

## Camden Local Strategic Partnership

<b>Meeting</b>	9 July 2009
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Note of a special Social Cohesion Forum meeting held on 27 May 2009</b>
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<b>Purpose</b>	The Social Cohesion Forum held a special meeting on 27 May 2009 to discuss the alleged harassment of six youth leaders at the Kentish Town Community Organisation.
<b>Recommendations</b>	The LSP is asked to note the report.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Cllr Moffitt opened the meeting by explaining that reason for the special Social Cohesion Forum which were:

- MI5 alleged harassment of 6 British Muslims detailed in The Independent (21 May 2009)
- Draft written letter to the Home Secretary

## 2 Alleged harassment of 6 British Muslims

2.1 Sharhabeel Lone stated that one of his youth leaders was first approached in August 2008 at Gatwick airport, whilst travelling to Djibouti. It is alleged that when he refused to become an informant he was allowed to fly to Djibouti, only to arrive and be detained for 16 hours before being returned the UK. Sharhabeel Lone then called a meeting with all 17 youth leaders from Kentish Town Community Organisation (KTCO) and found that a further 5 alleged that they had been approached by MI5 who had used coercive language to try and force them to become informants. S Lone complained to Frank Dobson MP, and the Home Office stating that his staff were willing to cooperate but that they wanted to have a senior member from KTCO present at each meeting. When another member of staff was stopped at the airport in May 2009 they decided to go to the press.

2.2 Sharhabeel praised the work of the SCF and confirmed that the network had offered him support in 2008 via Chief Superintendent Clout and Superintendent Smalley. He felt that the SCF was an excellent vehicle to take this forward and specifically requested:

- The SCF show their support by requesting a meeting with the Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith

- The Borough Commander (D Clout) has better links with his senior managers and MI5.
  - Better support for people targeted by MI5. Since the article featured in The Independent, 12 others from various organisations have requested assistance.
- 2.3 D Clout explained that although the senior management team have close links with MI5 he works at a local level and cannot influence events. He accepted that local communities see all the enforcement agencies as one and the same and that some trust may have been lost. He promised to feed the sense of anger back to police senior managers. He confirmed that this was not a joint police M15 initiative and that MI5 have been working in isolation.
- 2.4 Cllr Ali agreed that the SCF is a useful tool at times like this and that he would use his influence to speak to Frank Dobson MP in an attempt to expedite a meeting with the Home Secretary. He felt it would be useful if one representative, possibly Andre Schott, from Fitzrovia Youth in Action, attend any meeting, to ensure the Home Secretary is made aware of the depth of feeling on the street.
- 2.5 The meeting was asked if they were aware of any similar boroughs facing similar issues. Omar Yusuf stated he was aware of Somalis alleging being targeted in a similar manner in Haringey. One member felt it was key that people are made aware of their rights, especially where illegitimate means of entering individual's homes have been used. Another felt that the work Camden is doing on preventing extremism could now be more difficult and that there is a need to reassure youth and ensure long standing relationships are not damaged.
- 2.6 It was agreed that all members of the Social Cohesion Forum should speak to their communities and explain that the Forum works well and that members could be trusted. All to ensure work on Preventing Extremism is not adequately supported.

### **3 Letter to the Home Secretary**

- 3.1 A draft letter to the Home Secretary was tabled for discussion. Due to the time members were asked to comment by the end of the day. The letter is be copied to the Secretary for the Department of Communities and Local Government.
- 3.2 Other suggestions included requesting a question raised in the House of Commons, a poster campaign detailing an individuals legal rights when approached by the Security Services and raising general awareness through the Citizens Advice Bureaux.

### **4 Burning Issues**

4.1 None raised.

**5 Date of next meeting**

5.1 Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July, 6.00 – 8.00pm in Committee Room 2, first floor, Town Hall, Judd St