



# Faith groups and meeting places: Evidence base study

Final report to London Borough of Barking & Dagenham Council

November 2017

# London Borough of Barking & Dagenham Council

## Faith groups and meeting places: Evidence base study

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# Glossary

The following terms have been used in this report.

Term	Definition
<b>Faith Terms</b>	
Faith/Religion	The broad category of a faith/religious tradition, e.g. Christianity, Islam, Judaism. The terms faith and religion are used interchangeably in this report, although we note that there is a difference between the terms. Religion or belief is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Faith is a concept to which different religions ascribe various meanings.
Faith community	A practically useful term for referring to members of the same faith tradition within an area, e.g. 'the Buddhist community'. This term is recognised as being a simplification of what may be a very complex reality, e.g. 'the Christian community' would represent a huge variety of beliefs, traditions and practices and there may be no practical connection between some of the groups within this 'community'.
Faith group	An individual group within a faith tradition, e.g. an individual church or a regular group meeting of those within a faith. It would also capture any organisations based around a particular ethnicity, where these are closely tied to a particular faith. For example, in a previous similar study by CAG Consultants, a Bangladeshi Association involved in providing a range of community activities and services, and closely tied with a mosque, was considered a 'faith group' for the purpose of the study.
Faith facility	A physical space used by a faith group, whether for worship or other purposes.
Worship uses	The use of a faith facility for the purpose of worship.
Community uses	A useful catch-all term for 'non-worship' uses (whilst recognising that some would argue that all of life can be worship), such as the provision of community services, e.g. education, childcare, social care.
Local community	The geographic local community surrounding a faith facility.
Multi-faith facility	A physical space used by groups from more than one faith, whether for worship or community uses.
Intra-faith facility	A physical space used by more than one group from within the same faith, whether for worship or community uses.
<b>Planning Terms</b>	
Area Action Plan (AAP)	Spatially-defined guidelines for a local area that are material considerations in determining planning applications.
Development Plan Document (DPD)	The local plan consists of a series of DPDs, such as site-specific allocations and a proposals map.
D1	D1 is the land use category for community facilities in the English planning system, in line with the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). D1 refers to 'Non-residential institutions - Clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non residential education and training centres.'
Local Development Framework (LDF)	A set of documents, prepared by a local planning authority, which provide local planning policy.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	Document which sets out planning policies for England (produced in 2012).
Planning Advice Note (PAN)	Produced by local authorities to provide guidance on what type of development is encouraged. Although PANs do not need to be followed to get planning permission, whether the PAN has been followed will be considered in deciding applications.
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)	National planning practice guidance providing more details on points of interest than the NPPF.

Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)	Professional body for town planners.
Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)	Produced by local authorities to provide further detail on particular policies. They do not have the same status as adopted development plan policies, but may be material considerations in determining planning applications.

# Executive Summary

## Purpose and Approach

In recent decades the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has experienced considerable demographic change, and major change is projected in decades to come. Of local authorities in England and Wales, Barking and Dagenham had the fifth largest growth in residents born outside of the United Kingdom and Ireland between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. This population growth is also notably diverse in social and cultural characteristics; for example, 72 different non-English languages were recorded in the 2011 census as the main language in the household. Greater London Authority (GLA) projects population growth of 88,050 people by 2050 (central trend, 2016 based), equivalent to 43.4 percent growth from the 2015 population estimate. The council has ambitions for growth, with the current preferred growth options exceeding the GLA figures.

The demographic, social and cultural changes in the borough have resulted in the growth of existing religious meeting places and the demand for new religious meeting places. 74.7 percent of the borough's population noted some type of religious identity in the 2011 census, with an associated demand for religious meeting places. For some time now, different groups have been approaching the council with regard to new or expanded places of worship. The planning system mediates between demand for religious meeting places and impacts associated with these developments such as traffic, noise and land use changes. Due to the highly built-up nature of the borough, and constraints such as competing development needs and land costs, it has not always proved easy to work with groups to identify an appropriate long-term and sustainable solution for their accommodation needs. More broadly, the growth of diverse needs over a relatively short period of time in a location with limited previous history of diversity has generated challenges.

The council recognises the needs of the borough's faith communities and sees the cultural diversity of its residents as contributing to the well-being and cohesiveness of all communities. Barking and Dagenham's faith communities play an important and distinctive role in the voluntary and community sector, and are crucial in the provision of local and neighbourhood services, often in areas of long-term disadvantage.

The council commissioned this study to plan future development needs more effectively. This study provides an evidence base that can be used to produce planning policy and implement developments with a better understanding of faith groups and their needs. The evidence from the study also provides a foundation for improved communication and closer cooperation between the council and faith groups.

The purpose of this study was to:

1. develop profiles of Barking and Dagenham's principal faith communities;
2. carry out an audit of existing places of worship and other faith facilities; and
3. carry out a needs assessment of faith facilities, taking into account existing and projected future needs.

In addition, it was intended that the methods, evidence and outputs will contribute to wider outcomes for the borough, including:

1. improved understanding, trust and cooperation between the council, religious groups and other stakeholders;

2. better planning for religious groups; and
3. enabling religious groups to contribute to community cohesion, wellbeing and service provision.

This executive summary provides key points from the study; full details are in the main report.

## Methodology

The methodology for the study comprised five key stages:

1. A review of existing data sources on the composition of faith communities, including census data, the London Church Census and British Social Attitudes survey data.
2. A review of planning policy to understand the current policy framework for the development of faith facilities and a review of local planning application data to provide evidence of demand for different types of facilities and issues relating to securing planning permission for faith facilities.
3. Engagement and primary data collection with representatives of faith groups, including a scoping workshop, face-to-face and telephone interviews and an online survey. 54 percent of known groups participated in this data collection. Participants were offered anonymity and confidentiality, and their preferences have been followed in reporting.
4. Site visits to all known religious facilities, producing a geographic information system database.
5. Analysis and reporting, including:
  - mapping of faith communities and facilities;
  - analysis of participant responses;
  - demographic analysis of the future growth of ethno-religious groups and identification of future space needs;
  - review of good practice in religious facility sharing and engagement with faith groups; and
  - reporting and testing results with the council.

## Planning Context

The primary document for planning policy in England is the National Planning Policy Framework. This document has three specific references to 'places of worship', which are in the context of providing community facilities. Paragraph 70 states that planning policies should 'plan positively for the provision and use of... community facilities', such as places of worship and local plan making, whilst paragraph 171 states that local planning authorities should work to understand the health status and needs of the population, including needs relating to places of worship. Paragraph 28 refers to the provision of places of worship in villages.

The London Plan is a spatial development strategy that sets out the overall strategic plan for London, including setting the framework for the development and use of land in London. The London Plan primarily considers places of worship alongside other social infrastructure. Policy 3.16 of the London Plan recognises that London requires additional and enhanced social infrastructure, including places of

worship. This policy supports provision of social infrastructure, resists loss of this (including by promoting re-use for other community uses) and encourages multiple uses of premises.

The primary planning policy document in the borough is 'Planning for the Future of Barking and Dagenham: Core Strategy' (adopted 2010). This is part of a suite of documents that make up the Local Development Framework (LDF), which together form the statutory planning framework for the borough. The Core Strategy sets out a vision and objectives for the future of the borough and sets the framework for future land use. Strategic Objective 2 of the Core Strategy is to ensure development and growth helps to reduce inequalities and increase community cohesion through provision of social infrastructure. Places of worship are generally referred to collectively with other social infrastructure. The borough also has a Religious Meeting Places Planning Advice Note, last updated in 2012. This note provides guidance for those making planning applications for religious meeting places in the borough. The borough is in the process of preparing a Local Plan, which, when adopted, will replace the current LDF.

There are a number of common themes and messages regarding faith facilities and faith communities at national, regional and local levels of policy. These include recognition of the role that social infrastructure, including faith facilities, plays in creating cohesive communities and recognition that there is existing demand for such infrastructure in the borough and London as a whole. However, many policies do not discuss faith facilities separately from other social and community infrastructure.

The recognised demand for social infrastructure has resulted in policies to protect and retain community facilities and policies for development to provide or contribute to new and enhanced facilities. These policies and guidance promote shared use of facilities, including use of other community facilities, such as schools and community centres, for use by faith groups and encouraging multi-faith or multi-denomination faith facilities. Policies also encourage faith facilities to provide space for wider community activities, which may not necessarily be faith-related.

As part of this study, it has become clear that there is a need for cross-boundary considerations with regards to social infrastructure, and for religious meeting places specifically. One of the recommendations of this report is that a cross-boundary approach to planning for the provision of faith facilities should be promoted. Dialogue with neighbouring boroughs will be needed, and it is likely that the GLA will need to lead these discussions.

## Existing Faith Groups and Facilities

The changing demography of the borough, alongside other factors, has led to the changing composition of religious groups and changing demand for faith facilities. Key points are:

- The Christian community is large, active, growing and complex. 109 groups were identified in the borough. Although affiliation to the Christian religion has declined (as recorded by the 2011 census) in all parts of the borough apart from the Thames ward, most Christian groups report growth in the last five years. There has been particular growth in newer Pentecostal groups. There are some large groups in the borough, including at least three with more than 1,000 people regularly attending, one of which has approximately 5,000 regular attendees. There is also significant flux in Christian groups, with some groups' presence in the borough relatively short-lived. The size and complexity of groups in Christian denominations has, and likely will continue to, placed significant demands on the planning system in terms of planning applications for new facilities and in terms of ensuring that planned provision meets the needs of faith groups.
  - Note on terminology: The term Christian includes groups in more established 'traditional' denominations such as Church of England, Methodists, Baptists and Catholics, as well as newer groups such as African Christian and other Pentecostal groups. For reporting purposes

this report refers to groups within 'traditional' denominations and 'other' groups. Groups within the traditional denominations are Church of England, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed Church and Salvation Army. These terms may be inaccurate as some 'other' groups are within well-established traditions, and some 'traditional' groups may be new to a particular area. However, these terms are useful for distinguishing between Christian groups in reporting.

- Growth in the Muslim population is noteworthy, with the growth rate in the borough (256 percent change) far outstripping that for London (66.8 percent) and England (74.5 percent). 14 Muslim groups were identified in the borough, with most of these having formed in the past 20 years. The Muslim population is more concentrated in the west of the borough, although there was growth in all wards between the last two censuses. Most groups serve a local population and the average size of the groups is large (474 regular attendees) and growing. The largest group has a regular attendance of more than 2,500 people. The size, growth and spread of these groups have had, and will continue to place, demands on the planning system.
- The Hindu and Sikh populations are also growing, with both having spatial concentrations in the west of the borough. One Hindu group and one Sikh group meet in the borough, with both reported to have grown steadily in size over the past five years. The Hindu group has no dedicated facility but there is one Sikh Gurdwara in the west of the borough.
- The size of the Baha'i and Jain populations is unclear but is understood to be relatively small. Both of these faiths have groups which meet in the borough.
- Although there are no known Buddhist groups meeting in the borough and no Buddhist facilities, census data suggests that the Buddhist population is also growing.
- The size of the Jewish population declined by 22 percent between 2001 and 2011, and the synagogue which once operated in the borough has now closed.

## Existing Needs

A wide range of needs for space or facilities was identified in the study. There is a need for additional space for faith groups, particularly for Muslim groups and for Christian groups outside the traditional denominations. This need is driven by growing numbers of attendees but also by the expanding range of community activities in which these groups are engaged. The Hindu and Jain groups in the borough also need space; neither of these groups have their own dedicated facility in the borough at the moment.

50 percent of groups contacted through this study who need additional space expressed a preference to purchase or extend an existing building, with only nine percent preferring a new-build facility. While individual groups will need to be contacted for preferences, Christian groups in the traditional denominations and Muslim groups were more likely to prefer sites in residential areas, and often had specific locations in mind. Christian groups outside of the traditional denominations were more likely to have greater flexibility in terms of geographical preferences, with a preference for sites in employment or industrial areas. Further engagement with faith groups is needed to fully understand the geography of needs.



## Likely Future Demand

The study calculated likely future demand by producing ethno-religion population projections and applying fieldwork data on faith facility size to predict future demand to 2050 in spatial units (square metres).

Population projections for each of the main religions up to 2050 were broken down into ethno-religious categories. The methodology aligned ethnic projections (2015 projections from the Greater London Authority) proportionally with religious projections (from the population censuses) to create ethno-religious demographic projections. These were then apportioned to the council's Borough Preferred Option (BPO) demographic figures.

Projections of overall change in religious groups to 2050 show:

- a marked patterns of growth for the Christian and Muslim populations, and also (from a much lower base) for Sikhs and Hindus;
- by 2050 the Christian population is expected to have grown to around 160 percent of 2011 levels (a growth of more than 65,900, to 175,845), and the Muslim population to around 318 percent of 2011 levels (a growth of around 59,700) to 87,048;
- within the Christian group the White British group continues to fall to 2020, then levels off. Other ethnic groups among the Christian population are projected to rise significantly for the foreseeable future, ultimately off-setting the White British trend - the key groups in this regard are the African, Other White and Caribbean Christians;
- the Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups, and to a lesser extent the Other White and Black African groups, explain a large part of the overall Muslim growth trend;
- growth of the Indian ethnic group, and to a lesser extent the Other Asian group, accounts for a sizeable increase to mid-century of Hindus and Sikhs respectively; and
- those of 'No Religion' remain relatively stable to 2050.

With ethno-religious groups identified in this way, a measure of attendance was then used (based on British Social Attitudes Data) to identify the proportions of religious populations who regularly attend places of worship (regular attendance being once a week or more).

This projection was then joined with the calculated median size of principal meeting rooms in purpose-built religious meeting places derived from the fieldwork. This identified future demand in terms of space (square metres) required in 2050. The calculations suggest a need for circa 38,400m<sup>2</sup> additional purpose built principal meeting room floor space by 2050. This is a large amount and reflects the substantial growth planned in the borough by 2050. It also reflects the substantial demand in the borough for religious meeting places.

These calculations can be apportioned to per new households, which gives a measure of principal meeting room faith space required in new major developments. The space requirement calculated is 0.66m<sup>2</sup> per household. This measure can be refined in a Community Needs Strategy for major new developments, which should consider local context to implement the multi-pronged approach to supply recommended.

## Potential Future Supply

The existing need and likely future demand point to a substantial need for additional supply. A multi-pronged approach to meeting needs will be required. This should include:

- retention and intensification of use of existing faith facilities;
- increased site sharing;
- maximising use of community space;
- intensification of use in industrial and employment sites to accommodate faith facilities, where that can be done appropriately; and
- new faith facilities, both conversion of existing buildings as well as in new development.

All of these ways of meeting supply have been part of the mix in terms of meeting demand in recent years and all will be necessary to meet the needs of faith groups in coming years.

## Site Sharing

This project included a particular remit to consider sharing of sites and specifically multi-faith centres.

The study suggests that around 42 percent of the current buildings used by faith groups are shared with other faith groups and 44 percent of the buildings used have scope for further sharing. Opportunities for further sharing need to be maximised. In theory, facilitating further sharing of existing buildings could play a significant role in meeting demand but, in practice, this is likely to be constrained.

The research evidenced that there are a number of sensitivities and practical challenges to site sharing, as well as strong opinions on sharing. Participants had divided opinion on multi-faith site sharing in particular; 43 percent of respondents were not interested in multi-faith sharing. Almost half of respondents were open to some type of shared sites, the largest portion supporting sharing for non-worship uses (such as for community activities). There was more interest in intra-faith sharing (groups within same denominations or faith traditions), rather than multi-faith sharing. There was some support for a 'multi-plex' model of multi-faith sharing which has dedicated spaces for worship, around wider shared spaces. Overall shared sites are very unlikely to accommodate all demand. Requiring groups to share where there is little local support, or without transparent means of allocation and management, can lead to conflict.

There are a number of practical considerations for sharing which need to be addressed in any future sites. Substantial investment, both of time and money, is required for a successful multi-faith space. There is no established best practice for shared religious spaces, and successful sites emerge over long periods of time with strong support from faith groups.

The study identified a basis for developing sharing practices in the borough. This was:

- Build on existing sharing practices, including learning from experiences and developing local expertise.
- Maximise sharing of community sites, including provision of new community sites.
- Apply careful design to address the practical challenges of site sharing.
- Develop the 'multi-plex' model for multi-faith spaces.

## Engagement

Many participants welcomed the opportunity for engagement provided by the interviews, site visits and the scoping workshop. Together this demonstrated a demand for high quality consultation, such as facilitated workshops, or confidential interviews.

There were a number of comments on the quality of consultation undertaken by the council. Some were positive. Others pointed to a need for an improved approach. The study suggests a need for building engagement and trust between faith groups, and between faith groups and council.

The study evidenced concerns over the roles and efficacy of possible collective groups or faith forums. Given these mixed opinions, it is unlikely that a collective group formed under current conditions will be strongly supported by all or a large majority of faith groups. Improved engagement could help to build social and civic networks and improve the conditions for engagement which could lead to a well-supported collected faith group.

The data demonstrates a need for social infrastructure for faith groups, and a strong demand for engagement from some faith groups. This is an opportunity, and a good basis for efforts to improve engagement between faith groups and between the council and faith groups. As faith groups play a fundamental role in wider social cohesion and in the provision of various services in the borough, building these networks could have benefits well beyond faith group attendees.

There is a need to develop the pre-conditions for engagement, creating a better context to support engagement practices between faith groups and between faith groups and the council. Consideration needs to be given to learning from experiences and providing a longer-term and transparent approach to engagement. The Faith Covenant, an existing template for agreements between local authorities and faith groups (<http://www.faithandsociety.org/covenant/>) promoted by the All-Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society, should be considered as the basis for developing a future approach to engagement.

## Recommendations

The report provided 20 recommendations on planning policy, complementary measures, and engagement. Key points are summarised here.

### Planning Policy on Religious Meeting Places

We recommend that the Local Plan set out policy for considering planning applications for religious meeting places. This will replace Policy Advice Note 4 on religious meeting places. This policy should establish that the council has a multi-pronged approach to meeting need for religious sites, including:

- retaining existing sites;
- extension of existing sites;
- promoting sharing;
- maximising use of community (D1) sites; and
- provision of new sites for hire and for purchase.

Planning applications should be considered in terms of how they sequentially meet this multi-pronged approach.

Provision of new faith facilities should be in line with the current and projected need for faith facilities outlined in this study, alongside a wider assessment of need for community facilities. Calculations have been given for faith space needs in major development areas in the emerging local plan. These calculations should form the basis of faith requirements in a Community Needs Strategy for these areas.

Provision of new sites could include shared and leased spaces, but reflecting the changing needs of faith groups over time, there should be provision for ownership or long-term leases.

## Shared Sites

In developing shared sites, the council should note the following points.

- There is some opposition to shared sites, and there are a number of practical difficulties.
- There is greater support for shared community spaces, and more support for intra-faith than multi-faith sharing.
- There are opportunities to learn from existing experiences of site sharing.
- Local groups near future development should be engaged to build local platforms of involvement, should sharing be promoted in particular areas.
- The potential for 'multi-plex' design for shared sites should be explored.

## Engaging Faith Groups in Planning

The council should seek to build the capacity of faith groups to engage effectively in the planning process. This could include:

- providing easier access to information on community facilities (D1 use) and change of use for those looking for sites to hire;
- providing a non-technical introductory guide to planning and property issues;
- promoting this introductory guide, such as through a training session to interested groups;
- ensuring planners are aware of this guide for faith groups, so it is provided to groups when needed; and
- promoting Planning Aid.

## Directory of Community Space

The council should provide and maintain a directory of facilities suitable for use by faith groups, including existing facilities with potential for further sharing community facilities, commercial facilities (e.g. hotels, conference/banqueting facilities) and vacant community space. Data from this study provides the starting point for this.

The study has identified significant potential for further use of community space by faith groups, including some surplus sites which may be suitable for conversion to a dedicated faith facility. Providing and maintaining a directory of suitable facilities is good practice in faith planning. This directory will be needed to meet the council's goal of maximising use of shared and community spaces.

