



The London Borough of LEWISHAM

Intercultural Profile

Background¹

Lewisham is one of the 33 boroughs of London, located in the south-east of the city, some 10 km from Charing Cross and with a population of 264,500. The borough has a short section of the south bank of the Thames across from Canary Wharf and runs south from here along the valley of the tributary Ravensbourne River covering 35 km², taking in the major settlements of Deptford, Catford and Lewisham itself.

Those describing themselves as White British make up 59.5 % of the total population and foreign-born residents 24%. First and second generation migrants make up an estimated 32 % the majority of these describing themselves as Black British. The ethnic groups includes: Black Caribbean (13.4%), Black Africans (11.4%), Black Other (5.7%) and Indians (2.1%) and there is also a large, but currently unrecorded population of eastern Europeans.

73% of school age children are from ethnic minorities. The greatest concentrations of ethnic minority residents are around Deptford, New Cross and Lewisham Central, although hardly any part of the borough is without a significant minority presence.

The Deptford riverside area is an ancient part of London, long associated with sea-faring, albeit the less prestigious and salubrious aspects of the industry. As such has long been one of the most impoverished parts of the capital, and remains so, ranking as the 31st most deprived borough in England. In particular it has by far the highest rate of lone parent families in London at almost 18% of all households.

If anything can be said to characterise Lewisham it is the movement of people. Lying between central London and the great commuter belt of Kent and Sussex it is criss-crossed by numerous roads, railway and tube train lines which daily carry thousands of workers back and forth, and carve the district into many slices and segments. There is movement too in the resident population. Roughly 70% of them leave the borough each day for work whilst others commute in from other parts of the capital. Indeed Lewisham is the third lowest in London for the number of jobs in its local labour market. London is one of the most demographically mobile cities in Europe, but even by its standards Lewisham has a high degree of population transience, with 25% of the population changing every 5 years. Much of what might be termed the traditional white population is long gone to the outer suburbs and if any ethnic group can now be considered to be indigenous to Lewisham it is probably the black Caribbean population. This is explained by numbers but also by the recent history of the borough outlined below.

The contemporary history of cultural diversity and ethnic relations in Lewisham is overshadowed by two iconic events. Firstly, in August 1977, the racist National Front was achieving widespread success in local elections across London and planned a major march and rally of its supporters in the New Cross area of Lewisham which was substantially settled by people of Afro-Caribbean background. Thousands of anti-march protesters attended and a

¹ This report is based upon the visit of the CoE inspection team on 7 and 8 March 2011, comprising Irena Guidikova, Jagtar Singh and Phil Wood. This report should be read in accordance with the analysis of Lewisham's completion of the ICC Index, at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/Index/Lewisham_en.pdf

clash ensued between them and the police defending the marchers, who were ultimately prevented from holding their rally. 214 people were arrested and at least 111 injured and the event became known as the 'Battle of Lewisham'.

Then in January 1981 a devastating house fire in New Cross killed 13 young black people during a birthday party. It has never been determined whether the fire was accidental or caused deliberately, but many people were shocked by what they perceived as the indifference of the white population, and accused the London Metropolitan Police of failing to undertake a serious investigations. No-one was ever been charged in relation to the fire, but the event is highly significant in that it mobilised political activism amongst ethnic community minorities and (it is said) sensitized the local authorities to take a far more proactive approach to ethnic relations than was generally the case in Britain at that time. It is suggested that as a consequence of these two events, authorities in Lewisham have subsequently striven to be (and to be seen to be) at the leading edge of good practice.

National context

It is necessary to understand that by the standards of much of Europe, local government in the UK has been highly centralised and is regulated, and largely financed by national government. A comprehensive system of common institutions, standards, procedures, templates and performance measures, backed by a regime of annual inspection with incentives and penalties, has been in place for several years. Whilst this has generally led to a rise in standards of governance it has not necessarily allowed much space for individuality or innovation at the local level.

One example of this is that the term 'intercultural' has not been adopted by the national government in any of its policy guidelines, and the UK did not taken an active role in promoting the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. As a consequence, the terminology is almost completely absent amongst UK local authorities also. This is not to say that there is no understanding of the issues underlying interculturalism, and there has been a lively debate about whether the historic British approach of laissez-faire multiculturalism should be reformed. However, the predominant model adopted in UK local authorities over the last decade is very much home grown and described in different terms, as 'community cohesion' or 'community integration'. It has been characterised by a high degree of concern and intervention in the management of relationships between ethnic, cultural and faith groups, often connected to a high profile security presence. Paradoxically however, there has been a parallel decline in social cohesion and economic egalitarianism and Britain is by some margin the most economically unequal society in western Europe, and this can be seen in sharpest focus in London.

