772	1,250	+62%
Elementary Professions (low)	Northwood	237	218	-8%
Skilled Trades (high)	West Drayton	568	823	+38%
Skilled Trades (low)	Northwood	241	279	+15%

### Year last worked

This information was not collected in 2001. The 2011 questionnaire asked 'Have you ever worked?' and residents should state the year.

In Hillingdon of the 69,636 residents currently not in employment:

- 22,359 state that they have never worked which is followed by
- 12,248 who stated that the last time they were in employment was prior to 2001
- 9,885 stated that they last worked in 2010 and 2,450 in 2011

The remaining 22,694 were last employed in the years between 2001 and 2009.

<b>Year last worked (residents aged 16-74), Ward information (highest and lowest)</b>		
<b>Status</b>	<b>Ward (high)</b>	<b>Ward (low)</b>
Never worked	Brunel – 1,846 residents	Harefield – 320 residents
Haven't worked since before 2001	Eastcote and East Ruislip – 747 residents	Heathrow Villages – 372 residents
Haven't worked since 2010	Uxbridge South – 1,322 residents	Harefield – 182 residents
Haven't worked since 2011	Uxbridge South – 287 residents	Harefield – 51 residents

### **Transport to work**

In Hillingdon of the 130,290 residents aged 16 – 74 currently in employment the majority – 68,925 residents drive to work by car or van, followed by Underground, Metro, Light Rail – 17,458.

At ward level Charville has the highest level of residents driving to work – 3,697 (3,542 - 2001) up 4% and Harefield has the lowest level at 2,349 (2,201- 2001) up 7%. As can be seen there is a fairly small gap between the highest level and the lowest level, 1,348 residents. Manor has the highest levels using the Underground etc to get to work – 1,581 (1127- 2001) up 40% and Harefield has the lowest at 200 (195 - 2001) up 2%.