## Industrial Areas

The council should give consideration to specific policy provision for the development of faith facilities in employment and industrial areas, where this can be achieved without the loss of employment or industrial space. This would be intensification of use in these areas (as opposed to displacement of employment and industrial uses). The development would also need to be subject to key issues/ constraints being addressed, such as access, safety, parking and noise, to avoid any conflicts between uses.

## Cross-Boundary Approach

A cross-boundary approach to planning for the provision of faith facilities should be promoted. Dialogue with neighbouring boroughs will be needed, and it is likely that the GLA will need to lead these discussions.

## Experiences of Social Infrastructure in New Developments

The council should seek to develop knowledge of providing faith facilities and social infrastructure in new developments. Experiences in the current Barking Riverside multi-faith centre should be considered in particular to improve future provision of sites. This should include clarification provided to faith groups and residents on the provision of faith sites within future phases of new development. There is the opportunity to learn from experiences which could be important given the scale of development proposed.

## Engagement and Faith Groups

The council should seek opportunities for improving engagement with faith groups. This should make use of good practice resources. This should consider:

- making a formal commitment through the adoption of the 'Faith Covenant';
- maximising inclusion, transparency, and outcomes;
- developing a longer-term strategy to engagement; and
- developing a strategy for practical challenges in engaging with faith groups (contact methods, group changes, etc.).

The council should also seek to build the knowledge and understanding of religious matters and planning within the council, such as through expanded engagement work.

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# 1 Introduction

This report sets out the findings and recommendations from a 2017 study of faith groups, and the meeting places these groups use, in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. The planning department in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham procured the study. CAG delivered the study, in consortium with Dr. Richard Gale (Cardiff University), Dr. Andrew Rogers (University of Roehampton), and Land Use Consultants (LUC). The study findings will form part of the evidence base for the borough's new Local Plan. Recommendations are also provided on how the council engages with faith groups.

## 1.1 Need for the study

The fundamental driver for the study was the major demographic shift which have taken place within Barking and Dagenham borough over recent decades. The borough has experienced a substantial rate of population growth since the 2001 census, growing from 163,944 residents in 2001 to 201,979 in 2015 (Office of National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimate). Population growth is projected to continue with the Greater London Authority (GLA) predicting a population of 290,417 for Barking and Dagenham in 2050 (GLA 2016-based population projections, central trend). There are currently plans to build over 50,000 homes in the borough by 2030.

This population growth is also notably diverse in social and cultural characteristics. Of local authorities in England and Wales, Barking and Dagenham had the fifth largest growth in residents born outside of the UK and Ireland between 2001 and 2011 (333.7 percent). The 2011 census recorded a population of 49.5 percent White British ethnicity in the borough. The largest non-white British ethnicities were Black 19.9 percent, Asian 15.9 percent and White Other 7.8 percent. 72 different non-English languages were recorded in the 2011 census as the main language in the household.

This diversity is also reflected in terms of religion, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Religious affiliations, 2001-2011

	Barking and Dagenham						London	England
	2001	%	2011	%	Change 2001-2011	% change	% change, 2001-2011	% change, 2001-2011
<b>Christian</b>	113,111	69.0	104,101	56.0	-9,010	-8.0	-5.2	-10.7
<b>Buddhist</b>	366	0.2	842	0.5	476	130.1	51.1	71.6
<b>Hindu</b>	1,867	1.1	4,464	2.4	2,597	139.1	40.9	47.4
<b>Jewish</b>	547	0.3	425	0.2	-122	-22.3	-0.8	1.4
<b>Muslim</b>	7,148	4.4	25,520	13.7	18,372	257.0	66.8	74.5
<b>Sikh</b>	1,754	1.1	2,952	1.6	1,198	68.3	21.0	28.4
<b>Other religion</b>	308	0.2	533	0.3	225	73.1	31.2	58.4
<b>Religion of any type</b>	125,101	76.3	138,837	74.7	13,736	10.9	6.8	-5.5
<b>No religion</b>	25,075	15.3	35,106	18.9	10,031	40.0	49.9	82.9
<b>Religion not stated</b>	13,768	8.4	11,968	6.4	-1,800	-13.1	11.5	0.7
<b>Total</b>	163,944	100	185,911	100	21,967	13.4	-	-

Source: 2001 and 2011 Censuses

The 2011 census data is now over six years old, and current profiles of faith groups are provided in Section 4. However, the census provides the most comprehensive dataset available. Importantly, it allows for comparison over time. Table 1 shows an overall decline in the number of Christians between 2001 and 2011, but significant growth in the numbers of Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The growth in the number of Muslims is particularly large, with the percentage of growth in Barking and Dagenham (257 percent) far outstripping that for London (66.8%) and for England (74.5%).

The censuses also show a 40 percent increase in residents with 'no religion' (10,031 additional residents), and a decrease of 13.1 percent of those who did not state a religious identity. This means that more Barking and Dagenham residents stated a religious preference in 2011, either identifying with a religion or 'no religion'. In the 2011 Census 74.7 percent of Barking and Dagenham residents identified with a religion, an increase of 13,736 people from 2001.

Significant growth in some Christian groups is masked by the census figures. In particular, there was strong growth in the African Christian community. Growth in the African Christian community in London across the 2001-11 Censuses was 48 percent: growth was positive in 29 out of 33 boroughs and nine boroughs saw growth over 100 percent. Barking and Dagenham had the highest percentage of African Christians of any local authority in England and Wales in the 2011 census (12.29 percent) and the seventh highest population of African Christians in England and Wales (22,842). African Christian growth in Barking and Dagenham was 307 percent over 2001-11 censuses, where the median for England and Wales was 244 percent. For the 17 local authorities with African Christian populations over 10,000, Barking and Dagenham had the fifth highest growth rate in this population.

The London Church census 2012 (Brierley, 2015) identifies 79 Christian places of worship in Barking and Dagenham, including 23 Pentecostal churches. The London Church census identifies a 77 percent growth in the number of Pentecostal congregations in the borough over 2005-12, from 13 to 23, which is the fifth highest such growth rate for London boroughs.<sup>1</sup> Brierley (2015) identifies trends for church attendance in Barking and Dagenham as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Change in church attendance (across all churches) in Barking and Dagenham**

Years	Percentage growth
1989-1998	-17%
1998-2005	-13%
2005-2012	+31%

Source: Brierley, P., 2015, *UK Church Statistics 2: 2010-2020*, Tonbridge: ADBC.

These data sources under count the number of Christian places of worship in Barking and Dagenham; this study identified 109 Christian groups, including 70 groups outside the traditional Christian denominations (See Chapter 4).

These demographic, social and cultural changes have resulted in the growth of existing religious meeting places and the demand for new religious meeting places. The planning system mediates between demand for religious meeting places and impacts associated with these developments such as traffic, noise and land use changes.

<sup>1</sup> There is a notable distinction in the data collected within Christian groups. The term Christian includes groups in more established 'traditional' denominations such as Church of England, Methodists, Baptists and Catholics, as well as newer groups such as African Christian and other Pentecostal groups. For reporting purposes this report refers to groups within 'traditional' denominations and 'other' groups. Groups within the traditional denominations are Church of England, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed Church and Salvation Army. This is done with the knowledge that these are inaccurate terms as some 'other' groups are within well-established traditions, and some 'traditional' groups may be new to a particular area. However, they are useful for the purposes of the analysis in this study for distinguishing, in general terms, between groups which are more established in Barking and Dagenham, and those which are more recent.

The growth of diverse needs over a relatively short period of time in a location with limited previous history of diversity has generated challenges. There is a need for improved engagement between the council and local religious groups to ensure that development needs are met and to promote the council's cohesion work more generally.

The study was also driven by the requirements of national planning policy. One of the core planning principles set out in paragraph 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is to *'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs'*. As the council has recognised in commissioning this study, this can only be achieved if there is an evidence-based understanding of current provision of such facilities and services, and current and future needs for such facilities and services. The NPPF is clear about the requirement for such evidence. Paragraph 158 states:

*'Each local planning authority should ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area.'*

The absence of such evidence in relation to religious facilities in Barking and Dagenham was making it difficult to deal with requests for new religious facilities in the Development Control process.

Furthermore, in the absence of robust evidence regarding the needs of the Borough's religious groups and subsequent policy which addresses these needs, there was a risk of new developments lacking or misallocating religious facilities. This study was therefore intended to play a critical role in informing the handling of future development proposals and the formulation of future policy. The information generated by the study would also be valuable in informing wider council policy on engagement with religious groups.

## 1.2 Objectives of the study

The principal objectives of the study were to:

1. develop profiles of Barking and Dagenham's principal faith communities;
2. carry out an audit of existing places of worship and other faith facilities; and
3. carry out a needs assessment of faith facilities, taking into account existing and projected future needs.

In addition, it was intended that the methods, evidence and outputs would contribute to wider outcomes for the borough, including:

4. improved understanding, trust and cooperation between the council, religious groups and other stakeholders;
5. better planning for religious groups; and
6. enabling religious groups to contribute to community cohesion, wellbeing and service provision.

## 1.3 Structure of the report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- section 2 explains the methodology of the study;
- section 3 outlines the current policy context;
- section 4 sets out a profile of faith groups in the borough based on census data and the data gathered in the course of the study;
- section 5 sets out an assessment of the facilities-related needs of faith groups in the borough, along with an assessment of the principal opportunities for these needs to be met;
- section 6 sets out the findings from the study regarding current approaches to engagement with faith groups and the opportunities for improving this engagement; and
- section 7 provides our conclusions and recommendations.

# 2 Methodology

## 2.1 Overview of methods

Table 3 provides an overview of the principal methods used to generate the evidence necessary for the study.

Table 3: Methods and evidence generated

Principal methods	Evidence generated			
	Profile of religious communities	Audit of current facilities	Assessment of gaps, issues and future needs	Identification of opportunities for meeting needs
<b>Review of secondary data sources on composition of religious communities</b>				
Review of census data on ethnicity and religion.	Ward level data on ethnicity and percent of population in different religious groups.		'Theoretical' indication of demand across the different religions.	
Review of other secondary data sources, e.g. London Church census 2012, ONS estimates and GLA projections data on population and household growth.	Further data on composition of religious communities and ethnic groupings, general population growth by ward.		'Theoretical' indication of demand across the different religions by ward.	
<b>Review of local planning application data</b>				
Review of previous planning applications for new religious facilities.		Highlighted religious facilities which have recently been granted permission.	Provided an indication of demand for the different types of facilities and key planning issues to be addressed.	Highlighted permissions granted which have not been taken forward
Review of applications to assess loss of previous religious facilities.		Highlighted trends in the loss of religious facilities.	Added to evidence base in terms of need for facilities.	Added to evidence base in terms of need for facilities.
<b>Review of secondary data on existing or planned facilities</b>				
Review internet databases of religious facilities, e.g. FindaChurch, GoogleMaps, mosquedirectory.co.uk, sikhwiki.org, National Council of Hindu Temples UK, plus any others which could be sourced from the council or local networks .	Generated data to feed into the profiles.	Generated data to complement council-held preliminary list of all existing religious facilities in the area.	Highlighted absence or low numbers of some facilities.	
Review of current planning policies and allocations.			Outlined current framework for meeting needs for new facilities and any existing planned provision.	Highlighted any existing planned provision and other opportunities, including potential shared facilities.

Principal methods	Evidence generated			
	Profile of religious communities	Audit of current facilities	Assessment of gaps, issues and future needs	Identification of opportunities for meeting needs
Review planning framework including Local Plan review, emerging masterplans, policies in neighbouring Borough's and London-wide policy, including the SPGs on Social Infrastructure (2015) and Equality & Diversity (2007).			Outlined provision made for religious facilities, and an indication of key issues.	Highlighted existing planned provision and other opportunities, including within masterplan areas.
Review of current D1 availability.				Provided data on existing D1 space which might be usable by religious groups.
<b>Engagement and primary data collection</b>				
Scoping workshop with local religious group representatives.	Allowed testing of preliminary information gathered with regard to profiles, plus qualitative discussion about further disaggregation in terms of age, gender, location etc.	Incorporated qualitative discussion of current facilities, including issues such as quality and capacity. Allowed identification of previously unknown sites and those no longer in use.	Incorporated facilitated discussion of current gaps and likely future needs.	Incorporated facilitated discussion of existing and potential future opportunities for new facilities, including through shared facilities and the parameters surrounding such arrangements.
Interviews with religious group representatives and other members of these groups.	Allowed in-depth follow-up discussions on composition of the different religious groups.	Allowed in-depth follow-up discussions on location, quantity and quality of existing facilities.	Allowed in-depth follow-up discussions on current gaps and likely future needs.	Allowed in-depth follow-up discussions on existing and potential future opportunities for new facilities.
Survey of religious group representatives.	Incorporated questions on composition of the different religious groups.	Incorporated questions on location, quantity and quality of existing facilities.	Incorporated questions on current gaps and likely future needs.	Incorporated questions on existing and potential future opportunities for new facilities.
Site visits to all known facilities.	Contributed to refinement of database of groups through identifying sites no longer in use by faith groups.	Allowed assessment of current facilities in terms of size, suitability etc.	Allowed assessment of key issues relating to current facilities.	Allowed assessment of potential for extension of current facilities.
<i>(Future) Report launch workshop with local religious group representatives.</i>	<i>Will allow presentation of information on composition of the different religious groups.</i>	<i>Will allow presentation of findings on location, quantity and quality of existing facilities.</i>	<i>Will allow presentation of findings on current gaps and likely future needs.</i>	<i>Will allow presentation of findings on existing and potential future opportunities for new facilities, including shared facilities and the parameters surrounding such arrangements.</i>

Principal methods	Evidence generated			
	Profile of religious communities	Audit of current facilities	Assessment of gaps, issues and future needs	Identification of opportunities for meeting needs
<b>Analysis and reporting</b>				
GIS mapping of religious communities, facilities and key areas of deficiency.	Analysis and visual representation of current geographic spread of religious groups.	Analysis and visual representation of current provision.	By overlaying current provision on the geographic spread of religious groups we have identified key gaps in provision.	Analysis of possibilities for expansion.
Analysis, reporting and testing with the council.	Presentation, testing and refinement of religious community profiles.	Presentation, testing and refinement of audit.	Presentation, testing and refinement of conclusions regarding current gaps and likely future needs.	Presentation, testing and refinement of conclusions regarding opportunities for new facilities, including shared facilities and the parameters surrounding such arrangements.

## 2.2 Fieldwork and response rates

### 2.2.1 Survey and interviews

The survey of faith group representatives was a key element of the fieldwork. The questions in the main survey covered the following topics:

- individual contact details;
- group details – faith, length of time in the borough, travel patterns, size and growth/decline;
- meetings and activities held;
- details of main building used;
- details of additional buildings used;
- need for additional buildings or facilities; and
- views/preferences in relation to the provision of new facilities, including sharing.

The survey was available online, with invitations to respond sent out via email and post as in Table 4. Contact details were constantly updated as new data was gathered.

The survey was also completed via face-to-face interviews with some faith group representatives. Where face-to-face interviews took place, additional data was collected on the following topics:

- use of previous buildings;
- views on the planning system;



- views on the council's planning advice note for religious groups; and
- views on improving engagement between the council and faith groups.

In order to boost response rates, all non-respondents to the main survey were telephoned and asked to complete a shortened version of the survey via telephone, referred to here as the 'short survey'. The shortened survey covered most of the same broad topics as the main survey, but in less detail. No questions were included on views or preferences in relation to the provision of new facilities.

### 2.2.2 Approach to participant recruitment for survey and interviews

Participants were identified through an existing contact list provided by the council, publicly available information, and referrals (a recruitment method known as 'snowballing' in social research).

The approach to participant recruitment was to seek the widest response possible from faith groups. An added stage of data collection was conducted from the original scope to maximise participations. During the second stage of data collection, Muslim and Christian groups outside of the traditional denominations (such as the newer Pentecostal groups) were targeted on request of the council.

A staged approach to participant recruitment was undertaken, which is summarised in the following table. This approach was aimed at maximising recruitment through use of varying contact methods, including posted letters, email, phone calls, and in-person recruitment. These different techniques were used at multiple stages as outlined below. The recruitment approach was reviewed on an on-going basis and was adjusted as necessary to widen participation.

**Table 4: Participant recruitment approach**

Timing	Action
March 2017	Email and posted letter invitation to survey and invitation to scoping workshop. Interviews commenced. Site assessments commenced. Formation of stakeholder group and first meeting. Reminder sent for survey and scoping workshop via email (twice) and hard copy (once).
April 2017	Scoping Workshop held 4/4/2017.
May 2017	Second round of data collection determined to be needed, addition of 'short survey' to facilitate participations. Email reminder to participate in survey sent. Second round of interviews. Telephone calls to all organisations with telephone contact details. At minimum three sets of phone calls at different times of day, conducted from mid-May to the end of June.
June 2017	Hard copy reminder to participate in survey.
July 2017	Completion of site assessments (staged to wait until phone calls were completed, so as to be based on most accurate contact list). Some further participant contact made as data was analysed, to address data gaps.

Survey participant recruitment continued until the data obtained was considered to be sufficient for the needs calculation (through the survey, interviews and short survey).

The qualitative data from the interviews was analysed thematically. A theoretical sampling approach was used to target participants, seeking to create thematic categories related to the research questions, provide variability of information, and to identify relationships between categories and participants' understanding. Applying good practice for qualitative research, we aimed to reach 'saturation point', at

which we were confident that additional interviews would not generate significant new insights. ‘Saturation’ was considered to be the point at which the categories were fully accounted for, where relationships between categories and participants’ understandings had been tested, and where outcomes were therefore emerging. There was a distinct decline in the amount and quality of new information created by interviews as research progressed, indicating that ‘saturation’ was being approached.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.2.3 Response Rates

The overall response rates to the surveys and interviews are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Survey and interviews – response rates by religion

Religion	No. of known* groups in Barking & Dagenham	No. of groups who responded to the survey or were interviewed	Response rate
Baha'i	0	0	0%
Buddhist	0	0	0%
Christian	109	54	50%
Hindu	1	1	100%
Jain	1	1	100%
Jewish	0	0	0%
Muslim	14	12	86%
Sikh	1	1	100%
Jehovah's Witness	2	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	128	69	54%

\*Known groups are groups for which evidence was obtained that they continue to operate in the area. This evidence could include participation in the study, an operational phone line, a webpage, or an in-person visit.

Responses included 50 survey responses, 27 interviews, and 13 short survey responses. Some participating organisations completed multiple types of responses, so the total number of participants is less than the number of responses of some kind (90). Multiple responses were rationalised so as not to double count any participants.

The interview data provided the most detailed insights into experiences, so participant details are provided below. It should be appreciated that survey participants were asked some open-ended questions about their experiences (such as experiences of engagement with the council) which were also considered, but not all participants completed these questions so their characteristics are not included within Figure 1.