It is also worth mentioning the Equality Act 2010. This replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key measure in the Act - the public sector Equality Duty - came into force on 5th April 2011. The Equality Duty ensures that public bodies consider the needs of individuals in their day to day work - in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. The new Equality Duty covers the following protected characteristics (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). One of the key aims of the Equality Duty is that public bodies show due regard to the need to foster good relations. This involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

Since May 2010, the new Coalition government has declared its intention to break down the highly centralised and prescriptive system of regulation and management of local government and to give communities a much greater say, through what is called the Localism Agenda and the Big Society initiative. It is likely that 'community cohesion' will be quietly dropped while 'state multiculturalism' has been explicitly dubbed a failure by Prime Minister Cameron. Although the new government has declared its intention to reverse the trend in inequality and social mobility, it does this against a backdrop of the most severe cuts in public sector spending in living memory.

Meanwhile, London can probably claim to be the most multi-ethnic, multilingual and multifaith city in the world and with the lowest levels of ethnic segregation, and it is in this context, as much as in that of the UK as a whole, in which Lewisham should be understood.

The Lewisham way

Notwithstanding this picture of a highly regulated and centralised UK painted above, Lewisham has prided itself on pursuing a rather individual and distinctive course, regardless of who is in power just up the river Thames in Westminster. For example, Lewisham is one of only 13 local authorities in Britain to break with the traditional British structure of local governance and to adopt a new system with the option to appoint its own directly-elected executive mayor. Since 2001 the Mayor has been Sir Steve Bullock, who is now a well-known figure in local government circles. The presence of a directly-elected Mayor significantly changes the dynamics of local power and accountability. Mayor Bullock can and will reach beyond the bureaucracy to directly connect with anyone in the borough who wishes to make representations to him. He believes that both the public and the staff of the local authority prefer a system in which there is no ambiguity about where the buck ultimately stops.

The picture presented to us by various officers and elected members of the Council is that Lewisham sets its own values and derives its policies and programmes from these, rather than unquestioningly following the line recommended by central government. A good example of this is Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy² in which it accords a much higher priority to reducing inequality than has been the norm in the UK. Lewisham has probably gone further than most other Labour-controlled boroughs in the devolution of decision-making and in the out-sourcing of services to other providers, which will be discussed under the section on Governance and Participation.

Finally, Lewisham is probably the only local authority in the UK which has been pursuing an explicitly intercultural approach, and it has been doing this for several years prior to its acceptance into membership of the ICC network. This dates back to the period 2005-7 when it hosted a case study as part of the original Comedia Intercultural City research project.³ The outcome of this work will be discussed below in the section on Planning and Public Space.

But whilst the borough administration takes a singular approach, it could also be argued that Lewisham is simply part of a much larger and more important entity which is London. It is said that most local residents if asked their identity would probably describe themselves as Londoners first, secondly might cite their ethnic group or religion and after that might name their immediate neighbourhood, but few would include the borough of Lewisham in the combination. It may be the body which collects Council Tax from them and empties their dustbins but the London Borough of Lewisham does not generate an emotional charge or a clear territorial identity for them.

On the specific question of cultural diversity there is the sense that Lewisham – like much of the rest of London – sees itself as post-racial, ie that the city has been so diverse for so long that this is now normal and unremarkable and that most people only really start to think about it when they are outside London and presented with less diverse or less integrated scenarios. It is suggested that even within the context of London Lewisham is exceptionally well-integrated because it is more socially and economically homogeneous so, for example, most young people attend the same highly-diverse public sector schools. But this 'London-ness' is also seen as a source of one of the borough's more serious problems, a high degree of atomisation in which many people feel isolated from their families, neighbourhoods and other social networks. London for many is a place driven by opportunity and adrenaline which tends to sort people into social networks around work or leisure, leaving little space or need for

² "Shaping Our Future, 2008-2020", available at <http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/StrategiesPlans/StrategyDocuments/SustainableCommunityStrategy.htm>

³ The Comedia report of that study "Knowing Lewisham" may be accessed at <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/cities/Publication/Lewisham.pdf>

neighbourliness. Connected to this is a growing concern with alienation between people of different generations.

