

# Bridging Divides

## Policy Approaches to Ethnic Enclaves and Community Cohesion

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# Introduction

In the wake of the devastating Southport riots of 2024, the question of what constitutes a good community has taken on renewed urgency in the United Kingdom. This tragic event, which stemmed from long-simmering tensions and misunderstandings between different ethnic groups, has forced policymakers, academics, and citizens alike to reexamine the foundations of social cohesion in our increasingly diverse society. While Aristotle once posited that the pursuit of the 'common good' defined a thriving community, and modern communitarian philosophers emphasise overcoming individual differences for the sake of inclusion, the answer to this perennial question remains elusive. At the heart of this inquiry lies the concept of social cohesion, defined as the connections between individuals within a community and the overall feeling of communal membership.

Social cohesion is in a state of decline in the UK. Reasons for this are varied, ranging from economic pressures to a lack of confidence in politics. The proportion of people who said they could trust others in their neighbourhood has declined from 69% in 2012 to 56% in 2020, representing a fall of almost 15 percentage points.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, fewer than half of people report a belief that relations between different ethnic groups have improved in recent years, while one in four ethnic minority Britons believe that racism may worsen over the next ten years.<sup>2</sup>

To approach the complex issue of immigration and its impacts with clarity, it is essential to define what constitutes an ethnic enclave. An ethnic enclave is not merely the presence of an ethnic minority group within a community.<sup>3</sup> Rather, it emerges when formal and informal community institutions and symbols begin to appear. Formally, an ethnic enclave is an area where a specific ethnic community holds a numerical majority<sup>4</sup> and has established institutions

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Quilter-Pinner, Rachel Statham, Will Jennings and Dr Viktor Valgarðsson, *Trust issues: Dealing with distrust in politics*, IPPR, 2021

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Gold, S. (2015) 'Ethnic Enclaves' Chapter in 'Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioural Sciences'

<sup>4</sup> Demireva, N & Zwysen, W. (2021) 'Wellbeing in local areas: how trust, happiness, social distance and experience of discrimination differ in the perceived ethnic enclave', *European Societies*, 24 (1), pp. 83-110.

and services related to religion <sup>5</sup>, culture, commerce, and language.<sup>6</sup> Colloquially these can be recognised as markets that sell food specific to certain cultures and are not readily available from typical supermarkets, and clothing stores that trade in traditional clothing and jewellery from non-Western cultures.<sup>7</sup> Places of worship in keeping with the prevailing culture are also characteristic of some ethnic enclaves but this, of course, is dependent on the culture.

For the purpose of this project, I will refer to Manchester for the purposes of a historical analysis and the area of Rusholme as a contemporary example. It is my belief that in order to consider this issue effectively, the research should be grounded in a real-world example as opposed to the purely theoretical. To gain a nuanced understanding of how these areas are perceived locally and the impact of high cultural diversity, an interview was conducted with Cllr Rabnawaz Akbar, who has served as the Councillor for Rusholme for 14 years and has been a resident for even longer.

At the core of this phenomenon are people and communities who do not always act in accordance with the existing research or hold the beliefs that we might expect. As such, in order to contribute to the dialogue on this issue in a meaningful way, I believe it is important to conduct this research in a way that respects individual and community agency.

This paper will explore the state of social cohesion in the UK, with a particular focus on the role of ethnic enclaves. It will investigate both the positive and negative impacts of their existence on social cohesion and community resilience, considering their historical development and contemporary manifestations. Building on the findings of this research, policy recommendations will be provided that aim to address the breakdown in social cohesion and implement initiatives to bring about its restoration. The ultimate goal is to prevent future conflicts and foster a more harmonious, multicultural Britain, where diverse communities can thrive together.

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<sup>5</sup> Bakri, A. et al., (2014) 'The Physical and Cultural Attributes of Ethnic Enclave: A Basis for Conservation', EDP Sciences

<sup>6</sup> Qadeer, M. and Kumar, S. (2006) 'Ethnic Enclaves and Social Cohesion', *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, 15(2), pp. 1–17.