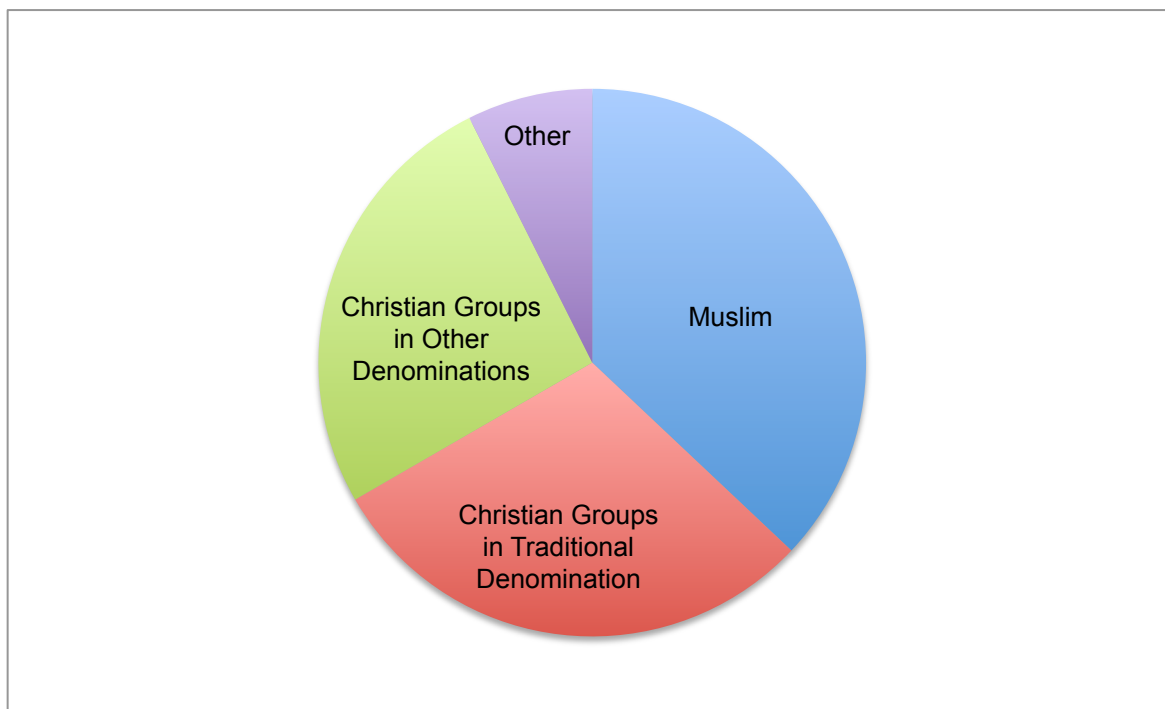
<sup>2</sup> Sources for this approach included:

Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. 2005. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Third Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

O'Reilly, Michelle, and Nicola Parker. 2012. "Unsatisfactory Saturation": A Critical Exploration of the Notion of Saturated Sample Sizes in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Research*, May.

Guest, Greg, Arwen Bunce, and Laura Johnson. 2006. "How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability." *Field Methods* 18 (1): 59–82.

Figure 1: Interview participants (Sample size = 27)



Response rates to the survey and to the interviews are considered to be suitably robust for the scope of the project.

#### 2.2.4 Public events

Two public events with faith groups were included in this study. Details on these events are provided in Appendices to evidence the comments received from participants. The first was a scoping workshop, which was held in April 2017. Details are provided on the scoping workshop in appendix A. A second public event, the report launch and workshop, will be held in the Autumn 2017 to present results. Details on this report will be provided in appendix B, once the event is complete.

#### 2.2.5 Steering group

A stakeholder steering group was established to provide another means of engaging with faith groups, so as to help steer the study through the provision of guidance and advice, extend the reach of the study through publicising it amongst faith groups, provide a sounding board for the project team on key issues arising, and provide a mechanism for interested groups to learn more about the study. The project team had formed similar steering groups on other faith planning studies, and sought to apply the same approach in this study. Members were identified, terms of reference circulated, and a meeting held in March 2017 with a small number of attendees. Due to lack of interest in that meeting, no further meetings were held before completion of the draft report. Lines of communication between the study groups and steering group members remained open, and the council has pursued improved engagement with faith groups during the course of the study.

#### 2.2.6 Data analysis

Data from the surveys, interviews and workshop was analysed in excel software. This included quantitative analysis and qualitative thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis involves identifying consistent data themes from qualitative data. The interviews, survey and scoping workshop notes were collected as qualitative data representing individual or organisational perspectives. These perspectives were then considered collectively in terms of the research questions and scope of the study to identify key themes and outcomes.

Geographic information system software was used for the spatial analysis. It should be noted that the maps provided in Section 4 present the data collected as well as additional considerations from the council regarding areas for regeneration.

## 2.2.7 Site visits

The purpose of site assessments was to review the existing supply of faith facilities in Barking and Dagenham. This included quantification of current supply in terms of the number of facilities and estimated floorspace, as well as the range of activities at each facility, scope for expansion and details of building fabric.

### 2.2.7.1 Desktop assessment

GIS (Geographic Information Systems) was used to map the locations of known faith facilities, which were identified through liaison with the council and through engagement work with local faith groups. Where it was not possible to measure the floor space of faith facilities onsite, the estimated area being used was recorded and measured using GIS.

For each identified facility, details such as its address and the name of the group or groups who use it were recorded. Data on the services that each facility provided (both faith-related and non-faith-related) were collected from reviewing the websites for each facility or the group(s) that use the facility. This information was recorded in the database of site and engagement data.

### 2.2.7.2 Site visits

Site visits constituted a key part of this study as they present an opportunity to collect data that cannot be collected from desktop assessments. In particular, site visits aimed to collect information on whether the site is operational, the size of the site and other issues regarding the building itself or its context. Site visits also presented an opportunity to identify faith facilities not previously identified through information from the council or from engagement work where they were found. It was not within the site assessment team's scope of works to do detailed searches for new places of worship (such as on-the-ground street by street mapping) but new facilities were noted where possible.

Site visits were conducted between March and July 2017. Prior to site visits being carried out, the locations of all known faith facilities in Barking and Dagenham were mapped using GIS, to allow for route planning. The categories of information collected during site visits are presented in Table 6. Surveyors attempted to gain access to the building with permission wherever possible, as some data could only be collected from an interior assessment. Where site access was not possible, assessments were made from adjacent public spaces. All data collected was added to the database of site and engagement data.

Table 6: Site assessment data fields

Field/Question
Exterior assessment
Does site appear operational as a faith facility?
Notes about site boundary
Name (if changed)
Denomination (if changed)
Type of building (e.g. purpose-built)

Approximate age of building
Dedicated parking?
Estimated number of parking spaces
On street parking?
Primary surrounding land use
Condition of building
Issues relating to parking, access and building fabric
Scope to extend building within site
Interior assessment (if access can be gained)
Floor space estimate of principal meeting space
Evidence of use by other faith groups
Description of ancillary meeting space
Other
Uses of building apart from faith

Size (in terms of floor space) of the principal meeting space was estimated for each venue. Where access could be gained to the interior of a faith facility, an approximate measurement of the principal meeting space was taken. For purpose-built faith facilities, where access could not be gained, it was assumed that the main meeting space comprised approximately 70 percent of the building footprint. This percentage was based on buildings where we were able to gain access, as 30 percent of the space generally consisted of corridors, toilets, kitchens, ancillary meeting spaces, offices etc. We have applied this rule to non-purpose-built faith facilities where appropriate. In some cases, this was clearly not appropriate, such as where the faith facility undoubtedly only constitutes a smaller part of the building. In these cases, the part of the building thought to be used was marked on a map onsite, and then the area of this space was measured using GIS.

A total of 140 sites were visited, 18 did not appear to be operational and it was unclear whether seven sites were operational. 100 percent of the sites thought to be operational were visited (115). Some previously unknown sites were also identified (included in the figure of 140).

## 2.3 Case studies

Case studies of shared religious facilities are provided in the Needs/Opportunities assessment in section 5. These were selected on the basis of their relevance to the study.

## 2.4 Limitations of the study

This study, as with all social research, is limited by the methodology. Some key considerations on the limitations of the study are provided here.

There was no open publicity about the study, so all participants were to some degree already involved in the social networks or civil society of the borough. This approach to participant recruitment means that groups that were unknown to existing social networks or civil society would not have been identified for participation (such as some new groups).

To maximise participation a second round of fieldwork was conducted. This lengthened the fieldwork stage.

Section 4 provides a profile of the various faith groups in the borough, drawing on data from this study as well as census data and other available sources. This provides a comparison of different groups by denomination and type. In discussing the groups, it should be appreciated that the data samples for groups are very different sizes: for example, there are 109 known Christian groups, 14 known Muslim groups, and one Hindu group.

There are multiple sources of evidence that point to the existence of new and/or transient groups. Over 30 organisations which previously existed in the area were removed from the contact list provided by the council as the study team did not find any evidence that they continued to operate in the area. In parallel, the site assessment work identified a number of new faith groups that were unknown until that point. One participant described a process of new groups being set up as 'planting churches', wherein an established faith group at maximum space capacity decides to establish a new faith facility at another location. Finally, there is demographic evidence of reasonably high population churn in the borough (population leaving as well as entering the borough), which would be reflected in faith group numbers as well.<sup>3</sup> Together these data sources illustrate the changing nature of faith groups in the borough. Attempts were made to update data sources for this study: however the extent of the churn in faith groups needs to be considered. It would provide limitations for the accuracy of the contact list produced.

The study captures a particular period, from March through to early July 2017. The situation will be constantly fluctuating over time, as illustrated by the number of groups added to and removed from the contact list provided by the council.

English political events over the first half of 2017, particularly the London Bridge attack, led to an increased interest by the council in engaging with faith groups. As a result, the council began a programme of engagement with faith groups before this study was completed, and thus did not draw fully on the outcomes of this study from the beginning of that engagement work. Preferably the council's approach to future engagement with faith groups would be on the basis of the recommendations of this report. However, at the time there was a unique and urgent need for engagement with faith groups. To integrate the outcomes from this study as soon as possible, early results were provided to the council and ways to integrate this study with the parallel engagement work were pursued.

## 2.5 Ethics and anonymity

The project was conducted in line with good ethical practice. Consent to participate was verbally gained for interview participants, as well as any sites internally visited during the site assessment. Survey and workshop respondents were considered to consent by virtue of their participation in these data collection activities.

Anonymity was offered to all participants, and participants' requests have been adhered to. Where anonymity was requested, the data has been used for the purposes of this report but the raw data (and identifiers) will not be shared beyond the research team. To allow for anonymity whilst maintaining the usefulness of the database, participants in the survey and interviews were asked at a series of stages whether they would like to keep the data confidential. This allowed participants to release some data to the council (such as current site needs), but also request confidentiality for other questions (such as perspectives on engagement).

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<sup>3</sup> See for example ONS 'Net internal and international migration, and Natural change' data set for 2015, at <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/net-migration-and-natural-change-region>; accessed 20/7/17.

The use of data has been communicated to participants. Information sheets and contact details for the study team were provided to participants or interested members of the public, and a dedicated email and telephone were used to provide a single point of contact for the project.

# 3 Policy context

## 3.1 Current policy context

### 3.1.1 Notes on wording

Various planning policy and guidance documents refer to places of worship, faith facilities and religious meeting places. The text below uses whichever term is used in the document, and relevant part of that document, being discussed.

Policy and guidance documents refer to social infrastructure, community infrastructure and community facilities. These terms are taken to be interchangeable and the Barking and Dagenham Core Strategy glossary states that these include religious meeting places, community centres, halls and meeting rooms, public libraries, public sports and leisure facilities as well as medical and policing facilities. It has been assumed that where 'social infrastructure', 'community facilities' are referred to in other documents of the Barking and Dagenham Local Development Framework (LDF), the definition is the same as that given in the Core Strategy (note the term 'community infrastructure' is not used in any of the Barking and Dagenham LDF documents).

### 3.1.2 National Policy

The primary document for planning policy in England is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). There are three specific references to 'places of worship' in the NPPF and these are in the context of providing community facilities. Paragraph 28 refers to the provision of places of worship in villages. More generally, paragraph 70 states that planning policies should 'plan positively for the provision and use of... community facilities', such as places of worship and with regard to local plan making, whilst paragraph 171 states that local planning authorities should work to understand the health status and needs of the population, including needs relating to places of worship.

### 3.1.3 London-wide policy

#### 3.1.3.1 London Plan

The London Plan is a spatial development strategy that sets out the overall strategic plan for London, including setting the framework for the development and use of land in London. Local Plans of the boroughs of London (and the City of London Corporation) must be in general conformity with the London Plan.

The London Plan primarily considers places of worship alongside other social infrastructure. Policy 3.16 of the London Plan recognises that London requires additional and enhanced social infrastructure, including places of worship. This policy supports provision of social infrastructure, resists loss of this (including by promoting re-use for other community uses) and encourages multiple uses of premises. It states that such infrastructure should be accessible to all and accessible by sustainable modes of transport. This policy also encourages cross-boundary approaches to delivering social infrastructure. The supporting text encourages additional use or reuse of places of worship to accommodate use by other traditions, faiths and/or wider community functions.

#### 3.1.3.2 Social Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

The SPG provides guidance with regards to social infrastructure considerations in planning, aimed at a range of interested parties, including local authorities and developers. Implementation point 7 ('Community Facilities') advises that boroughs maintain an up to date list of local demand for community



facilities, encourage local groups to identify and prioritise their needs for facilities, engage with proposals that include new facilities and encourage registration of community facilities as assets of community value.

### 3.1.3.3 Planning for Equality and Diversity in London SPG

This SPG sets out principles to guide planning for equality in London and explores how spatial planning issues can impact upon equality and diversity. The SPG sets out spatial planning issues with regards to faith, including the need for specialised service provision, including places of worship. SPG Implementation Point 4.5c ('Supporting places of worship') advises boroughs to identify significant clusters of faith groups and identify sites that will encourage provision of suitable faith facilities. It also advises that, where appropriate, multi-denomination places of worship should be encouraged and serve as wider community facilities.

## 3.1.4 Borough-wide policy

### 3.1.4.1 Core Strategy

'Planning for the future of Barking and Dagenham: Core Strategy' was adopted in July 2010 and is the primary planning policy document in the Borough. It is part of a suite of documents that make up the Local Development Framework (LDF), which together form the statutory planning framework for the borough. The Core Strategy sets out a vision and objectives for the future of Barking and Dagenham and sets the framework for future land use in the borough. Strategic Objective 2 of the Core Strategy is to ensure development and growth helps to reduce inequalities and increase community cohesion through provision of social infrastructure. Again, places of worship are generally referred to collectively with other social infrastructure.

Policies CM1 and CM2 require development to deliver new social infrastructure, to meet the needs of new and existing communities. The Core Strategy contains a specific policy regarding social infrastructure to meet community needs, Policy CC2. Policy CC2 supports proposals that protect, retain or enhance existing community facilities, which could include faith facilities, or provide additional facilities. This policy also requires that facilities are accessible to all and accessible by sustainable modes of transport. The policy promotes new community facilities to be brought forward through mixed-use developments and close to the communities they serve. The policy also supports dual use of community facilities, particularly for schools.

In addition, the Core Strategy includes a number of policies and criteria regarding the location, layout and design of new development.

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham is in the process of preparing a Local Plan, which, when adopted, will replace the current LDF.

### 3.1.4.2 Religious Meeting Places Planning Advice Note 4 (2012 update)

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham updated its Religious Meeting Places Planning Advice Note in 2012. This note provides guidance for those making planning applications for religious meeting places in the borough. It identifies noise, car parking and traffic as the main potential impacts associated with religious meeting places.

The Planning Advice Note (PAN) states that preferred locations for religious meeting places are those easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, particularly in town or district centres, as these generally have higher levels of accessibility, and are in close proximity to the community they serve. The note also emphasises the need for consideration of the proportion of non-retail uses allowed in shopping frontages.

The note also requires religious meeting places to be accessible to enter, including disability access. The note makes it clear that religious meeting places will generally not be permitted in employment or industrial areas, particularly retail warehouse parks, except in exceptional circumstances where the site can be demonstrated to meet a number of criteria, set out in the note.

The note encourages faith groups to use existing premises that are under-used or vacant at certain times, including:

- underused existing religious meeting places;
- vacant buildings in retail parks;
- community halls;
- schools, colleges and public libraries; and
- other public venues (e.g. theatres and public houses).

It identifies two sites where it will look favourably on proposals for religious meeting places, South Dagenham West (SSA SM2) and South Dagenham East (SSA SM4). These are also specified in the Site Specific Allocations (SSA) DPD (see below).

The Barking and Dagenham website states that Planning Advice Notes do not have to be followed, but whether applicants have followed the advice will be considered in deciding planning applications. Participant's experiences of engagement with the planning system are discussed in section 6.1

### 3.1.4.3 Previous versions of PAN 4

Previous versions of the PAN are summarised here as they provide context for policy decisions on religious meeting places.

On 12 June 2007 Cabinet agreed a Planning Advice Note on Religious Meeting Places. This was revised on 28 September 2010. The revisions to the guidance introduced more clarity on what were considered to be the preferred locations for religious meeting places. This established greater flexibility for the location of religious meeting places within employment areas and identifies four locations where applications for religious meeting places were to be dealt with favourably:

- Thames Road within the River Road Employment Area;
- South Dagenham West (SSA SM2);
- South Dagenham East (SSA SM4); and
- Ripple Road within the Rippleside Employment Area.

On 4 October 2011 the Local Development Framework Steering Group reviewed the revised 2010 PAN. This was in response to evidence about the adverse impact the area specific guidance was having on rent levels for business premises with these areas, the latest data on vacancy levels and concerns expressed from local businesses in response to recent planning applications on Thames Road and Wantz Road.

The Group concluded that the preferred locations of Thames Road and the Rippleside Commercial Area should be removed from the guidance and industrial sites safeguarded for industrial uses only. This led to the revised PAN 4 (2012).

The Group also recommended that live applications for religious meeting places in designated industrial sites were approved in principle and then industrial sites safeguarded for industrial uses (B1(b) (c), B2 and B8 uses) and other uses not allowed within them at ground floor level.

#### 3.1.4.4 Borough Wide Development Policies Development Plan Document (DPD)

This DPD was adopted in 2011 as part of the LDF and contains detailed development management policies that build on the Core Strategy. Policy BC6 states that loss of community facilities will only be permitted where a new facility is provided, the facility is relocated or the facility is no longer needed. This DPD also restricts loss of office space (although not directly linked to faith facilities) and retail. In addition, the DPD includes a number of policies and criteria regarding the location, layout and design of new development.

#### 3.1.4.5 Site Specific Allocations DPD

This DPD was adopted in 2010 as part of the LDF and identifies specific sites for development within the Borough. This document identifies a number of sites that may be suitable for development of faith facilities. The DPD identifies potential for community uses, including faith facilities, at allocations SSA SM1: Barking Riverside, SSA SM2: South Dagenham West and Dagenham Leisure Park, SSA SM3: Barking Rugby Club and Goresbrook Leisure Centre, and SSA SM5: Sanfoi Aventis Site 2. Sites SSA SC3: Japan Road Community Centre and SSA SC4: Whalebone Lane South are allocated for community uses. In particular, the DPD states that site SSA SC4 is suitable for religious meeting places to meet the needs of the borough's faith groups.

All four stages of Barking Riverside (allocations SS SC8A, SS SC8B, SS SC8C and SS SC8D) include provision of a place of worship, leading to allocation of four places of worship at Barking Riverside. One of these is allocated in the DPD for shared use by the Salvation Army, the Methodist Church and the Church of England (stage 1; SS SC8A). No user has been identified for stages 2, 2 and 4 of the scheme. The DPD states that the faith forum will determine the user for these places of worship. The first of these places of worship, Rivergate Church, is operational and managed by the Salvation Army. Stages 2, 3 and 4 of the scheme have not yet been completed. We understand that a revised S106 agreement has now been agreed, which specifies all future facilities as multi-faith.

#### 3.1.4.6 Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP)

This AAP was adopted in 2011 as part of the LDF and provides the planning framework for areas in and around Barking Town Centre. Policy BTC15 of the AAP states that the council will work with other bodies to enable provision of suitable community facilities. The supporting text refers to Policy CC3 of the Core Strategy and the Planning Advice Note 4 for further details.

### 3.1.5 Conclusions

There are a number of common themes and messages regarding faith facilities and faith communities at national, regional and local level. These include a recognition of the role social and community infrastructure, including faith facilities, plays in creating cohesive communities and that there is existing demand for such infrastructure in the Borough and London as a whole. However, many policies do not discuss faith facilities separately from other social and community infrastructure.

The recognised demand for social infrastructure has resulted in policies to protect and retain community facilities and for development to provide or contribute to new and enhanced facilities. Policies at all levels also require community facilities, including faith facilities, to be accessible to everyone, including the elderly and disabled, and to have good levels of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport.