Planning and Public Space

As stated above, Lewisham first participated in the Comedia Intercultural City research project, and took a particular interest in its application to the public realm. Lewisham originally invited Comedia into the borough because it was concerned at the quality and the level of usage of much of its public realm and yet felt it didn't feel it understood what the population, in all its diversity, really wanted from its public buildings, thoroughfares, markets, parks and play spaces. It was also concerned with public fear of crime (real and perceived) and how this influenced the way in which people used spaces and moved around.

The project introduced new ways of intelligence-gathering and communication between the Council Planning department and the public and led to a much richer conversation than had ever been held before. This in turn led to a strategic vision and, in the interim, several specific projects. For example the Deptford/New Cross suffers particularly from the divisive effects of railway lines, severely limiting the scope for movement across the area and creating pressure points at a limited number of underpasses and bridges, some of which were considered dangerous or risky. These have now been much improved as part of a network of attractive spaces and thoroughfares (including Fordham Park, Giffin Square and around the Albany theatre) which make the district feel much more legible and accessible. An example of this is the transformation of a forbidding wasteland next to Deptford railway station into a welcoming space with regular events and community-owned shops and cafes, the Deptford Project.



Figure 1 The Deptford Project - Before and After



Figure 2 Pepys Park

In Pepys Park young people were invited into the process of designing and making a new playground area. At Ladywell Fields, an area of non-descript parkland and a fenced off river were restored to public use with EU Funding, the involvement of a park user group and the reinstatement of a park warden and a 'Rivers and People Officer'.

Meanwhile, the problem in Lewisham Central was a severe lack of places for people to sit or safe places for youngsters to hang around. New seating and the designations of several safe havens, including the library have improved things greatly.

More than the physical and aesthetic improvements to the borough, the planning officials also cited the improved cultural competence and confidence of officials and the improvement in relations with the general public.

One of a number of major regeneration projects in the borough will be the Surrey Canal development involving the proposed transformation of a large area of land around the New Den, the home of

Millwall Football Club. As well as being the most explicitly intercultural of the physical improvements, this is a remarkable project for a number of reasons. Firstly, the private development partner for the scheme is Renewal, a multi-ethnic company with a deliberate agenda to initiate projects which will encourage intercultural living. Indeed, the extent of Renewal's partnership with LB Lewisham includes a financial contribution towards the cost of membership of the ICC network, which is certainly a first.

The aim of Surrey Canal is to create a space which will bring the residents of borough together by appealing to some of their strongest passions. The plans promise:

- A borough wide destination focusing on sports and healthy living, which will include a regional sports centre for London and the South East
- 2,000 new jobs
- Better connections and improved transport links including a new station at Surrey Canal Road on the East London Line phase 2 extension
- A Multifaith Community Centre
- Business and Creative Incubation Centres
- An improved stadium for Millwall Football Club
- New and enhanced publicly accessible open space
- 2,500 new homes.

It is the Multifaith Centre which particularly interests us here. Renewal aims to achieve something which, to their knowledge, has not been attempted anywhere else in the world – a collection of many different places of worship under one roof. Although plans remain flexible, the building is likely to feature a common entrance of central space and then separate worship rooms for between 6 and 10 different faith, and capable of holding several thousand people at any time. Over 70 local faith groups have been canvassed on their opinion. Rogers, Stirk,

Harbour and Partners will be formally appointed for the detailed design of the Multifaith Centre once outline planning consent has been granted.

Although this is intended to be a facility to serve south east Londoners as a whole, It responds to problems specific to Lewisham, namely that there has been a burgeoning of the size, number and variety of faith groups in the borough and due to inadequacy of facilities many have found themselves using highly unsuitable premises, resulting in great inconvenience to themselves and surrounding residents. In our questioning of the project architect it is clear Renewal is still some way from finalising its brief for the project and is still open to ideas on what else it might contain. For example asked about whether it will also be a place of public education about different religions, thereby continuing artefacts and texts on public display⁴; or whether there might be a link up with an academic institution to foster interfaith research and the training of priests and imams.



Figure 3 The New Den: now and as projected

Another audacious aspect of the proposal is its location adjacent to the New Den football stadium. Millwall, and specifically its fans, have a rather special reputation in English football. Whilst no club in the league can ever claim to be completely immune from hooliganism and racism, such behaviour has been largely eradicated from the game over the last two decades. Despite concerted action by the club (as part of the Kick Racism out of Sport Campaign) Millwall supporters retain a reputation as the most intransigent of crowds and, as recently as 23 April 2011, a visiting black footballer made a complaint against the club, stating he had "Never seen a more racist and abusive crowd".