<sup>7</sup> Zhou, M. (2014) 'The Formation of Ethnic Resources and Social Capital in Immigrant Neighbourhoods: Chinatown and Koreatown in Los Angeles

# Chapter 1 – A History

Manchester has been profoundly shaped by the contributions of its immigrant communities. They have played a pivotal role in transforming the city's economic, social, and cultural landscape and have been instrumental in filling critical skills gaps across various sectors, initially in construction, manufacturing and textiles and more recently in healthcare, engineering, and information technology.<sup>8</sup> Further, the social and cultural fabric of Manchester has been richly woven with the threads of diverse immigrant communities with the city now boasting over 200 languages spoken within its boundaries.<sup>9</sup>

The Industrial Revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century saw an influx of Irish immigrants who fled poverty and famine in Ireland in search of work and a better life in Manchester's rapidly industrialising centre. They constituted Manchester's first major ethnic enclave. This rapidly advancing frontier of Manchester's industrialisation was known as 'Little Ireland' and is adjacent to what is now Oxford Road train station. It was home to 1,510 people in 1841, 75% of whom were Irish and had settled in the unplanned, speculative buildings as they were cheap and adjacent to a large number of unskilled employment openings.<sup>10</sup> During this time, Irish immigrants contributed extensively to Manchester's industrialisation, providing 'a crucial workforce for Manchester's rapidly expanding factories and mills, particularly in the textile industry', alongside contributing significantly to the construction of infrastructure such as 'canals, railways, and roads, which were essential for the city's industrial expansion'.<sup>11</sup> Further, many Irish workers advocated for their fellow workers to bring about improvements to working conditions and workers' rights in Manchester.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> A. Morris, *Immigration & Societal Contributions*, 2024

<sup>9</sup> Internet Geography, *What are the impacts of national and international migration in Manchester?*, 2024

<sup>10</sup> Paul Hindle, *Exploring Greater Manchester – A Fieldwork Guide*, Manchester Geographical Society, 1998.

<sup>11</sup> C.L. Scott, *A comparative re-examination of Anglo-Irish relations in nineteenth-century Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, 1998.

<sup>12</sup> A. Tagore, *Irish and German Immigrants of the Nineteenth Century: Hardships, Improvements, and Success*, 2014

This time also saw the arrival of a number of Italian Immigrants who were fleeing the poverty and instability that was caused by the unification of their home country. The area of Ancoats, which has since been bestowed with a plaque bearing the label 'Little Italy', became home to 600 Italians by 1891, rising to 2000 in 1914.<sup>13</sup> They had a significant impact on Manchester's culture and economy as pioneers of the British ice cream industry with 70 Italians living in Ancoats trading as ice-cream vendors by 1891. Italian men from the Ancoats community were also represented in the armed forces during the Second World War.<sup>14</sup>

The mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century marked the appearance of Caribbean immigrants who formed part of the Windrush Generation and settled in Manchester to be with friends and relatives and to take advantage of the readily available employment opportunities. In 1951, there were only 351 people from the Caribbean living in Manchester, by 1962, this had increased significantly by 1961 to 2,502 and to 6,185 by 1971. Settling in the Salford Docks area initially, they eventually moved to areas such as Trafford, Moss Side, Hulme and Cheetham. Caribbean immigrants made significant contributions to Manchester's economic, cultural, and social landscape. Economically, they provided a crucial workforce for the city's industries, including factories and mills, taking on essential jobs that were often low-paid or undesirable to locals. Culturally, Caribbean immigrants brought their traditions, music, food, and social practices, further developing the cultural diversity that existed in Manchester. They established community organisations and churches that not only supported their own community but also contributed to the broader social fabric of the city and their arrival represents a momentous leap forward for Manchester's development as a multicultural city.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, a wave of South Asian immigration to Manchester is commonly believed to have started in the 1950s but instances can be traced back further to the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>16</sup> Many South Asians moved to the UK to work

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<sup>13</sup> BBC, I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream,

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/immig\\_emig/england/manchester/article\\_1.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/immig_emig/england/manchester/article_1.shtml)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> J. Stanley, Mangoes to Moss Side: Caribbean Migration to Manchester,

[https://www.academia.edu/643012/MANGOES\\_TO\\_MOSS\\_SIDE\\_CARIBBEAN\\_MIGRATION\\_TO\\_MANCHESTER?source=swp\\_share](https://www.academia.edu/643012/MANGOES_TO_MOSS_SIDE_CARIBBEAN_MIGRATION_TO_MANCHESTER?source=swp_share)