The policies and guidance reviewed also promote shared use of facilities, including use of other community facilities, such as schools and community centres, for use by faith groups and encouraging

multi-faith or multi-denomination faith facilities. Policies also encourage faith facilities to provide space for wider community activities, which may not necessarily be faith-related.

Borough-wide policy identifies some areas where faith facilities would not be an appropriate use, such as industrial and employment areas and retail warehousing. Borough-wide policy also identifies some preferred locations for faith facilities, particularly town and district centres, but also identifies some specific sites that may be suitable for new faith facilities.

One issue raised at regional level that is not discussed much in local level documents is the issue of cross-boundary considerations with regards to social infrastructure. It is not clear to what extent the council have discussed provision of faith facilities with their neighbours, particularly for facilities that may serve populations that span local authority boundaries. As part of this study, neighbouring authorities and the Greater London Authority were contacted to explain the study and ask for information on their approaches to planning and faith groups/facilities and possible cross-boundary issues. Three responses were received: one from the Greater London Authority; one from the London Borough of Newham; and one from Havering Council. The Greater London Authority welcomed the study and highlighted Policy 3.16 of the London Plan (see above), particularly the need to develop collaborative cross-boundary approaches, where appropriate. Newham Council clarified that their policies do not distinguish faith facilities from other D1 uses and that these are addressed through policy INF8: Community Facilities of the Local Plan Core Strategy and policy INF10 of the Detailed Sites and Policies DPD (Policy INF9: Infrastructure Delivery) is also relevant. These policies promote mixed and flexible uses to meet a demonstrable local need (to be demonstrated by the applicant). With regards to location of facilities, these policies adopt a 'town centre first' approach and prioritise health, education and childcare facilities on strategic sites. Newham Council engage with known faith and community groups as part of Local Plan consultation and through development management activity. Newham Council recommend that local need should be prioritised over sub-regional needs. Policy INF10 states that when demonstrating the need for new, intensified or replacement facilities, at least 67% of users will be ordinarily Newham residents. Havering Council stated it does not have any information to provide on the issue.

## 3.2 Current planning practice on places of worship

The council searched their database of planning applications relating to faith facilities since 2009 using three search terms: 'place of worship', 'church' and 'mosque'. This generated three lists of data (one for each search term), which formed the basis of the analysis below. The timeframe used (2009 – July 2017) roughly corresponds with the adoption of the Core Strategy, which was in 2010. The majority of such applications related to churches or other worship space for Christian groups, with a lower number of applications relating to mosques or other worship space for Muslim groups. There were no applications relating to any other faith groups.

The data generated from the planning database was reviewed to remove applications that did not relate to a place of worship. Applications regarding approval, dismissal or variation of planning conditions were not taken into account in the analysis below, but the main applications they related to were included, where relevant. The data was also reviewed to remove duplicates and determine which applications related to which faith groups. This was only possible in terms of whether the application related to a church or Christian group, or a mosque or Muslim group. It was not always possible to identify the particular denomination or group that each application related to, as the application did not always detail this and the applicant was often an individual, rather than a faith group. As such, it is difficult to identify trends between different faith groups, denominations and sects.

### 3.2.1 Churches

There have been 42 planning applications with regards to churches in Barking and Dagenham over the past eight years (excluding applications to approve or vary conditions), including one certificate of lawfulness. Over two-thirds of these relate to applications for change of use to a place of worship or continuance of use as a place of worship (30). Approximately half of these were permitted (one on appeal), the certificate of lawfulness was granted and two applications are currently pending. Other applications generally relate to alterations to existing buildings or erection of related structures (storage buildings, railings etc.). The date of application decisions ranges from 2009 to 2014, with no applications recorded in 2017 (January to July). In comparison, six relevant planning applications were recorded in Barking and Dagenham between 2000 and 2008.

The most common type of application was for change of use from industrial and warehouse units (Class B2/B8) to a place of worship, with 15 such applications. Eight of these applications were for 'continuance of use' as a place of worship, indicating that faith facilities had been operating at these sites without planning permission. Two of these applications related to the same premises at different points in time. Approximately half the applications for such changes of use were permitted and half refused, with the exception of two applications still pending a decision. Reasons for refusal included poor accessibility by public transport and lack of dedicated parking, noise nuisance from worshippers leaving late at night, loss of employment space within a Locally Significant Industrial Area (in particular, this conflicts with Core Strategy policy CE3: Safeguarding and Release of Employment Land, which states that there should be no net loss of employment in these areas) and conflict with neighbouring employment uses. Permission was generally granted where there would be no net loss of employment, or where community benefits and local need for the facility outweighed the loss of employment space.

In addition, there were four applications for change of use or continuance of use from a shop or combined shop and office uses to a place of worship, one application for a certificate of lawfulness to use a hall as a place of worship, and two applications for change of use from an office, or use of office space, as a place of worship. Two applications for change of use from a pub to place of worship were refused, whereas one for change of a snooker club to a place of worship was permitted. An application for change of use from a social club to place of worship and community centre was allowed on appeal.

There were two applications for redevelopment of sites with existing places of worship to include replacement churches, one of which was permitted and the other refused. The refusal was due to loss of amenity for adjacent properties and increases in on-street parking demand.

There were a number of applications for mixed use, including a faith facility on the site or for multiple uses, including worship. Some 17 of 42 relevant applications identified include the use of a building as a community centre and/or after school club and place of worship.

### 3.2.2 Mosques

Planning applications relating to mosques in the past eight years include one application for an extension to a mosque and four applications for new faith facilities or change/continuance of use. One of these four was refused: this was an application for continuance of use as a community centre and place of worship, in what was a class A2 (financial and professional services). The other three were permitted and include erection of a new 3-storey building to provide two multi-purpose halls at Barking Mosque, use of a shop as an Islamic centre and mosque, and the use of offices as a place of worship. These applications were decided in 2011 and 2010.

The applications suggest a need for Islamic faith facilities across a range of types, such as large-scale upgrading and conversion of smaller shops or office space to places of worship.

### 3.2.3 Other

There has also been one application for a Christian education and skills centre that does not include dedicated worship or prayer facilities.

### 3.2.4 Conclusions

Planning applications since 2009 relating to faith facilities, particularly places of worship, were reviewed.

Some 80 percent of applications for new Muslim faith facilities were permitted and 52 percent of applications for new Christian faith facilities were permitted. These figures are not easily comparable as far fewer applications were made relating to new Muslim faith facilities (five compared to 42).

The following trends demonstrate a demand for faith facilities in the Borough:

- all applications related to improving or expanding existing places of worship, change of use to a place of worship or continuance of use as a place of worship; and
- there were no applications for change of use or redevelopment of faith sites (at least not without providing replacement facilities) demonstrating a demand for space for faith groups in the Borough.

In summary, all applications related to creating space for faith groups, rather than replacement or conversion of an existing faith facility into non-faith use.

Almost half of applications for new faith facilities included provision of community facilities, indicating that faith groups are interested in playing a wider community role and are willing to share space with wider community uses.

From this review of the planning database, it can be concluded that there is a continuing demand for faith facilities in the Borough. This needs to be considered in light of the other evidence collected in this study.

# 4 Profile of faith groups

## 4.1 Introduction

This section presents the results of the fieldwork and subsequent analysis of current characteristics of faith groups (Sections 4.2 – 4.8). Numbers of faith groups and numbers and characteristics of religious meeting places were determined through fieldwork. Characteristics of groups were provided in the interviews and survey.

Following this a spatial analysis of demographic data on faith groups (Section 4.9) is presented. Together these data sources provide a profile of current faith groups, which is the basis for the following sections which consider needs, future demand and supply.

## 4.2 Numbers of groups

128 groups in the borough were identified through fieldwork. These groups were less than those initially provided by council data, illustrating that there is a “churn” in religious groups, with some leaving and presumably others coming to the borough. 40 groups were removed from the contact list initially provided by the council.

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of faith groups, by religion, of known groups in the borough during this study undertaken in 2017. 85 percent of faith groups in the borough are Christian. The next largest category is Muslim (11 percent), with each of the other religions representing only a very small number and percentage of groups.

Figure 2: Breakdown of faith groups in Barking and Dagenham, by religion

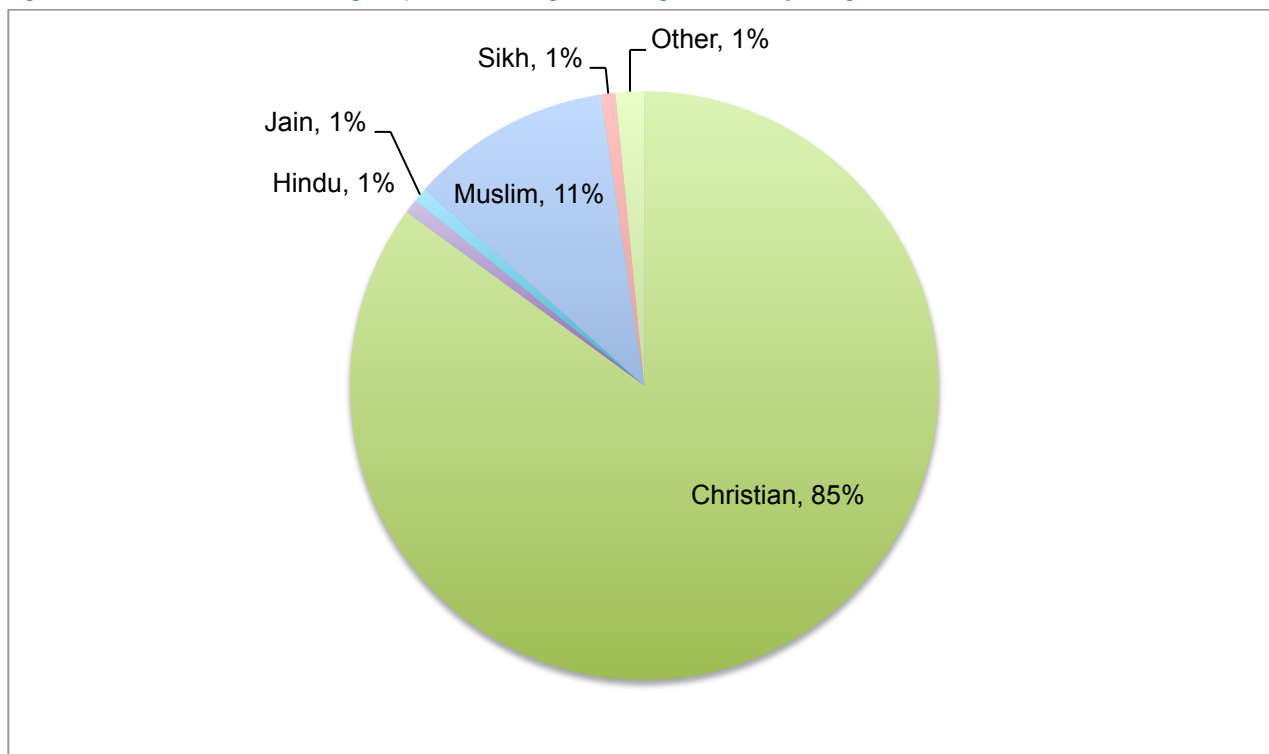


Table 7 provides a further breakdown of Christian groups. When these groups are split into those within ‘traditional’ denominations and other groups, it can be seen that those in the latter category are in the majority. Many of these are Pentecostal groups and are relatively new to the borough (see Figure 4).

The term Christian includes groups in more established ‘traditional’ denominations such as Church of England, Methodists, Baptists and Catholics, as well as newer groups such as African Christian and other Pentecostal groups. For reporting purposes, this report refers to groups within ‘traditional’ denominations and ‘other’ groups. Groups within the traditional denominations are Church of England, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed Church and Salvation Army. This is done with the knowledge that these are inaccurate terms as some ‘other’ groups are within well-established traditions, and some ‘traditional’ groups may be new to a particular area.

**Table 7: Number of Christian groups, by category**

Category	No. of groups
Groups in traditional denominations	39
Other groups	70
Total	109

Figure 3 shows faith groups’ reported length of time in the borough, by religion. The Christian religion has a significant number of groups that have been in the borough for more than 50 years. But the composition of the Christian community has changed rapidly, with significant numbers of newer groups outside of the traditional denominations (see Figure 4). The fieldwork also illustrated the substantial flux in Christian groups, with almost 40 being removed from the study database because there was no evidence found that they continue to meet in the borough. Most of the Muslim groups have formed in the borough in the past 20 years (see Figure 5).

**Figure 3: Groups’ length of time in the borough, by religion**

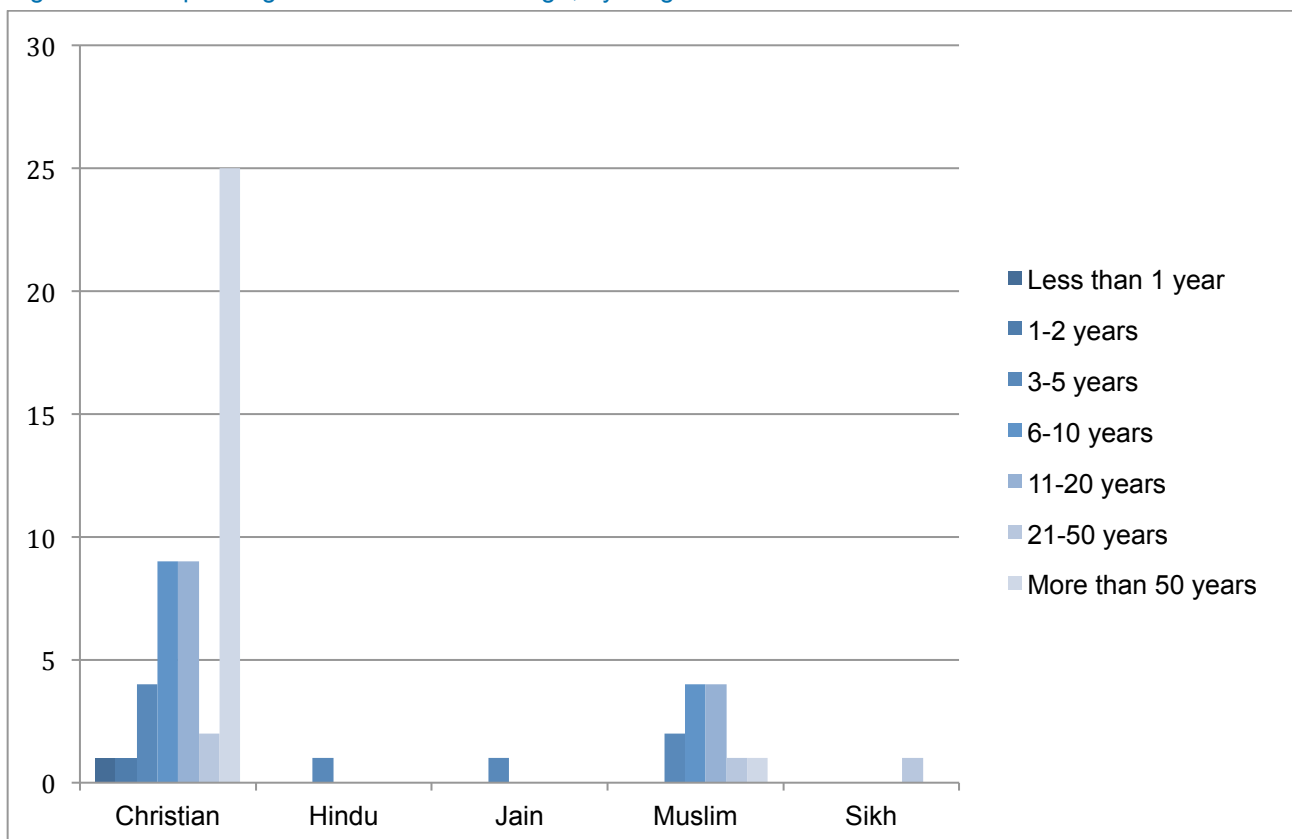




Figure 4: Christian groups' length of time in the borough, by category

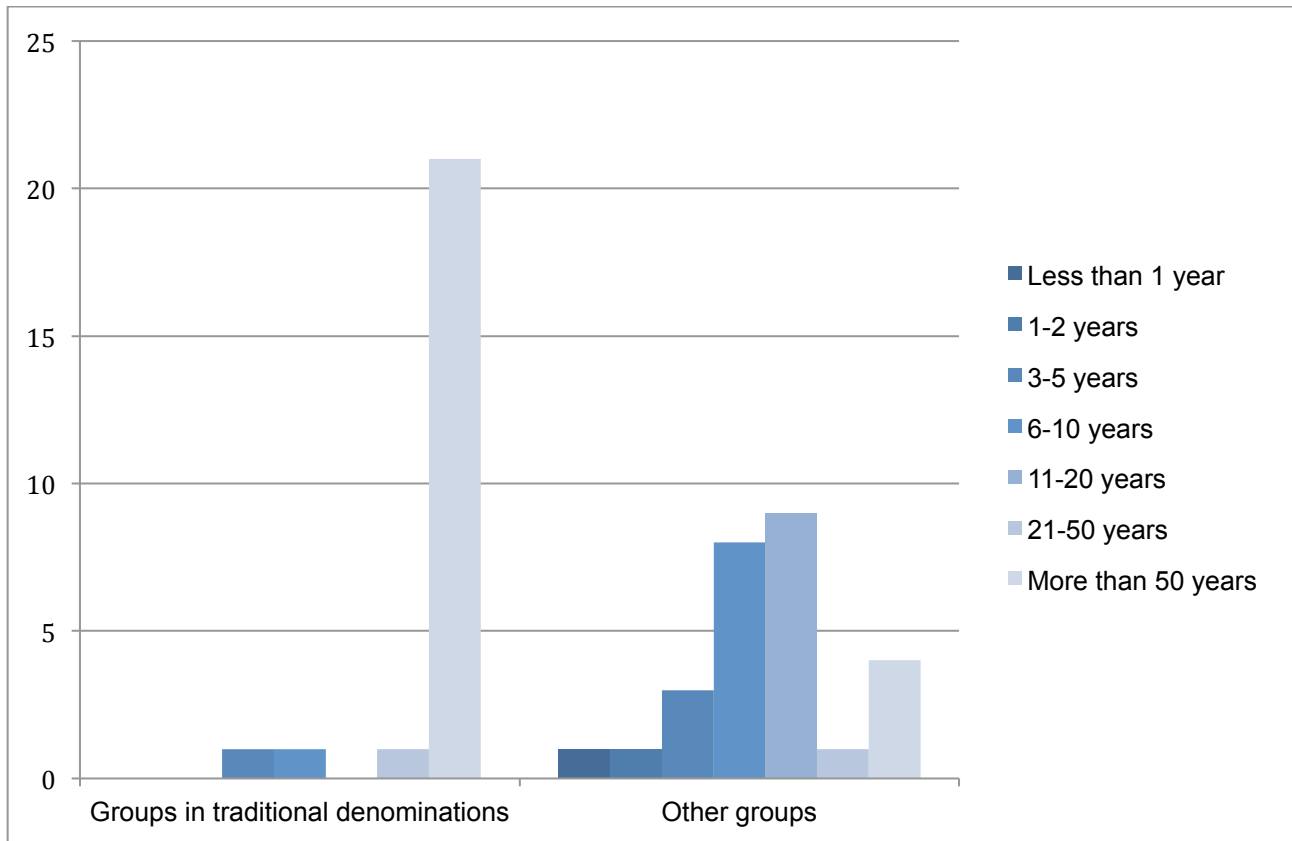
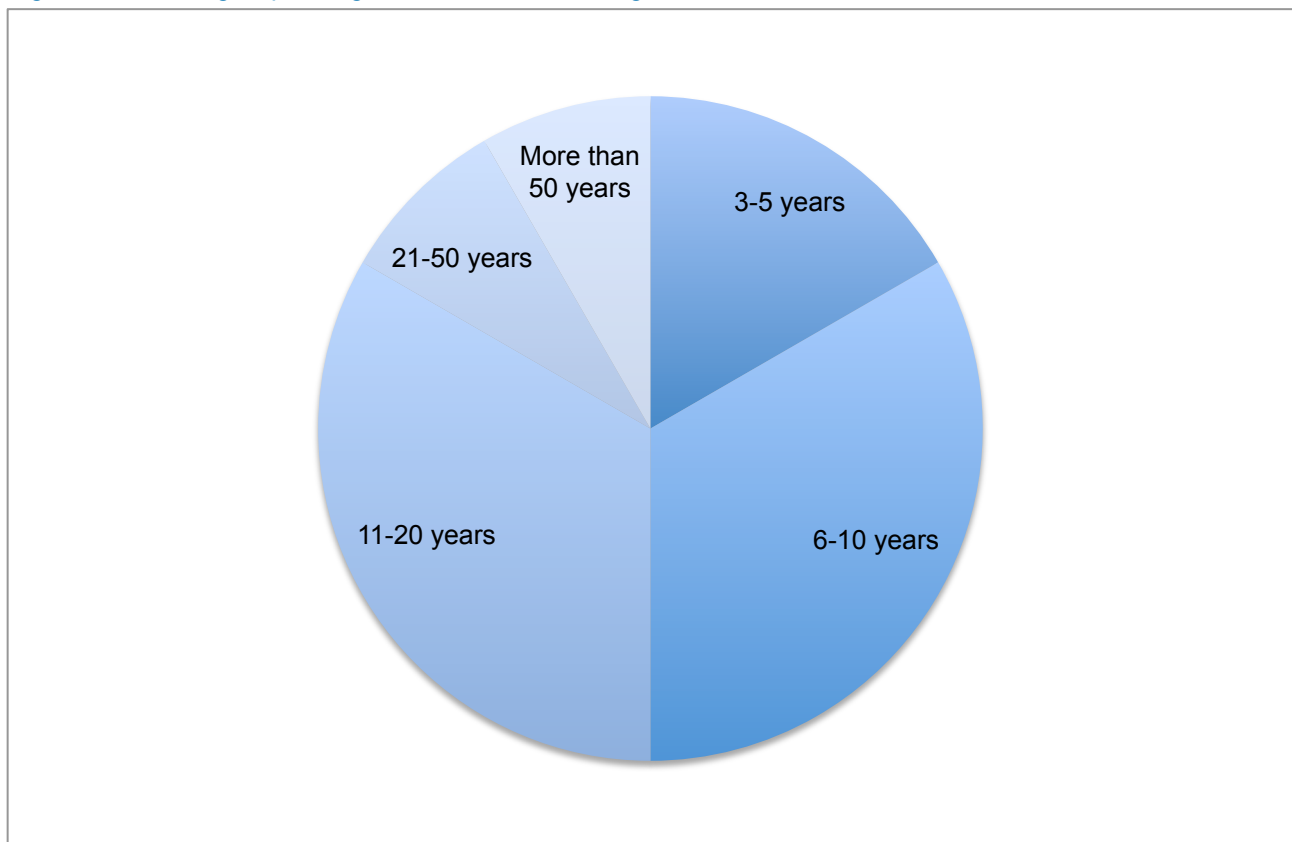