This emphasises the challenge ahead but, if Renewal, LB Lewisham and the football club are able to successfully establish Europe's largest interfaith centre next door to the New Den, their achievement will be all the more impressive for it.

Inter-faith issues

The preceding section already brings to attention the importance of faith and religious issues in Lewisham. As already stated, Lewisham is characterised by a high degree of demographic transience and social atomisation and traditional bonds of neighbourhood or ethnic and national identity are not as strong as might usually be encountered elsewhere. This might well explain why religion seems to have emerged as the strongest form of social bonding and identification for many Lewisham residents. This may in turn explain why the local authority has accorded a level of prominence to religion that might be considered unusual in many other parts of Europe. Traditionally in Britain, as well as elsewhere, local government has sought to maintain a clear line of distinction and a distance between itself and religion. Secularism is the norm, extending in France for example to a severely policed *laïcité*.

Certainly in Britain since Part 2 of the Equality Act 2000 came into effect in April 2007 it has been unlawful to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief and this has begun to blur the traditional divide. But strict secular separation seems never to have been the case in Lewisham where for many years the local authority has sought to actively engage with religious groups, particularly through a series of 'Having Faith in Lewisham' conferences and a Faith in Lewisham

⁴ In this case we would recommend looking at the Intercultural Centre in Oslo.

Network in which the Mayor takes a prominent role. The council has a dedicated Faith and Social Action Officer and has a specific budget offering a small grants scheme to faith-based organisations – something which would be considered beyond the pale in many other places.

Lewisham explains its distinctive approach by pointing to the large numbers of residents who subscribe to a religion and of the rapidly growing number of groups (over 200). As already noted, this can lead to problems if not regulated, but on a more positive level these faith groups are seen as having a vital social role to play. Without ever directly engaging with the act of worship or with proselytizing, the Council believes that one of the best and most cost-effective ways of communicating with many of its residents is through their membership of faith groups.

The role of the Faith Officer has been to establish relationships and build trust, both with the Council and between different denominations. Interdenominational conflict within a single faith can be just as challenging as between the different faiths. From this basis of trust dialogues are encouraged around shared values and positive solutions to social issues such as supporting the elderly, young people or promoting cohesion.

Now that many groups are amassing large congregations and economic power, it is expected they will begin to seek greater political influence. The British electoral system currently makes it difficult for minority interests to find representation so groups are exploring other ways of making their views known, particularly through direct contact with the Mayor. There seems to be an assumption in Lewisham that faith groups will continue to grow in size and importance and will assume greater influence and authority in the future, so rather than try to deny this the borough is trying to design a system of governance that takes account of it.

Governance and Participation

Whilst the Coalition government is trying to introduce a new concept of governance across the UK called The Big Society, Lewisham likes to argue that it is well ahead of the trend in terms of the devolution of power and services and the encouragement of active citizenship. The local authority has long since ceased considering itself as a service-delivery organisation and prefers to take a strategic and facilitating role.

It was difficult for our team to verify the extent to which services have been successfully devolved in Lewisham because the great majority of people we interviewed were from the local authority. It should be a priority for a second visit to hear the testimony of civil society organisations and social enterprises on the matter.

Lewisham is proud of its attempts to engage more people in the deliberative process of local governance. It has created a Strategic partnership which brings together representatives from public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations. It sets the broad strategic direction for the Borough and develops new ways of working together to each economic, social, and environmental goals.

The Borough employs a Local Assemblies Manager and a team of 6 co-ordinators, which is given a high priority by the Mayor and will be protected from spending cuts. Each of its 18 wards have a local forum (chaired by a councillor) which meets quarterly to discuss local issues such as transport, anti-social behaviour, and the environment. They have a small funding allocation of £18,000 to make things happen. They are managed in such a way as to avoid being dominated by organised lobby groups and to encourage strangers to meet and interact. They also encourage cross-fertilization of ideas between different ward forums. So, for example, one area has established a social enterprise called 'Lee Green Lives' to encourage local ownership of shops and other assets and this is now being copied by other areas.

Lewisham admits that the devolution of power is not always acceptable to some councillors who see it as an undermining of their own role as elected representatives, but they accept that this trend can only accelerate. They now consult and support bloggers, tweeters and online networks to monitor local concerns, canvass opinion and assess the effects of new initiatives.