<sup>16</sup> Manchester City Council, 2024, Migration and Ethnic History – South Asian,



in Manchester's flourishing textile industry, over 95% of the workforce in this industry at the time was made up of people of Asians descent.<sup>17</sup> These new workers, recruited to fill British labour shortages, socialised and met along Wilmslow Road. By the late 1970s, the mainly Pakistani community had settled and was expanding, leading to the growth of what is now known as the Curry Mile. The South Asian community has made significant positive contributions to Manchester's cultural and economic landscape, turning The Curry Mile into one of Manchester's most famous stretches of road, attracting visitors from across the UK and contributing to local tourism and the economy. The businesses opened by South Asian immigrants not only serve their community but also introduce their culture to the wider population of Manchester.<sup>18</sup>

The history of Manchester suggests that immigration resulting in the development of ethnic enclaves is not a new phenomenon and is not unique to any culture or people. This evidence demonstrates that ethnic enclaves have historically formed for a variety of reasons, including:

- Access to work and entrepreneurship opportunities that tend to the specific needs of the ethnic community
- The ability to preserve their cultural practices, language and traditions,
- The crucial social support networks that are beneficial for finding employment, housing and navigating the social systems inherent in a new culture.<sup>19</sup>

These reasons remain relevant today.

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<sup>17</sup> BBC, The making of 'Curry Mile, 2009

<sup>18</sup> Z. Saleem, An ode to Curry Mile and its South Asian community, 2022

<sup>19</sup> Portes and Shafer, Revisiting the Enclave Hypothesis: Miami Twenty-Five Years Later, 2006

## Chapter 2 – A Contemporary Reflection

Ethnic enclaves are a topic of contention among the academic community who cannot even come to a consensus on their existence. Some argue that an enclave is purely symbolic<sup>20</sup>, whereas others have posited that a link exists between the proportion of 'non-western minorities' in an area and the likelihood that people will support far-right parties, though it is worth noting that this study was conducted in the Netherlands.<sup>21</sup> Those who are sceptical about the existence of ethnic enclaves point to the concept of 'super diversity' which recognises the significant increase in net immigration to the UK since the 1990s and highlights the diverse countries of origin that immigrants are arriving from. It argues that the traditional understanding of diversity based mainly on ethnicity is no longer sufficient and argues for a refined understanding, that recognises the multiple dimensions of differentiation amongst immigrants.<sup>22</sup> For the purpose of this research, whether or not ethnic enclaves exist in any real sense is not relevant. If they are perceived to exist, they have the potential to impact their emotions, beliefs and actions. The fact that they exist in people's minds, predominantly in a negative way, is supported by the wealth of newspaper reports which reference the 'ghettoisation' of the UK.<sup>23</sup> Their prominence was also reinforced by their discussion by Conservative MP Suella Braverman<sup>24</sup> and former Conservative MP Nick Fletcher<sup>25</sup> in the House of Commons.

South-Asian migrants initially settled in Rusholme due to affordable housing and economic opportunities. Many were men working long hours, leading to the establishment of curry houses as a convenient source of traditional

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<sup>20</sup> Varady, *Desegregating the City – Ghettos, Enclaves and Inequality*, 2005

<sup>21</sup> Janssen, Ham, Kleinepiers and Nieuwenhuis, *A Micro-Scale Approach to Ethnic Minority Concentration in the Residential Environment and Voting for the Radical Right in The Netherlands*, *European Sociological Review*, 2019

<sup>22</sup> Vertovec, *Super-diversity and its implications*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2007

<sup>23</sup> Pearce, *British Indian blasts migrants who REFUSE to embrace Britain: 'Learn the flipping language!'*, *GB News*, 2024; Hymas, *Suella Braverman: Islamists are in charge of Britain now*, *The Telegraph*, 2024; Doughty, *Ghetto Britain: Entire districts segregated, warns report, as it urges school intakes to be mixed*, *Daily Mail*, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Bell, *T Sorry, Suella Braverman, your bleak picture of a 'ghettoised' Britain doesn't stack up*, *The Guardian*, 2024

<sup>25</sup> James, *R, Immigration turning UK into 'ghetto' where no-one speaks English – Tory MP*, *The Independent*, 2023

food. Over time, Wilmslow Road became known as 'The Curry Mile', Britain's largest concentration of South Asian restaurants and takeaways. As these migrants decided to stay and were joined by their families, the area evolved into a cultural hub, offering clothing and jewellery shops that catered to their needs. This transformed Rusholme into a popular destination for experiencing South Asian culture, attracting visitors from afar.