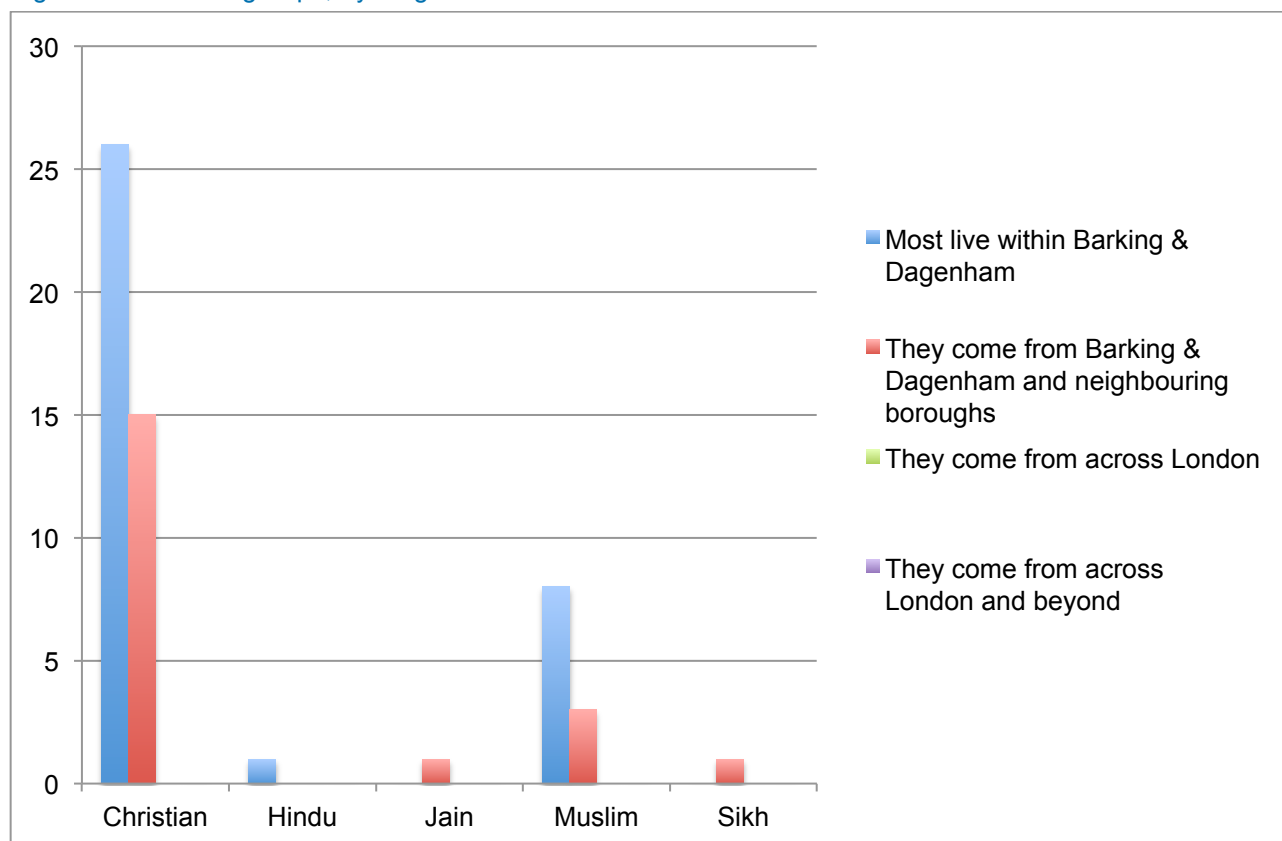
Figure 5: Muslim groups' length of time in the borough



### 4.3 Reach and travel of groups

Survey respondents and interviewees were asked “Which of these best describes where the people in your group live?”. The responses suggest that most attendees are relatively local. Most groups indicated that their attendees mostly live within the borough, although 22 groups indicated that their reach extends to neighbouring boroughs. None of the groups who responded indicated that coming ‘from across London and beyond’ best described where the people in their group live.

Figure 6: Reach of groups, by religion



Although most groups serve a relatively local population, there are some significant distinctions in the usual mode of travel. Figure 7 shows the usual mode of travel for attendees at Christian groups, whilst Figure 8 shows the same data for Muslim groups. It is apparent that there is a higher level of usage of cars and public transport amongst the Christian groups, which may be driven by the geography of attendance, i.e. Muslim congregations may be more geographically concentrated around the places of worship. However, further analysis suggests that the distinctions between Christian and Muslim groups here may be particularly driven by the travel preferences of members of the newer Christian groups (see Figure 9). This is likely to be because more of these groups are located away from residential areas, e.g. in employment areas.

For those who answered ‘combined’, the combination of transport modes varied: in some cases participants noted an even split between all three travel modes. This was true for all Muslim respondents. For the Christian groups in some cases travel mode was evenly split and in others two of the three modes were mentioned (such as travel by foot and car).

Figure 7: How most Christian group attendees travel to meetings

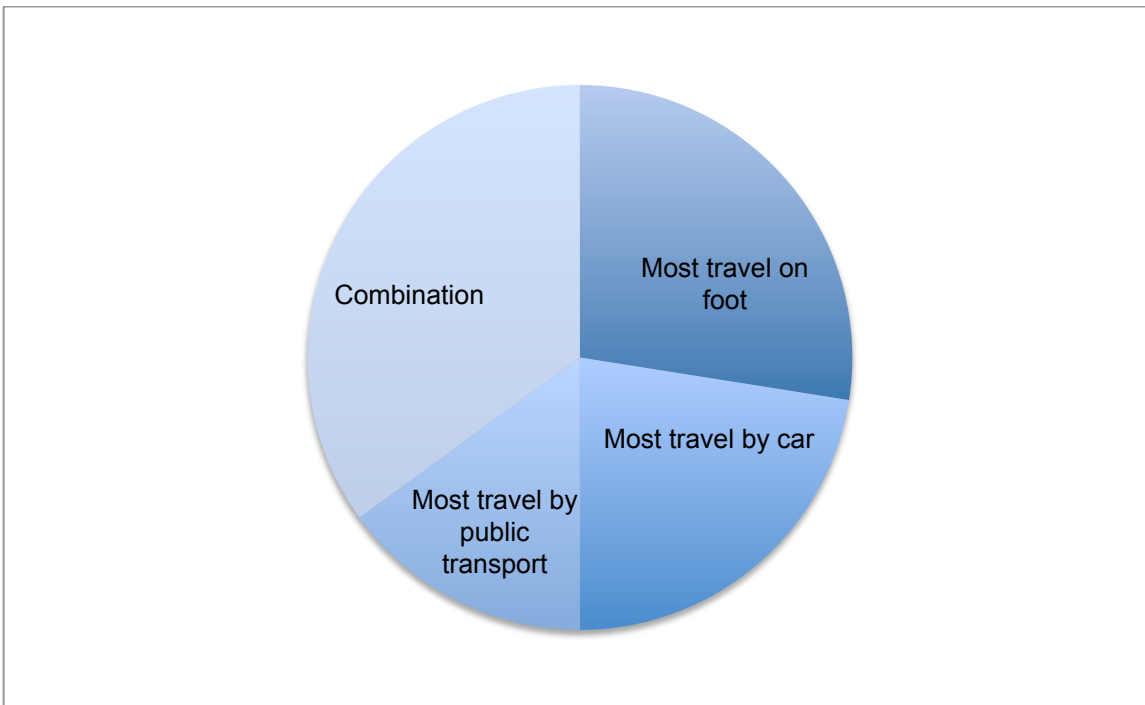


Figure 8: How most Muslim group attendees travel to meetings

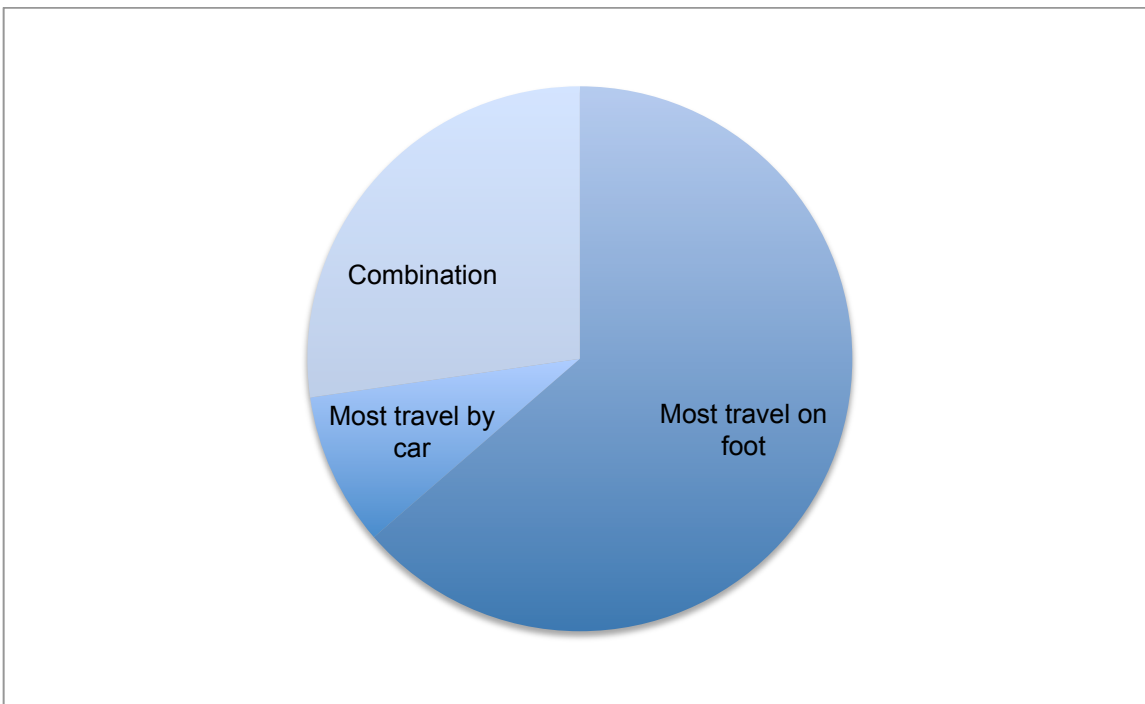
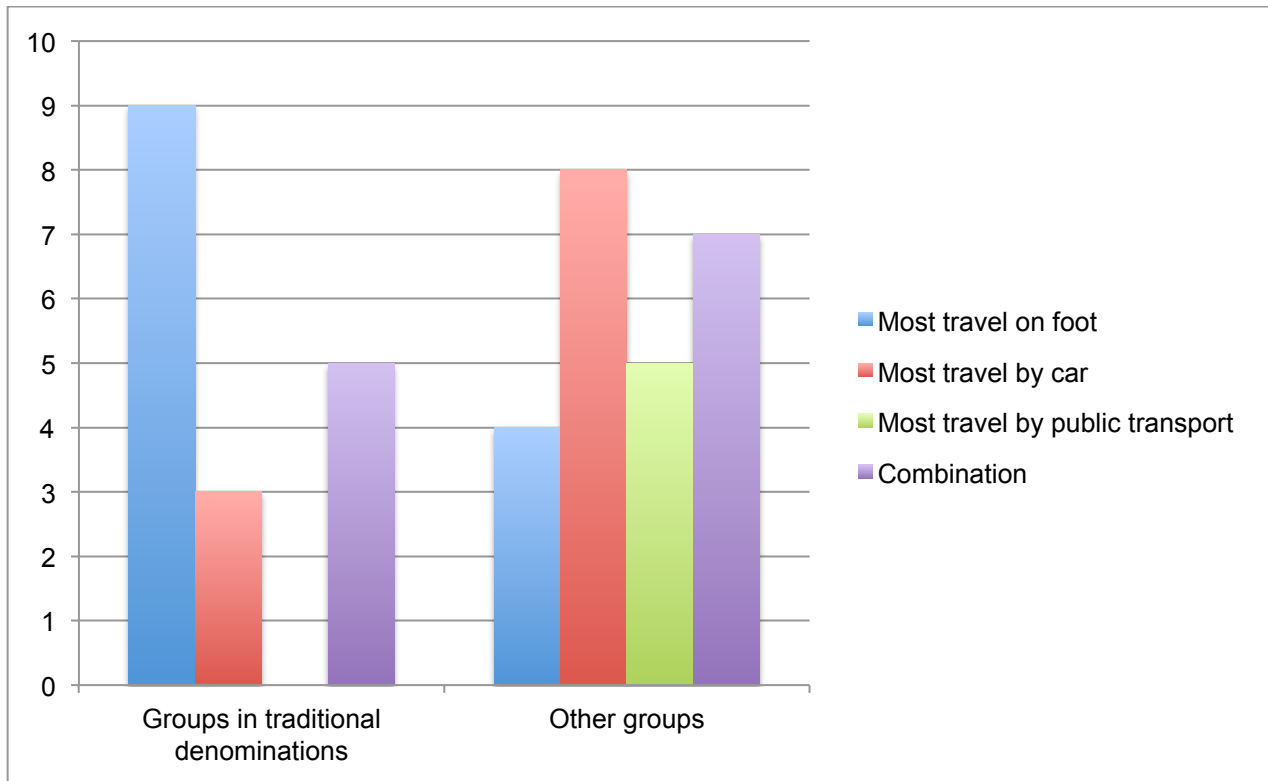


Figure 9: How most Christian group attendees travel to meetings, by category



#### 4.4 Size of groups

As shown in Table 8, the size of Christian and Muslim groups varies significantly in terms of number of attendees, but in both cases there are some very large groups. We have limited data on the size of groups due to the absence of any responses to this question from Baha'i, Buddhist, Jain and Sikh groups. Three Christian groups reported regular attendances of more than 1,000 people. One Muslim group reported a regular attendance of 2,500 people.

Table 8: Size of group (attendance), by religion

	Smallest group attendance	Largest group attendance	Mean group attendance
Baha'i	/	/	/
Buddhist	/	/	/
Christian	10	5000	303
Hindu	75	75	75
Jain	/	/	/
Muslim	31	2500	474
Sikh	/	/	/
Other	/	/	/

Each of the Christian groups which reported regular attendance of more than 1,000 people was outside of the traditional denominations. The presence of a number of very large churches means that the average (mean) size of groups within the traditional denominations is significantly smaller than the average within other denominations (see Table 9). However, this masks the fact that there are also a large number of small groups within this category, so median group attendance is actually larger within the traditional

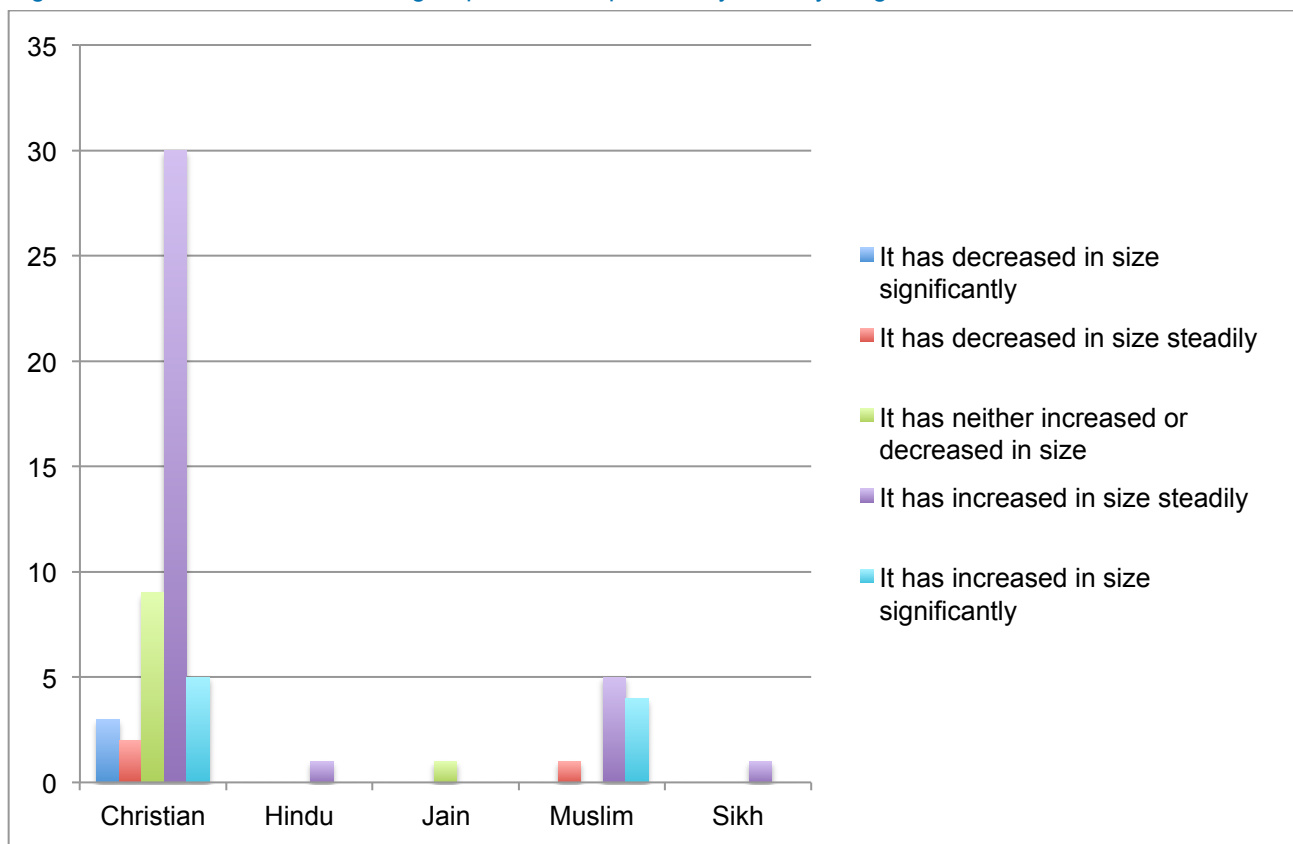
denominations. Together this illustrates the pronounced variability in the size of Christian faith groups - groups ranged from 10 attendees to 5000.