During 2010 the Council initiated a form of participatory budgeting and asked people how they would like to distribute the forthcoming public expenditure cuts. 2500 people took part⁵. Now during 2011 Lewisham will host a rather special project to create 'conversations' in neighbourhoods. The aim is to increase awareness of the richness and diversity of local people, to discover hidden talents, create a greater sense of connection and belonging and create collaborations between people who wouldn't normally meet⁶. The Project is the idea of writer Theodore Zeldin, author of 'An Intimate History of Humanity', and is in association with the National Portrait Gallery and the National Health Service. The BBC is also making a radio documentary about the project. The eventual aim is in each neighbourhood to connect together groups of up to 200 people from all walks of life who would not normally belong to such a diverse group.

The Council also collaborated with the RSA to map social networks in localities and New Cross Gate was used as a guinea pig. It produced some surprising and enlightening findings about people's social connections in a diverse community and found that the supermarket tended to be the hub of modern communities⁷.

Participation is also at the heart of the council's strategy for urban regeneration. For example, in preparing its current strategy⁸ they began from the basis of a set of values that mattered to local people rather than is often the case, from a set of economic or political imperatives. Large numbers of local people were recruited and paid to serve on consultative panels. Young people were taken to different parts of the borough they didn't know to interview others so they could get a deeper understanding of the competing priorities. And because many council staff live locally they also provide a valuable sounding board. This ethos has embedded itself in many officials who now see it as their responsibility to talk to the public at all times. They have also introduced a scheme to allow officials to be released from their normal work and nominate themselves to join other projects or teams. This ensures that departmental silos are broken down. This is particularly important in departments that traditionally struggle to recruit many ethnic minority staff.

The Council is also funding community radio stations as a way both of communicating with specific communities and also encouraging the stations to develop as enterprises and job creators.

Last, but by no means least, special mention should be made of one of Lewisham's most important innovations in governance and participation: the Young Mayor. Many local authorities have adopted the idea of youth parliaments but these can often appear tokenistic. On the other hand the Lewisham Young Mayor seems a much more robust attempt to put real power and responsibility in the hands of young people and treat them seriously. The Young Mayor is elected by direct ballot every year and – along with a cabinet of young advisors – is given a budget (£30,000 per annum) to initiate a programme of work, as well as to scrutinise the work of Sir Steve Bullock and the Council.⁹

⁵ The extensive findings can be consulted at <http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4ABAC273-5055-4FED-A462-9E4251C36A54/0/Item8Appendix1017November2010.pdf>

⁶ <http://bemoreblog.co.uk/conversation-dinner-at-the-horniman-museum-cafe-20-january-2011/>

⁷ Full report at

http://www.thersa.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/333483/ConnectedCommunities_report_150910.pdf

⁸ See <http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/StrategiesPlans/PeopleProsperityPlace.htm>

⁹ See <http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/ElectedRepresentatives/TheYoungMayor/>



Figure 4 The Young Mayor and his advisors in action

Having met several past and current young mayors and advisors they demonstrate a high level of self-confidence and understanding. They have travelled extensively around Britain and the rest of Europe and this has helped them to appreciate what has been achieved in Lewisham. They have encountered few other places where young people's participation in the democratic process is taken so seriously. Also they have noted how much more diverse Lewisham is and, importantly, how much more comfortable it seems with its diversity, than most other places. They concur that whilst Lewisham may not be the most comfortable of places to live, and that it can at times be quite threatening particularly for young people, few of the district's problems are attributable to ethnic divisions. Even the gangs are multi-ethnic, we were told.

Economic development

As already noted, Lewisham has a relatively small labour market and business community because the majority of residents work outside the borough. The Council's economic development policy has been to encourage more people into small enterprises and then to move these enterprises up the value chain. In general, people of minority background are more likely to set up enterprises than the white majority. Most of these start out by providing services within their own ethnic group. This can initially be a useful first step for a new starter but if too many people go into the same business (eg Vietnamese restaurants) it can be self-defeating. The purpose of Council policy has been to assist them to 'break out' into the mainstream economy, including by providing financial support and advice to unregistered businesses to encourage their "legalisation". Lewisham once had business support officers for all large ethnic minorities but such is the level of diversity now that this is out-dated.