As believers in the concept of 'super-diversity' would expect, the area of Rusholme, which was once an area that was predominantly settled by South Asian economic migrants, has undergone a transformation into a diverse community, home to residents from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Syria, India, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Somalia, and a significant number of white British residents, among many other cultures and ethnicities. As changes to preferences, demand and cultural practices have emerged, the 'Curry Mile' has reflected these changes and is now only home to fewer than 10 curry houses out of the 70 outlets that line the street. Their places have been filled by Middle Eastern businesses along with Afghan, Iranian, Malaysian and other eateries from across the Muslim world.

As Cllr Akbar was keen to highlight, these communities are not planned. They emerge as a result of factors such as, the cost of housing, proximity to religious institutions and job opportunities. Areas where migrant communities have developed subsequently grow as new migrants select the location to benefit from pre-existing community ties and cultural institutions. These communities are, therefore, the result of consumer practices and will continue to change and develop in a way not dissimilar to the average high-street. It was consumer practices which led to the demise of the high-street grocer, baker and butcher, likewise it was market forces that replaced pubs on the 'Curry Mile' with curry houses, and market forces that replaced the curry houses with kebab and falafel shops. This logic exposes the failure to comprehend the reality of how these communities come to exist by those who refer to the 'Ghettoisation of Britain'.

These cultural changes, however, have not been without their impact on social cohesion. The influx of immigrants arriving from new countries, particularly those in the Middle East, has led to tensions forming within the existing community. Cultural differences appear to be a driving force of the discontent that has arisen, particularly the acknowledgement and observation of behavioural norms. To provide an example, Cllr Akbar has spent a lot of time addressing nuisance car parking on the Curry Mile which regularly blocks traffic on what is a major arterial route into Manchester City Centre. Similarly, problems arising from poor waste management practices have also emerged as a

contentious issue in the community and have furthered strained community relations. These incidences, despite not being registered in any statistics that seek to measure social cohesion, nonetheless have a significant impact on it.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Chen-Xia, Betancor, Rodríguez-Gómez and Rodríguez-Pérez, Cultural variations in perceptions and reactions to social norm transgressions: a comparative study, *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2023

## Chapter 3 - Impact On Social Cohesion

The impact that Ethnic Enclaves have on social cohesion are complex and varied. To attempt to reduce their impact to something easily digestible and immutable would be misleading. This question becomes even more nuanced if we consider intra and extra-community cohesion. Intra-community cohesion refers to cohesion within an established group, whereas extra-community cohesion refers to the ability of group members to forge relationships outside of the established group. As discussed previously, immigrants settle in areas where their cultural community is already represented in order to reap the benefits of a shared language, culture and institutions. In doing so, their sense of cohesion within their cultural community is strengthened as relationships are formed predominantly within these pre-existing social circles.<sup>27</sup> These communities grow increasingly closer and tight-knit, benefiting from the security that this brings. This, however, does have a detrimental impact on the extent to which members of these groups are able to effectively integrate with the wider community.<sup>28</sup>

Research indicates that these self-perpetuating social circles have an unfavourable impact on the ability of immigrants to benefit from mechanisms that enable social mobility.<sup>29</sup> While these communities may offer short-term economic benefits, they can become 'mobility traps' in the long-term, as work is often sought within these networks, reducing potential avenues and opportunities for professional growth.

How ethnic enclaves interact with levels of deprivation is of enormous importance when contemplating their impact on social cohesion. Income inequality and deprivation have been shown, in some studies, to have a greater impact on social cohesion than the presence of ethnic enclaves.<sup>29</sup> It is therefore

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<sup>27</sup> Hermansen, Ethnic enclaves, early school leaving, and adolescent crime among immigrant youth, *European Sociological Review* 39 (3), 2023

<sup>28</sup> Danzer, A. M. and Yaman, Do Ethnic Enclaves Impede Immigrants' Integration? Evidence from a Quasi-Experimental Social-Interaction Approach. *Review of International Economics*, 21(2), 2013 <sup>29</sup> Demireva and Zwysen, Ethnic Enclaves, Economic and Political Threat: An Investigation With the European Social Survey, 2021

<sup>29</sup> Demireva, Immigration, Diversity and Social Cohesion, 2019, Kawachi and Kennedy, Health and social cohesion: why care about income inequality?, 1997, Boarini and Causa, Reducing inequalities

unsurprising that Cllr Akbar was unyielding in his opinion that the main driver of the breakdown in social cohesion, was the increase and deepening of poverty experienced across the UK since 2010.<sup>30</sup> It is for this reason that poverty is intrinsic to Manchester City Council's 'Building Stronger Communities Together' strategy<sup>31</sup>, along with some national strategies, such as the Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales.<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, any discussion concerning ethnic enclaves and their impact on social cohesion must also consider the impact of deprivation. Enclaves and deprivation are not easily separated as factors in this equation, as ethnic enclaves exist, predominantly, in areas of higher deprivation.<sup>33</sup> It is also for this reason that estimates concerning their impact on community cohesion may be overstated and their role in increasing the incidence of far-right voting, exaggerated.