Table 9: Size of Christian group (attendance), by religion

	Smallest group attendance	Largest group attendance	Mean group attendance	Median group attendance
Traditional denominations	13	850	173	98
Other denominations	10	5000	417	70

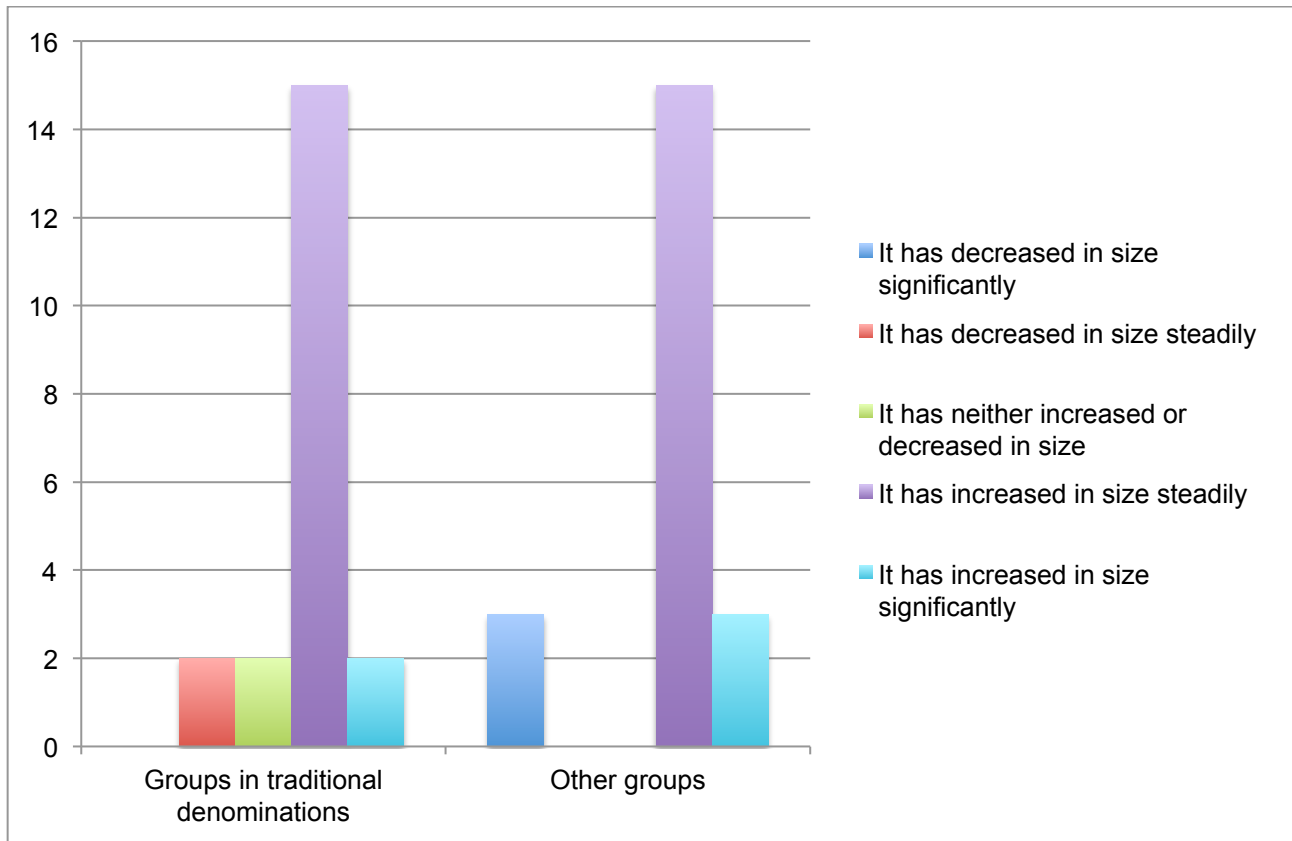
Figure 10 shows that there are a large number (35) of Christian groups which have experienced steady or significant growth over the past five years. However, there are also a number of Christian groups which have experienced steady or significant decline. This further reinforces the flux within Christian groups referred to earlier. Although there are a smaller number of groups, a similar pattern of overall growth alongside some decline is evident within Muslim groups.

Figure 10: Growth and decline of groups over the past five years, by religion



Further detail on the growth and decline in Christian groups is shown in Figure 11. Most groups are growing steadily, both in the traditional and other groups. However, the data indicates a higher level of flux within the other groups, with a higher number of groups experiencing significant growth and a higher number experiencing significant decline.

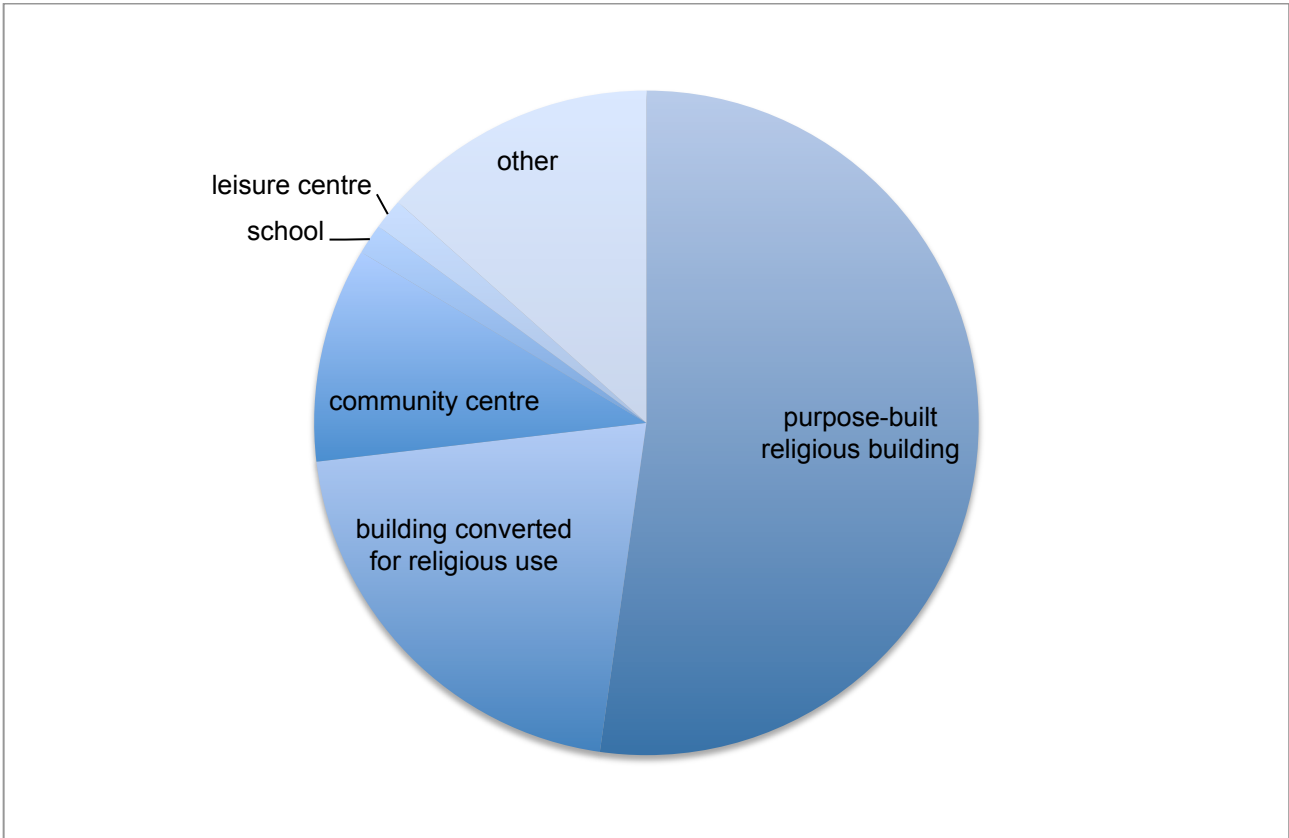
Figure 11: Growth and decline of Christian groups over the past five years, by category



#### 4.5 Building usage

The types of buildings used by faith groups in the borough is shown in Figure 12. Amongst respondent groups, more than half of the buildings used were purpose-built religious buildings (57.39 percent), with a further 22 percent of buildings which have been converted for religious use. A range of other buildings are used by faith groups, including community centres, pubs, banks, bowling alleys, cinemas, leisure centres, libraries, schools and colleges. These “other” sites were 17.39 percent of known facilities.

Figure 12: Overall pattern of building usage (type) in borough



There are significant distinctions in terms of the types of building used between the different religions. As can be seen in Figure 13, whilst most Christian groups meet in purpose-built religious buildings, only a small percentage of Muslim groups have access to such buildings. Within the Christian category, there are also significant differences between the traditional and other denominations, as can be seen in Figure 14. All respondent groups within the traditional denominations meet in purpose-built religious buildings, but less than half of groups within other denominations have access to such buildings. Data from the site visits suggested that where Christian faith facilities are not purpose-built, industrial buildings are the most commonly used type of building (excluding community centres). Where Muslim faith facilities are not purpose-built, retail units are the most commonly used type of building (excluding community centres).

Figure 13: Building usage (type) by Christian and Muslim groups

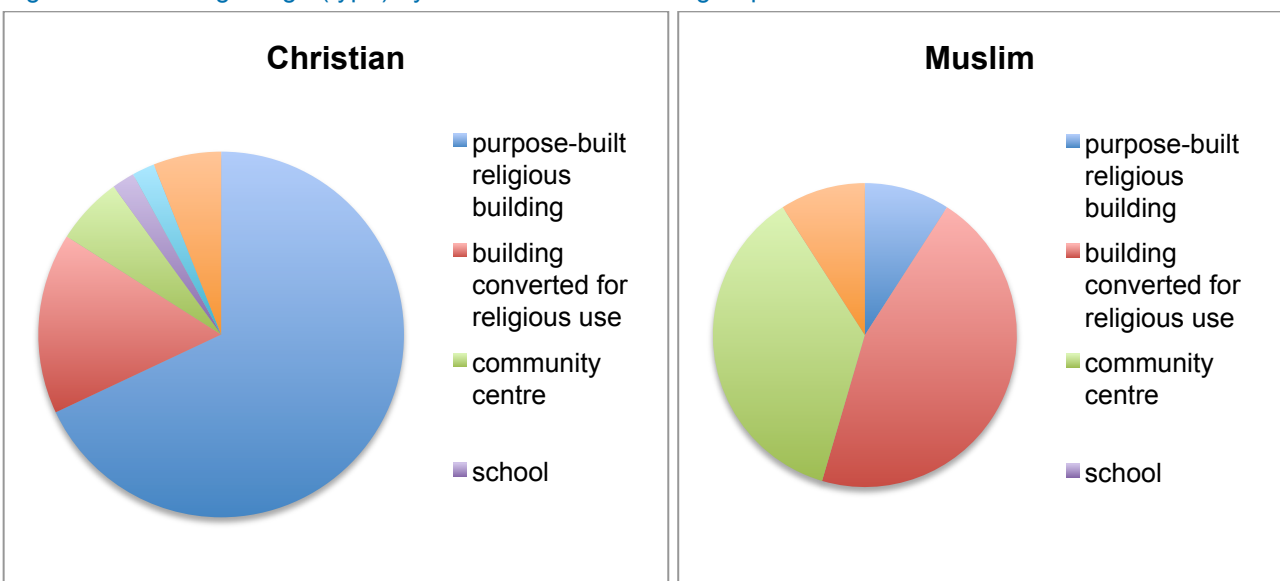
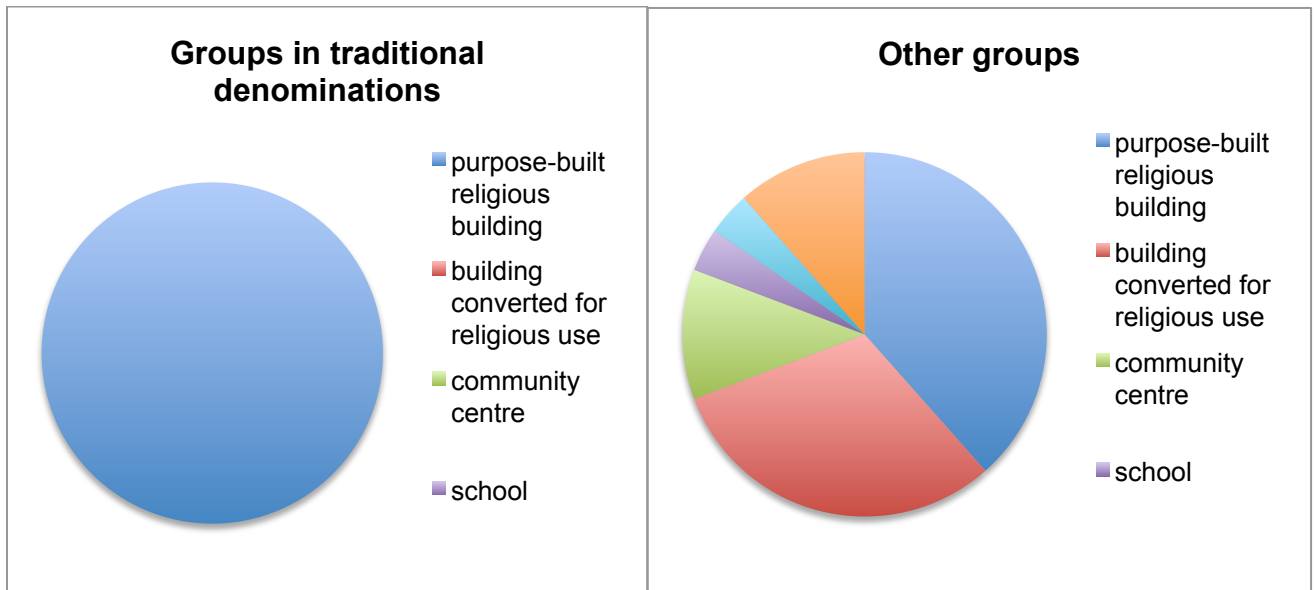


Figure 14: Building usage (type) by Christian groups, by category



Similar distinctions are observed in terms of building ownership, as can be seen in Figure 15 and Figure 16. Whilst most Christian groups own the main buildings they use, only one third of Muslim groups own the main buildings that they use. In the traditional Christian denominations, more than three quarters of respondent groups own the main buildings they use but only around one third of groups in the other denominations do so. Most of the Christian groups who hire or lease the main building that they use hire/lease from another church.

Figure 15: Ownership of main buildings used by Christian and Muslim groups

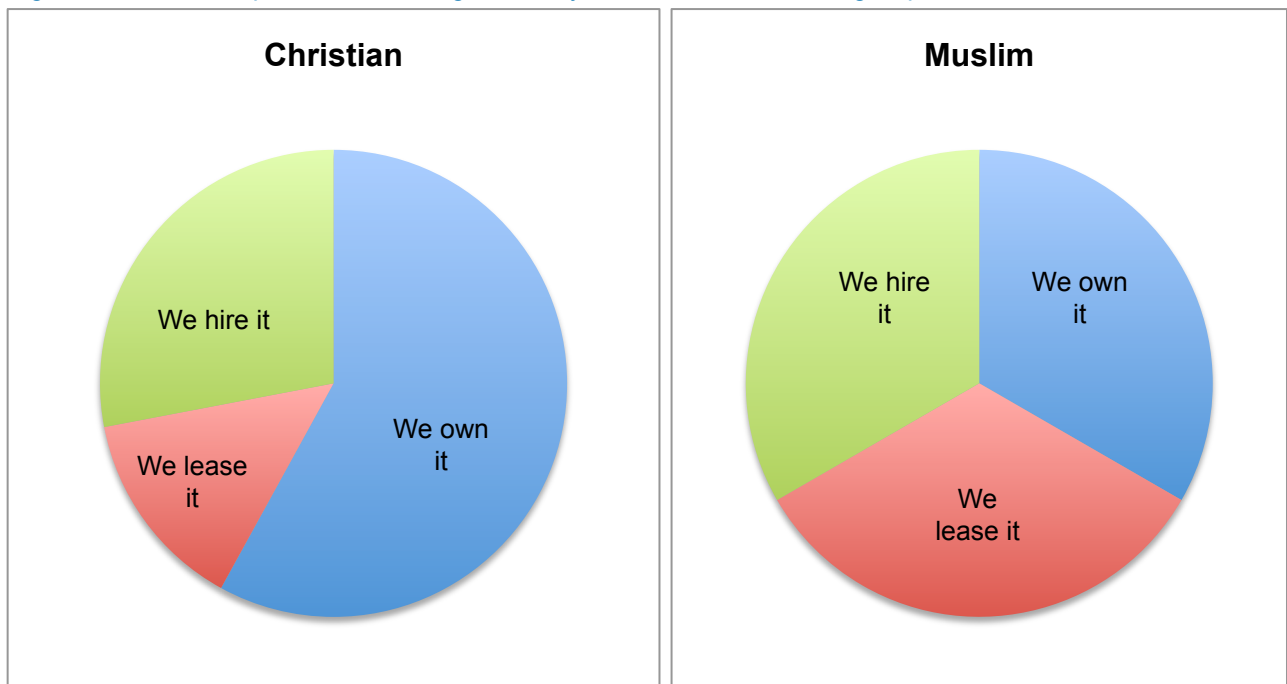
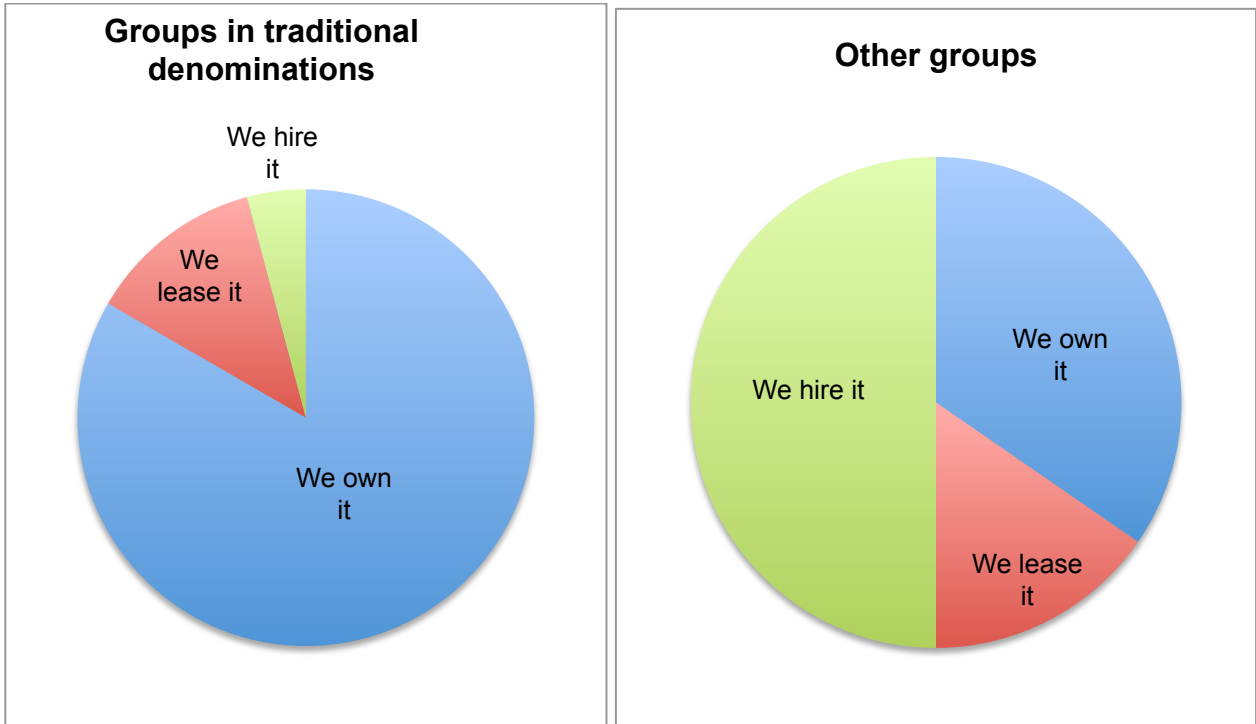