The Lewisham magazine has business pages with advertisements which are very useful for start-up services. There is an initiative among neighbouring boroughs to move towards joint procurement for business support for hard-to-reach groups. There is a local labour business scheme to maximise local employment and procurement opportunities, enabling small businesses to join up to tender. The labour scheme contains the rule that developers employ at least 20% local people but this is difficult to enforce although the Mayor is passionate about encouraging businesses to employ local people

With EQUAL funding they ran a scheme¹⁰ to train respected people within communities to be business advisors and intermediaries with the mainstream business support agencies. They proved particularly useful in helping Lewisham business open trade links with the countries of origin of migrants, in cooperation with the Chamber of commerce.

Despite the borough's proximity to one of the largest business hubs in the world, the local economy of Lewisham feels almost in a different world. There is the paradox that if local businesses do begin to find success they may leave Lewisham and move to more prosperous parts of London. Certainly our respondents found it extremely difficult to name any specific

¹⁰ <http://www.equalworks.co.uk/resources/contentfiles/5035.pdf>

businesses that had been born and then flourished over a long period in the local economy. The Council did not seem to have any particular initiative to encourage the mixing and merging of business people from different cultural background to try and innovate new business models and projects, and were not aware of any such businesses locally.

Conclusion

Lewisham exhibits many of the advantages and some of the disadvantages of being part of one of the great world cities. It is intensely fluid and dynamic and yet parochial; within sight of global centres of political and financial power and yet isolated and shut out from them; economically and socially homogeneous and politically egalitarian, but dictated to by more powerful trends towards polarisation and exclusion; its normality is a state of intense ethnic diversity and mixing, and yet it is part of a national culture and system of governance which remains segregated and ill at ease with cosmopolitanism.

But, whilst the borough is even less the master of its destiny than most localities in a global economy, it shows a remarkable energy and determination to control those tools available to it and exercise them single-mindedly and creatively within a firm set of values and towards clear goals.

Lewisham recognises that whilst it may enjoy more relaxed intercultural climate than most places, inter-ethnic relations are only one of several interfaces and lines of potential division in modern society, and that one cannot solve one whilst failing to deal with the others. Atomisation and alienation and of people from each, within the labour market, as consumers, in neighbourhoods and across generations are equally serious and Lewisham finds itself at the leading edge of trends which will affect many other places. In the Light of this Lewisham is particular notable for its commitment to communication, co-production and conviviality, not only between people but within and between the local authority and the residents. Much of what it is doing is still experimental and will not all bear fruit, but the important thing here is that whilst Lewisham may be a ship on choppy seas, but it feels like it is charting its own course rather than cast adrift on the prevailing currents.

Having said this it is going to become increasingly difficult for the borough to follow its preferred course in the face of severe public sector funding cuts. One of the consequences is the decision of the Council to close five of its branch libraries, which would seem counter-productive to its desire to support services and build conviviality in neighbourhoods. This is just example of how difficult it will be for the borough to maintain a close correlation between its principles and the hard realities which face it.

There are areas of the borough which require further investigation in subsequent visits. As already mentioned, the role of civil society is considered to be significant and growing but its voice was little heard during the first visit. Education was discussed tangentially but needs a closer look. Crime, security and the role of the police also needs to be explored, particularly whether there are any significant ethnic dimensions to this. For example, as recently as 2008-09, the Metropolitan Police recorded 466 racist crimes in Lewisham making it the second worst borough in London after Westminster¹¹. These figures do not tally with the picture of post-racial Lewisham we were presented with on the visit.

It would be wrong to judge the ultimate success of Lewisham's participation in ICC by one initiative or project but it is difficult not to see the Surrey Canal development, and the relationship of the borough with Renewal as iconic. We will follow this with great interest.

Recommendations

1. Lewisham could maximise the innovation potential of diversity by developing a scheme which encourages contacts between start-up businesses, in particular across ethnic lines, and

¹¹ Accessed at http://www.emmainteractive.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18741&Itemid=3429

the development of new products or services based on a cultural mix. Regular business meetings, competitions or prizes could be means to achieving this.

2. The planned work on intergenerational relations could benefit from an intercultural angle, exploring how different cultures deal with inter-generational conflict and transmission. Insights from such work could be then used to inspire new approaches in social policy, in particular care for the elderly and the young and community-based projects.

3. Lewisham strategic partnerships and local area agreements could take a more explicitly intercultural approach in analysing challenges and developing projects (for instance in the fields of youth offending or building stronger communities).