Therefore, while research has suggested ethnic enclaves may increase on the incidence of far-right voting, it is not necessarily clear. Increased levels of deprivation have also been shown to have a considerable impact on the incidence of far-right voting – including in the UK.<sup>34</sup> There is a need for more data and research on this, before we can truly understand the impact of ethnic enclaves on social cohesion.

This phenomenon is partly driven by the evolving discourse on immigration since 2010. Following the election of the Conservative Government, there was a notable increase in media coverage of immigration, particularly after attempts to reduce immigration in 2011 and 2012.<sup>35</sup> This coverage often

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and strengthening social cohesion through inclusive growth: a roadmap for action, Economics EJournal, 2018

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation, UK Poverty 2024, 2024

<sup>31</sup> Manchester City Council, Building Stronger Communities Together Our Strategy 2023–2026, 2023

<sup>32</sup> Welsh Government, Evaluation of Getting on Together, the Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales, 2012

<sup>33</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Ethnicity and deprivation in England: How likely are ethnic minorities to live in deprived neighbourhoods?, 2013

<sup>34</sup> Haußmann and Rüttenauer, Material deprivation and the Brexit referendum: a spatial multilevel analysis of the interplay between individual and regional deprivation, 2024; Dorn, Clemens, Lea and Florian, Economic deprivation and radical voting: Evidence from Germany, 2020

<sup>35</sup> The Migration Observatory, A Decade of Immigration in the British Press, 2016

presented a predominantly negative perception of immigration, frequently framing immigrants as delinquents or criminals.<sup>36</sup> The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford noted that the most common word associated with migrants in the media was 'illegal' <sup>37</sup>, with headlines like 'Eight-fold increase in the number of illegal migrants entering Europe' being common.<sup>38</sup> This negative framing has contributed to a public discourse that is increasingly critical of immigration, further complicating the dynamics of social cohesion in areas with ethnic enclaves.

This change of rhetoric and language was driven, to a large extent, by the incoming Conservative Government, whose target of reducing net migration to the 'tens of thousands', shifted the focus of the debate to the scale of migration, prompting the belief that Britain was a country that was 'full up' and unable to adapt to the changes that migration brings.<sup>39</sup> The dominance of immigration as an issue in the main parties' manifestos and the rise in support of the UK Independence Party, and subsequently the Reform Party, provide irrefutable examples of how immigration has come to dominate the media, to the detriment of immigrant communities across the country. This trend has only been exacerbated by the development of social media as a political medium which has enabled the amplification of anti-immigrant sentiments through various platforms, and as we all know, this was the precursor to the riots in Southport in 2024.<sup>40</sup>

Immigrant communities, and by extension, inhabitants of ethnic enclaves, have been scapegoated by politicians and the media for the issues that we are currently facing in our public services, and the shortage of housing. This can be seen in the pledge in the 2024 Conservative party manifesto to enforce new 'Local Connection' and 'UK Connection' tests for social housing in England.<sup>41</sup> These proposals rely on misguided understandings of how migration and

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<sup>36</sup> Eberl, Meltzer, Heidenreich, Herrero and Theorin, The European media discourse on immigration and its effects: a literature review, *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 42(3), 2018

<sup>37</sup> The Migration Observatory, *Migration in the News*, 2013

<sup>38</sup> Payne, Eight-fold increase in the number of illegal migrants entering Europe, 2014

<sup>39</sup> Crawley, McMahon and Jones, *Victims & Villains – Migrant Voices in the British Media*, Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, 2016

<sup>40</sup> Eskman, Anti-immigration and racist discourse in social media, *European Journal of Communication*, 34 (6), 2019

<sup>41</sup> Serpa, Election 2024: migrants aren't to blame for Britain's housing crisis, 2024

housing are intertwined, scapegoating migrants for the government's own failure to provide homes. The wholly incorrect and unsubstantiated notion that immigrants are unfairly advantaged in the allocation of social housing has emerged as one of the most frequently alleged injustices of immigration, despite the lack of reliable evidence to substantiate such claims.<sup>42</sup> It is this misinformation and the deliberate and calculated distortion of the truth for political ends, which has resulted in more people in the UK believing that immigration is a bad thing than a good thing.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Robinson, new immigrants and migrants in social housing in England, 2008