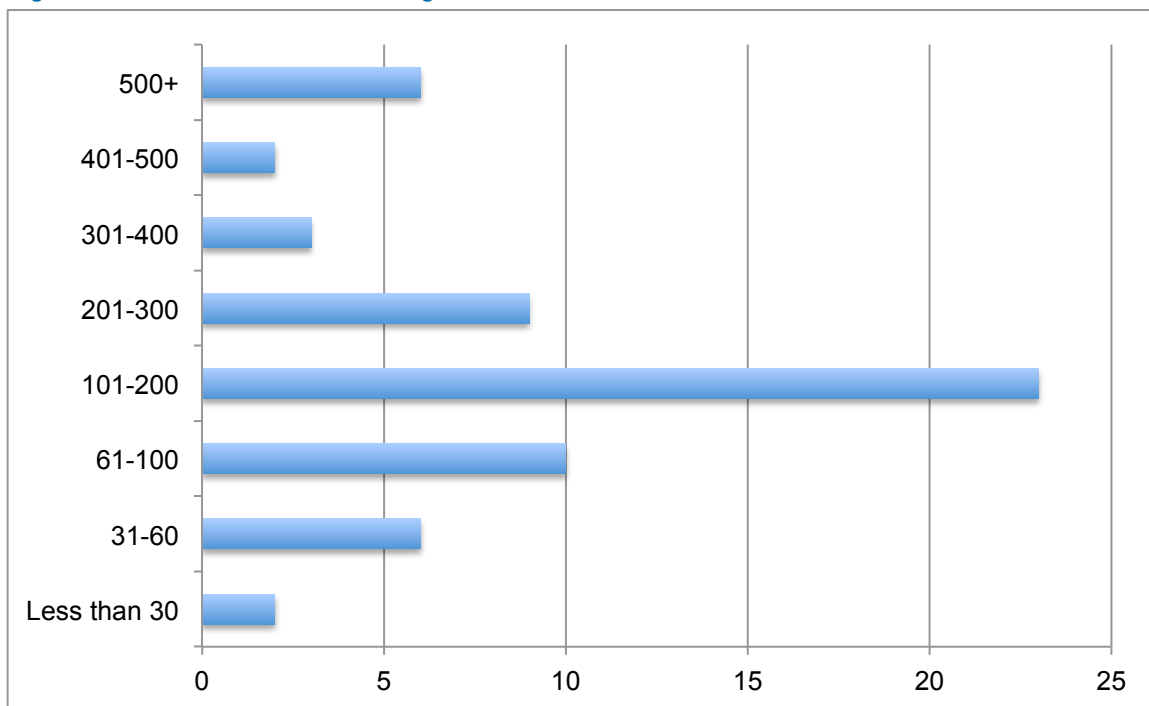
Figure 16: Ownership of main buildings used by Christian groups, by category



## 4.6 Building sizes

In terms of main meeting rooms, a wide range of sizes are used by faith groups, including a significant number which can accommodate more than 500 people. The most common size category is 101-200 people.

Figure 17: Number of main meeting rooms of different sizes



## 4.7 Building issues

Survey and interview respondents were asked whether they had issues relating to the use of the buildings they used, such as access, parking, complaints from neighbours, maintenance issues, costs etc. In relation to the main buildings used, 70 percent of Christian and Muslim groups reported issues. The one Hindu group which responded to the question also reported issues.

Car parking was the most commonly cited issue by faith groups. Constraints on parking availability were reported to be causing problems for many groups and this was leading, in some cases to issues with local residents, e.g. complaints about inappropriate parking, blocked driveways etc. This was less of an issue for some of the Christian groups meeting in employment locations, where parking was reported to be more freely available on Sundays.

It is noticeable from the data that parking issues were cited less by the Muslim groups. Three of these groups referred to efforts they had made to help resolve parking issues. These included:

- supporting a residents-only parking zone around the mosque;
- hiring private parking security to enforce parking restrictions at meeting times; and
- ‘naming and shaming’ attendees who parked inappropriately and using volunteers to direct parking during special events.

Linked to the issue of parking constraints, a number of respondents referred to the approach to parking enforcement by the council, with some perceiving it to be too inflexible, e.g. one respondent referred to tickets being issued for vehicles which were dropping off attendees.

A small number of Christian groups reported that they had received noise complaints from local residents.

Christian and Muslim groups reported issues with building maintenance, whilst the Hindu group reported issues with the hire costs of the buildings they use.

Another issue reported was waste disposal. Some groups referred to waste being tipped within the grounds of their buildings, whilst others cited issues with waste collection.

## 4.8 Sharing

Survey and interview respondents were asked whether the buildings they use were shared with other faith groups. 42 percent of the buildings used were reported to be shared with other faith groups.

This current sharing can be split into two categories:

1. community and commercial facilities, such as community centres, Barking Library or hotel venues, which are utilised by more than one faith group; and
2. church buildings owned by groups within the traditional denominations who share these buildings with groups from other denominations.

There is one multi-faith facility in the borough, the Rivergate Centre, which is currently run as an Ecumenical Christian site, with access provided to other faiths.

## 4.9 Spatial analysis of existing faith groups

### 4.9.1 Demographic changes by ward

Table 10 provides an overview of the changes in religious populations at ward level in the borough. The data demonstrates that the borough experienced important population changes in the inter-census period:

- the overall population of the borough increased by approximately 13 percent;
- this encompasses major changes in the balance of religious populations over the decade;
- overall, the Christian population fell by eight percent; the much smaller Jewish population also fell by approximately 22 percent;
- all other religious populations, including Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists, grew across the decade; and
- the most dramatic growth was exhibited by the Muslim population, which increased by 257 percent.

This is reflected geographically in ward-scale patterns below the level of the Borough:

- every ward in the Borough experienced population growth, ranging between 0.8 percent (Becontree) and 33 percent (Gascoigne);
- the Christian population fell in 16 out of 17 wards in the Borough;
- the largest fall in Christian population was in Longbride by 26 percent, while it increased in Thames by 11 percent;
- the Jewish population fell in 10 out of 17 wards;
- the largest fall in Jewish population was also in Longbride by 68 percent, while it increased in Valence by 46 percent;
- conversely the Jewish population fell in 10 out of 17 wards;
- the Muslim population increased in every ward, with the largest increase in Longbride by 790 percent; and
- Hindus and Buddhists also increased in every ward, while Sikhs increased in all but four wards.

Table 10: Percentage religious population changes by wards, 2001 to 2011

Ward	All people	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religion	No religion	Religion not stated
Abbey	25.3	-7.6	0.0	198.7	-34.2	105.2	-2.8	31.4	5.1	-15.3
Alibon	11.7	-5.4	800.0	326.7	42.9	456.5	107.1	126.7	60.5	-16.8
Becontree	0.8	-16.5	78.0	55.4	-50.0	192.1	93.3	7.7	24.2	-32.9
Chadwell Heath	7.8	-14.3	33.3	139.4	-31.7	276.2	178.0	107.7	42.3	-4.4
Eastbrook	4.1	-11.7	86.4	56.4	36.4	281.5	-5.2	285.7	48.0	10.4
Eastbury	15.2	-7.7	94.1	115.0	42.9	271.0	98.4	92.9	48.3	-18.8
Gascoigne	32.9	11.9	232.0	96.9	-22.2	195.5	63.8	91.7	20.2	-29.4
Goresbrook	9.0	-5.3	100.0	156.0	-45.5	278.0	39.1	130.0	60.5	-29.7
Heath	11.8	-2.2	106.7	314.3	-26.1	293.6	61.9	133.3	45.4	-19.0
Longbride	29.1	-25.9	184.0	168.3	-67.9	789.8	134.4	316.7	23.9	28.4
Mayesbrook	11.0	-8.9	323.1	400.0	0.0	494.4	450.0	63.2	56.2	-10.6

Ward	All people	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religion	No religion	Religion not stated
Parsloes	8.9	-10.7	125.0	161.1	-55.9	458.1	156.3	-10.5	59.2	-9.3
River	6.5	-6.6	133.3	28.6	38.5	202.6	-11.5	200.0	39.4	-6.7
Thames	25.5	10.7	139.1	170.0	21.1	365.1	-10.6	42.9	17.4	-21.5
Valence	12.4	-11.5	371.4	228.3	46.2	454.2	278.0	209.1	45.7	9.3
Village	11.0	-1.9	433.3	134.7	-41.2	272.9	119.2	0.0	41.9	-15.6
Whalebone	10.1	-14.0	272.7	114.4	-18.2	400.8	153.7	0.0	24.2	14.0

(Source: 2001 & 2011 Censuses)

#### 4.9.2 Residential segregation of religious population, 2001-2011

Segregation is generally measured using an index, the Index of Dissimilarity (ID). ID evaluates the extent to which sub-population groups reside in the same small areas and neighbourhoods. It varies between 0 (no segregation) and 100 (complete segregation). Typically, values of 0-30 are 'low', 30-39 'moderately low', 40-49 'moderate', 50-59 'moderately high' and 60-69 'high'. ID values of 70+, which are considered 'very high', are rare in the UK context at ward scale.

Analysis of 2001 and 2011 census data (Table 11) suggests that:

- religious segregation in the Borough fell overall between 2001 and 2011;
- segregation levels by religion in the Borough were 'low' or 'moderately low' in both 2001 and 2011;
- for most groups, segregation fell fairly sharply between the censuses, including for Christians, Buddhists, Jews and Muslims; and
- segregation increased slightly, to levels still 'moderately low', for Hindus and Sikhs.

Table 11: Changes in religious group segregation (percent) 2001-2011

Religion	2001	2011	2001-2011 Change
Christian	11.6	8.0	-3.6
Buddhist	25.0	15.2	-9.8
Hindu	35.7	35.9	0.2
Jewish	22.3	17.7	-4.6
Muslim	37.8	33.0	-4.8
Sikh	38.8	39.2	0.4
Other religion	18.6	10.1	-8.5
No religion	5.8	10.3	4.5
Religion not stated	8.8	3.5	-5.3

(Source: 2001 & 2011 Censuses)

Detailed inter-religious patterns (Table 12) confirm this overall picture, with some nuances:

- ID values for Sikhs, the most segregated group overall, rose to 'moderate' levels vis-a-vis Christians (ID=42), 'Other religion' (ID=41) and 'No religion' (ID=46);
- low and falling rates of segregation tell a story of residential dispersal and outward movement;
- growth of some groups and fall in others reflects dynamic internal migration patterns and increased residential mixing;

- nevertheless, there is still an underlying pattern of residential clustering for some groups;
- Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all exhibit clusters in wards to the west of the Borough, which accounts for the low levels of segregation between these groups; and
- these demographics partially explain the locations of places of worship, most clearly in the case of Muslims and mosques (see Figure 20: Muslim population (percent) 2011, and Muslim places of worship).

Table 12: Inter-religious segregation, 2011

	All people	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religion	No religion	Religion not stated
<b>Christian</b>	8.0	0.0								
<b>Buddhist</b>	15.2	17.4	0.0							
<b>Hindu</b>	35.9	38.4	30.0	0.0						
<b>Jewish</b>	17.7	18.6	23.2	34.6	0.0					
<b>Muslim</b>	33.0	31.3	21.7	17.5	34.9	0.0				
<b>Sikh</b>	39.2	41.9	33.8	17.8	32.7	22.1	0.0			
<b>Other religion</b>	10.1	9.8	17.3	37.6	17.8	30.8	40.8	0.0		
<b>No religion</b>	10.3	6.0	20.5	42.7	21.2	35.7	46.0	11.9	0.0	
<b>Religion not stated</b>	3.5	4.6	14.3	34.7	18.1	29.0	38.2	9.7	9.2	0.0

(Source: 2011 Census)

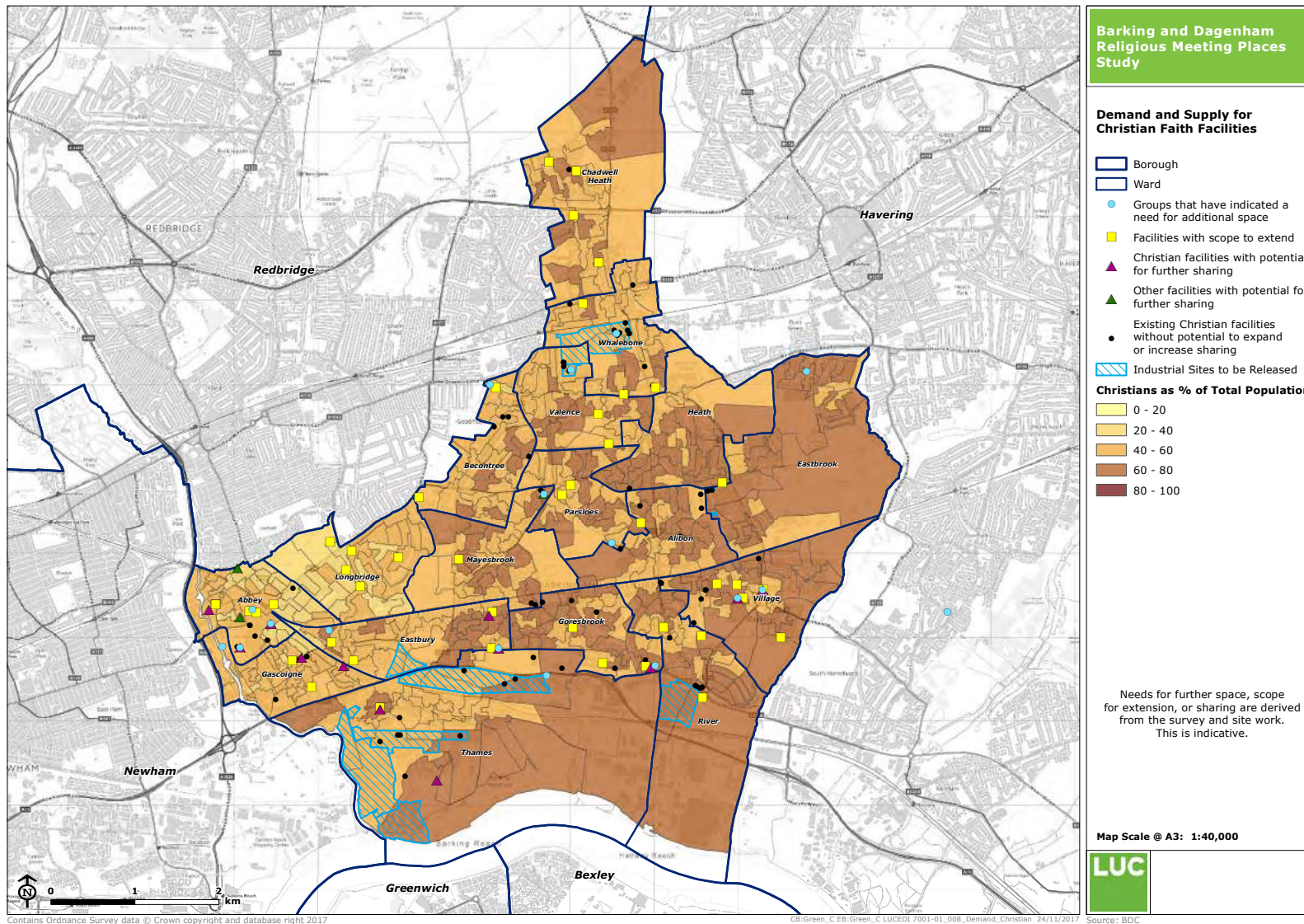
## 4.10 Key Findings

### 4.10.1 Christian groups

- There was an overall decline in affiliation to the Christian religion between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. The Christian population fell in 16 out of 17 wards in the Borough, with the largest fall in the Christian population being in Longbride (26 percent). It increased in Thames by 11 percent.
- Wards in the south and east of the borough tend to have the highest percentages of Christians (see Figure 18: Christian population (percent) 2011, and Christian places of worship). These are also the areas with the fewest Christian places of worship, although the existing groups that have indicated the need for additional space are spread across the borough.
- A number of existing groups meet in industrial sites that are to be released. If the needs of these groups are not accommodated within the redevelopment of these sites, this will further increase the needs which will need to be met elsewhere.
- The overall decline in affiliation to the Christian religion masks significant growth in some Christian groups and in terms of church attendance. Most groups contacted as part of this study report growth in the last five years.
- There has been particularly strong growth in the African Christian community. In 2011, Barking and Dagenham had the highest percentage of African Christians of any local authority in England and Wales and the seventh highest population of African Christians in England and Wales.

- African Christian growth in Barking and Dagenham was 307 percent between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, where the median for England and Wales was 244 percent. For African Christian populations over 10,000, Barking and Dagenham has the fifth highest growth rate out of 17 local authorities.

Figure 18: Christian population (percent) 2011, and Christian places of worship



- 109 Christian groups were identified in the borough<sup>4</sup>. Of these, 39 were in the traditional denominations. This illustrates the rapidly changing composition of the Christian community, with significant and growing numbers of newer groups outside of the traditional denominations. There has been particular growth in newer Pentecostal groups. There was also very significant flux in Christian groups, with some groups' presence in the borough being relatively short-lived.
- Most Christian groups reported that they are growing steadily, both in the traditional and other groups. However, the data indicates a higher level of flux within the other groups, with a higher number of groups experiencing significant growth and a higher number experiencing significant decline in the past five years.
- Most of the groups who responded reported that their attendees mostly live within Barking and Dagenham, although a significant number of groups attract people from neighbouring boroughs.
- There is a higher level of car and public transport usage amongst the newer Christian groups, which is probably driven by more of these groups being located away from residential areas, e.g. in employment areas, which are less accessible on foot.
- There are some very large Christian groups within the borough, with the largest groups being outside of the traditional groups. However, there are also a large number of small Christian groups.
- All traditional respondent groups meet in purpose-built religious buildings, but less than half of other Christian groups have access to such buildings.
- In the traditional Christian groups, more than three quarters of respondents own the main buildings they use. Only around one third of other groups do so. Most of the Christian groups who hire or lease the main building they use hire/lease it from another church.
- 70 percent of Christian groups reported issues relating to the use of their buildings.
- Christian groups are engaged in the provision of a very wide range of services and activities. In addition to worship (principally but not exclusively on Sundays) and other religious activities (e.g. baptisms, weddings and funerals), the groups also provide a diverse range of cultural, social and educational activities for children and adults, including:
  - language lessons;
  - sporting activities;
  - welfare and advice services, e.g. night shelter, food bank;
  - schools; and
  - social events.
- Churches and church halls clearly play a very important community role through their hiring for social and sporting activities (pre-school groups, scouting groups, boys/girls brigade, health/fitness groups, music groups, after-school clubs, amenity groups, public meetings/consultations etc.), in addition to them being hired by other Christian groups for worship.

