



WALTHAM FOREST COUNCIL OF MOSQUES

c/o- 713 HIGH ROAD, LEYTON,
LONDON E10 5AB
TEL 020 8558 0786

Re: BRIT Project/Council Motion 17th December 2015

On behalf of WFCOM, we make the following statement

WFCOM is committed to working in the community, and is involved with social cohesion at all levels. We welcome community cohesion and all projects that aspire to this noble cause. Most recently we opened the mosque(s) across the borough to visitors of all beliefs and faiths. This was received very warmly and reflected the position of the majority of Muslims in the borough.

However in relation to the BRIT project and Prevent, the notion that it is for community cohesion and engagement is a complete misnomer. We state our case on the following grounds:

The agenda that has appeared on LBWF's website in furtherance of the aims of the BRIT Project, we say the following.

The project itself and Prevent in general is an ill-conceived and flawed policy. It is racist, and overtly targets members of the Muslim faith. This has been demonstrated by organisations who are collecting data on referrals to the Channel programme. At the time of its implementation in the guise of the BRIT project, we gave no credence to it, or any sense of affiliation, for its roll out.

When a local authority decides to enact a programme that will have the potency to alienate a huge part of their constituency, democratically they must do an Equality Impact assessment. We are yet to see this and whether it exists. Surely there must be some governance mechanisms in place, as there is clear evidence of its pernicious racist targeting of very young Muslim children. Where is the accountability ?

We have seen the fruits of the poisoned BRIT project from the fall out in the summer and recently with the debacle that is Greenleaf school. Blaming all and sundry other than themselves for breaching the Data Protection Act. Let us reiterate we have no faith in this project, or Prevent in general.

Contrary to some accusations against members of WFCOM, we can CONFIRM that not a single member participated in the BRIT project. We can confirm that WFCOM, its members and their trustees have no support for the BRIT project. In fact we see the BRIT project as another tool being used (like the Prevent strategy) to spy and denigrate the Muslim community and cause distrust. We have no confidence in the BRIT project and the Prevent strategy overall.

Members:

- Cann Hall Deen and Education Trust, 106 Cann Hall Road, Leytonstone, E11 3NH
- Chingford Mosque, 92 Chingford Mount Road, Chingford, E4 9AA
- Faizan e Islam, 8 Corbett Road, Walthamstow, E17 3JZ
- Jamia Masjid & Muslim Community Centre, 324-326 High Road, Leyton, E10 5PW
- Masjid & Madrassa Al Tawhid, 80 High Road, Stratford, E15 2BP
- Masjid Abu Bakr and Islamic Centre, 26a Mansfield Road, Walthamstow, E17 6PJ
- Masjid e-Umar, 79 Queens Road, Walthamstow, E17 8QR
- Noor Ul Islam Masjid, 713 High Road, Leyton E10 5AB
- Waltham Forest Islamic Association, 439-451 Lea Bridge Road, Leyton, E10 7EA

In relation to the motion, and the agenda items, there is an inappropriate conflation of issues. The author of the agenda has linked a man stabbing someone in Leytonstone to implementing the BRIT program in schools to make us feel safe. We endorse the manner in which the police dealt with such an incendiary situation, and provided the community with a sense of reassurance. It is shameful how politics is being manipulated to implement a programme which asks questions such as:

- I believe that my religion is the only correct one: True/False
- God has a purpose for me: True/False
- I would mind if a family of a different race or religion moved next door: True/False.

In fact some of the agenda items are potentially treading onto the toes of the Criminal Justice System. There is a criminal investigation on-going and there maybe issues of mental health etc. For members of an elected body to openly use this case for their own political ends is not only tawdry but potentially misfeasance in a public office. We leave that for the appropriate authorities to consider that.

From what we can ascertain there has been a whip across the parties. For a local authority whose ethos is one of openness, transparency and democratic principles. This motion is clearly an affront to those stated aims. We as an organisation do not condone those who vote in favour of this racist policy. We request that all party members review their decision and vote freely. In fact we would request that items 6, 7 and 8 are removed as they do not relate to the Leytonstone incident and in fact detract from the bravery of the police and others in dealing with the situation.

We do not wish to repeat what was reported by Newham Council of Mosques but we support and amplify the same message as to the toxic nature of both the BRIT project and Prevent. We call for a boycott of it in all its guises, and we ask our 70,000 worshippers to raise these issues with Mark Rusling, Liaquat Ali and the Council in general.

Yusuf Hansa
Chair, WFCOM

Adil Boparia
Secretary, WFCOM

Irfan Akhtar
Media Officer, WFCOM

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