<sup>43</sup> Richards, UK Public Opinion toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern, 2023



## Chapter 4 – Policy Recommendations

In the preceding chapters, a comprehensive analysis of the history, causes, and impacts of ethnic enclaves has been put forward. To briefly summarise: ethnic enclaves are not a new phenomenon but have in fact been developing for centuries and are not exclusive to any ethnic or cultural group. The concept itself is contentious among academics and their impact on social cohesion has long been disputed. Their impact on community cohesion is complex, with there being potential intra-community benefit, at the expense of developing ties with those outside of the enclave. Deprivation and income inequality both have a considerable impact on levels of social cohesion and make the impact of ethnic enclaves difficult to measure due to the way that they often coexist. The perception of immigrants, and ethnic enclaves by extension, is heavily influenced by the media and the agenda-setting of the Government and the shape this has taken since 2010 has resulted in the scapegoating and demonisation of immigrant communities.

The policy proposals I will put forward will fall into one of three categories. Thought leadership, the requirement for the development of local plans and reporting, and the recognition of social deprivation as a significant contributing factor.

### Thought Leadership

As I have outlined, the discourse surrounding immigration, especially that of politicians and the media, has a significant impact on perceptions of immigrant communities and social cohesion by extension. My first recommendation is that the Government seize this opportunity to reframe the debate around immigration and immigrants to highlight the significant benefit that they bring to the UK. The way that the narrative descended so rapidly into one of vitriol and hatred from the late 2000s onwards illustrates the power that the Government wields in influencing the media, and therefore, the popular narrative.

This can be done by improving the quality of data and analysis that is available to the public on issues surrounding immigration and particularly surrounding public services. This will enable the Government to openly dispel baseless claims of the NHS being overrun or social homes not being available due to immigrants. These misconceptions need to be tackled head-on and addressed directly to prevent their propagation.

## **The Publication of a National Cohesion Plan**

The Government should develop and publish a comprehensive, long-term social cohesion strategy for England. The development of this strategy should be collaborative, involving extensive consultation with local and regional government, public bodies, faith and civil society organisations. This process should aim to construct a detailed understanding of the cohesion challenges facing the country, evaluate the effectiveness and adequacy of existing policies and practices, and propose new approaches at local, regional and national levels.

The strategy should encompass a comprehensive set of aims to address the complex challenges of social cohesion in diverse communities. At its core, the strategy must focus on combating prejudice and hate crime effectively, ensuring that all community members feel safe and respected. This central pillar is crucial for creating an environment where social cohesion can flourish. Local leaders, including councils, public institutions, faith groups, civil society organizations, and businesses should be empowered, by providing them with the tools and authority to take decisive action at the grassroots level.

Simultaneously, the strategy should strive for universal English language fluency, recognising language as a crucial tool for integration and it should also work to reduce other barriers that impede migrant integration into broader society, fostering understanding and connection across cultural divides. Finally, the strategy should promote ongoing evaluation and institutional learning, establishing mechanisms for continuous improvement of cohesion efforts. This approach will allow for adaptability in the face of evolving challenges and ensure that strategies remain effective and relevant over time.

By implementing these measures, the Government can work towards building more cohesive communities that celebrate diversity while maintaining a shared sense of belonging and purpose. This approach recognises the complex interplay between ethnic enclaves, social cohesion, and broader societal factors such as deprivation.

## **Mandatory Local Plans and Tension Monitoring**

It is vital that combined authorities and councils develop comprehensive local social cohesion strategies to address the complex challenges posed by

ethnic enclaves and their impact on social cohesion. These strategies should be grounded in national guidance and tailored to the specific needs of each locality. The development of these strategies should be inclusive and collaborative, utilising the input of public, faith groups, civil society organisations, police forces, other public services, and local businesses.

While the priorities and content of these strategies may vary to reflect local contexts, they should universally aim to promote shared values across diverse communities, reinforce norms of acceptable behaviour, and ensure engagement with all sections of society. A crucial component of each local strategy should be the implementation of a tension monitoring scheme. This scheme would continuously review local data from various sources, guide both short-term and long-term interventions, and incorporate updated tension monitoring toolkits with a particular emphasis on the role of social media in community dynamics.

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