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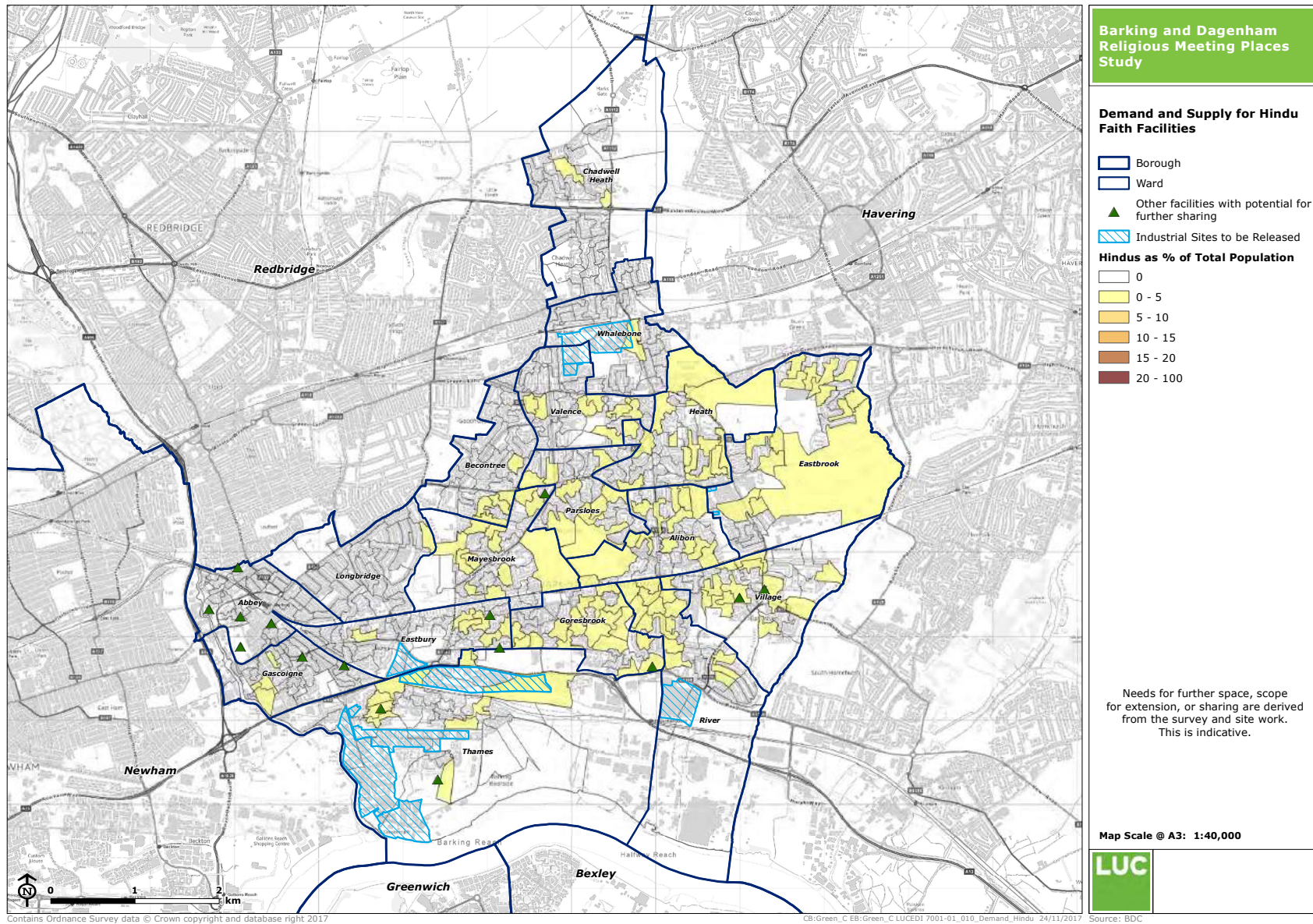
<sup>4</sup> Two groups of Jehovah's Witnesses were also identified. Whilst these groups share some beliefs and practices with Christian groups, they hold non-Trinitarian beliefs and are not generally considered part of mainstream Christianity.



#### 4.10.2 Hindu groups

- There was significant growth in the numbers of Hindus in Barking and Dagenham between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, an increase of over 2,500 (139 percent). This percentage growth is far higher than that for London and England. There are no significant ward-level concentrations of Hindus in the borough, although the percentage of Hindus is slightly higher in central and eastern areas (Figure 19: Hindu population (percent) 2011). Other facilities with potential for sharing are shown in the map, since there are no dedicated Hindu facilities in the borough.

Figure 19: Hindu population (percent) 2011



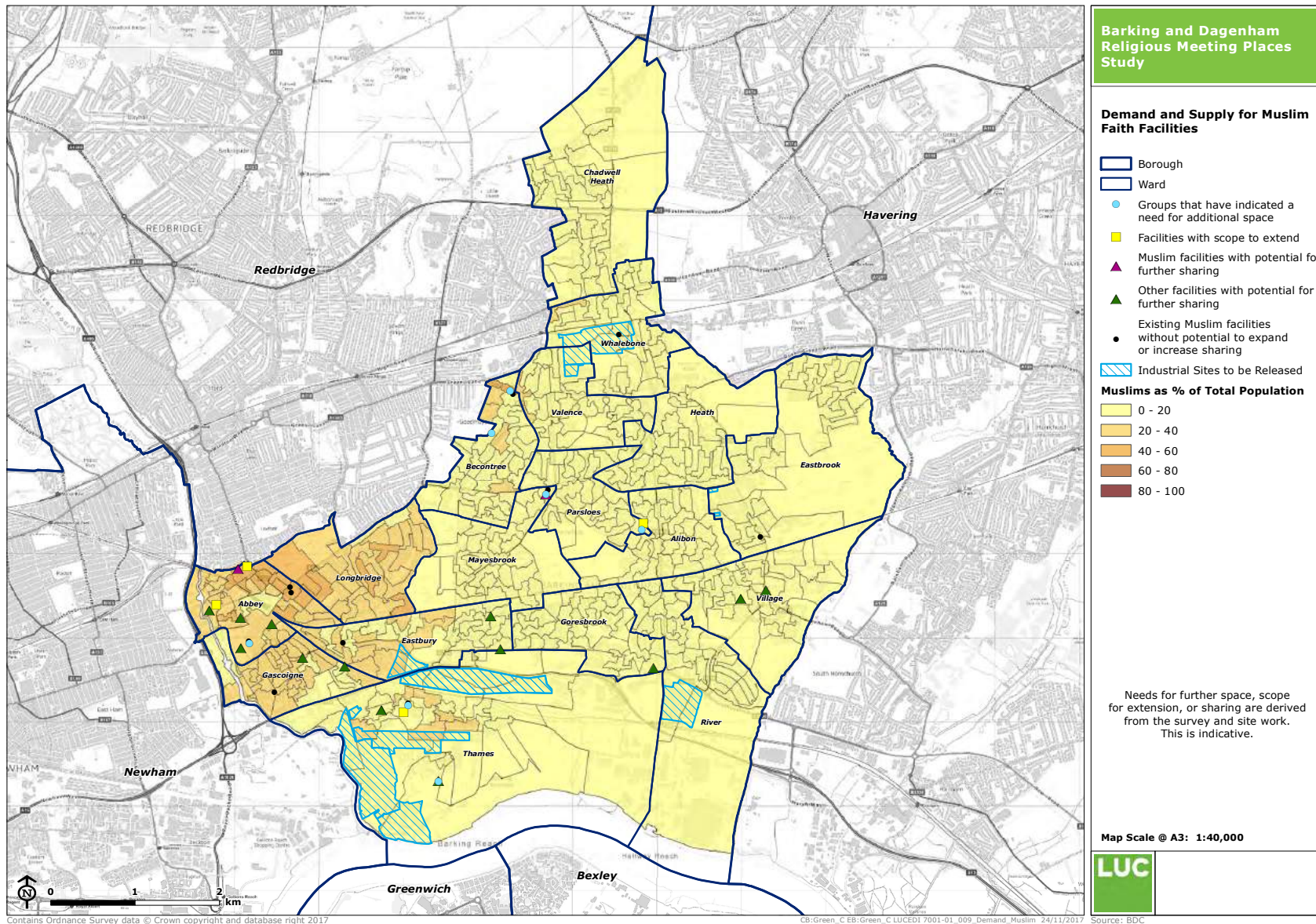
- One Hindu group was identified in the borough. This group, Community Concord, is relatively new to the borough, having formed in the past five years.
- The group serves a relatively local population, with most travelling to meetings and activities on foot from within the borough.
- The group has increased in size steadily since being formed, and now has a membership of approximately 600 people, with approximately 75 people regularly attending. The gap between membership and regular attendance illustrates the fact that much Hindu worship is undertaken at home.
- Community Concord are involved in a diverse range of events and activities, including worship (such as the annual Ganesh Festival), learning and cultural activities.
- The group do not own their own building but primarily used the Barking Library and the Ripple Centre during the fieldwork period.

#### 4.10.3 Muslim groups

- The recent growth in the number of Muslims in Barking and Dagenham is particularly large, with the percentage growth (257 percent) between the 2001 and 2011 censuses far outstripping that for London and England.
- The 2011 census data suggests that the Muslim population is concentrated in the west of the borough, particularly Abbey, Gascoigne and Longbridge wards (Figure 20). This is where most Muslim places of worship are located. It is worth noting that there is also a relatively high percentage of Muslims in Eastbury, Becontree and Thames wards. In each of the latter two wards, there are two existing groups which need additional space and there are three other such groups in other parts of the borough. The data suggests that it may be possible for some of this need to be met through the extension of existing facilities.
- No existing Muslim facilities will be affected by the release of industrial sites.
- 14 Muslim groups were identified in the borough. Most of these have formed in the past 20 years, and half have formed within the past 10 years.
- Most groups serve a local population, with most attendees travelling to meetings on foot.
- The groups vary in size widely. All but one of the groups who responded to the study had more than 100 regular attendees and the Al Madina Mosque has approximately 2,500 regular attendees.
- All but one of the respondent groups reported that they had grown in size over the past five years, with four groups reporting that they had grown in size significantly.
- Muslim groups are engaged in the provision of a very wide range of services and activities. Most hold daily prayers and other religious meetings and celebrations, but the groups also provide a diverse range of cultural, social and educational activities, including:
  - language lessons;
  - sporting activities;
  - welfare and advice services;

- schools; and
- social events.

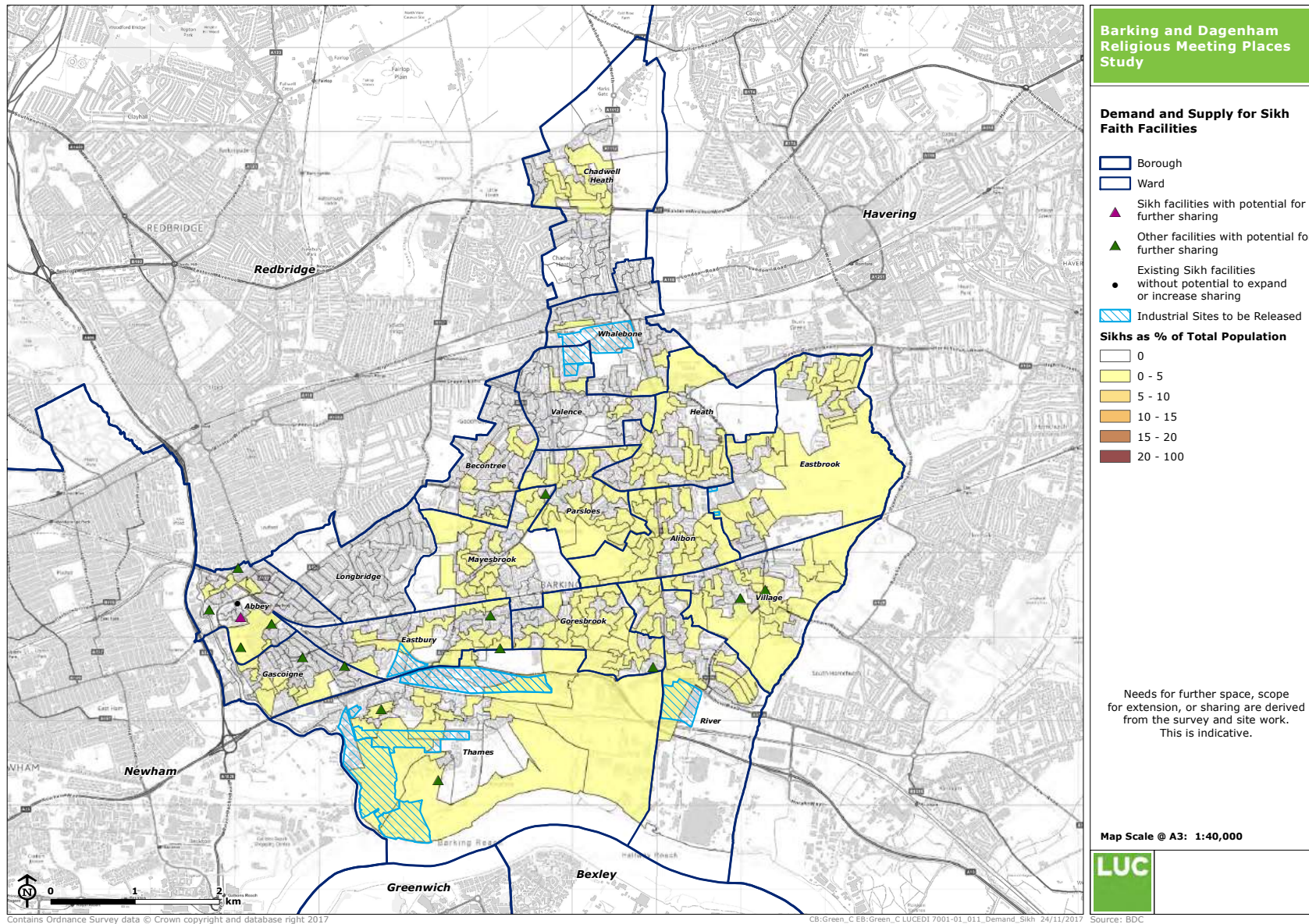
Figure 20: Muslim population (percent) 2011, and Muslim places of worship



#### 4.10.4 Sikh groups

- There was significant growth in the numbers of Sikhs in Barking and Dagenham between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, an increase of almost 1,900 (68 percent). This percentage growth is far higher than that for London and England.
- The 2011 census data (Figure 21) indicates that the Sikh population is spread across the borough.

Figure 21: Sikh population (percent) 2011 and Sikh places of worship



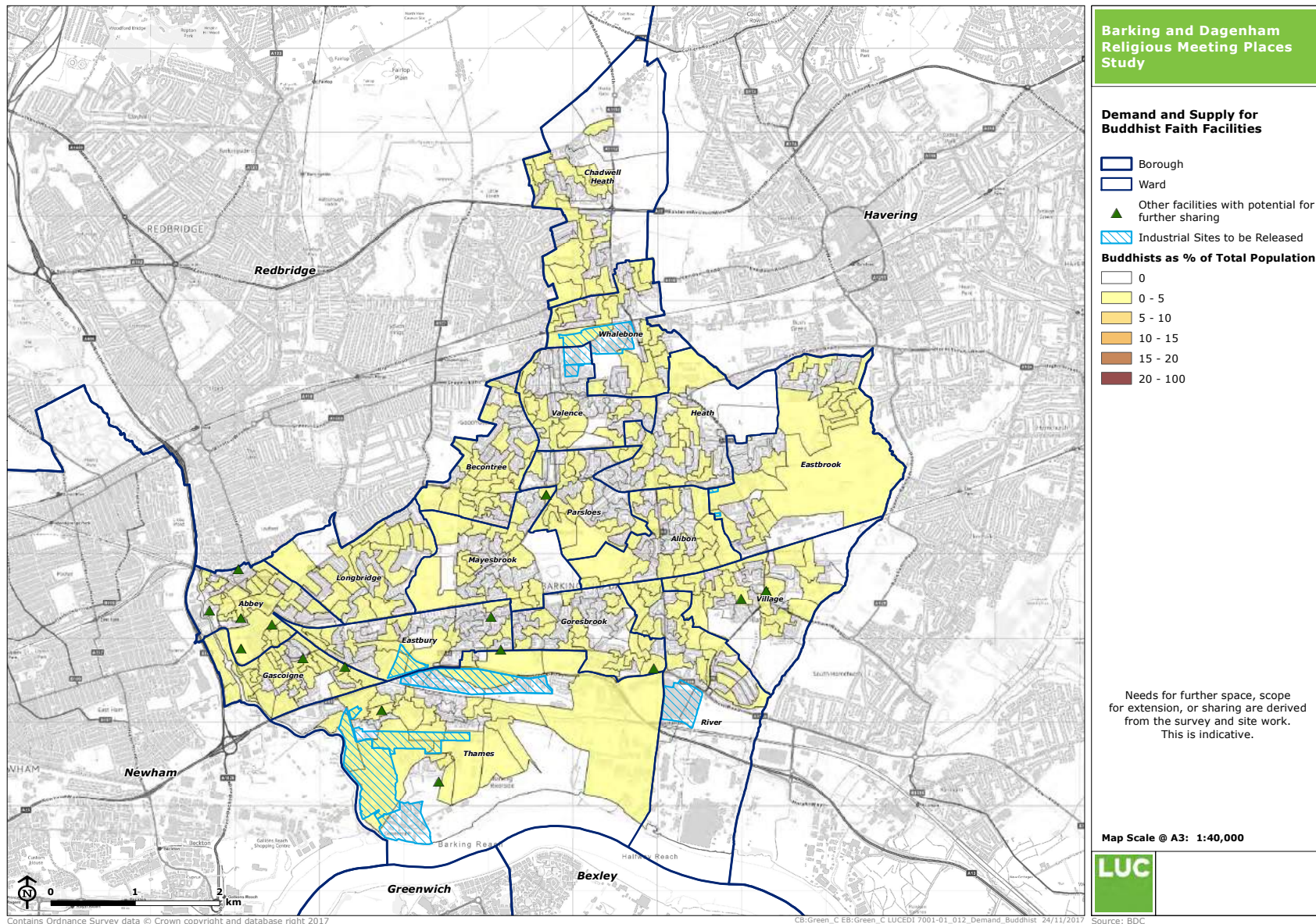
- One Sikh group facility was identified in the borough – Singh Sabha London East – and this group has been present in the borough since 1971.
- The group has attendees from Barking and Dagenham and neighbouring boroughs. No information was provided on the size of the group but it is reported to have grown steadily over the past five years.
- The main worship occurs on Sundays, with other services (marriage ceremonies, funerals etc.) and religious programmes taking place on weekdays and weekends. Other activities include:
  - hosting visits from schoolchildren;
  - birthday parties;
  - women’s yoga classes;
  - karate classes; and
  - Panjabi language classes.
- The group meet in a building which has been converted for religious use. The main meeting room can accommodate 201-300 people. The building is owned by the group and is not currently shared with any other faith groups. No issues relating to the use of the building were reported by the group.

#### 4.10.5 Buddhist groups

- There was significant growth in the numbers of Buddhists in Barking and Dagenham between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, an increase of 476 (130 percent). This percentage growth is far higher than that for London and England.
- The 2011 census data indicates that the Buddhist population is spread across the borough (Figure 22). There are no known Buddhist places of worship in the borough.
- The study findings suggest that there is no Buddhist group meeting in the borough at present. Redbridge Buddhist Cultural Centre is the nearest known Buddhist meeting place. This centre was contacted to establish if there were any specific needs in the Barking and Dagenham area but no response was received.



Figure 22: Buddhist population (percent) 2011



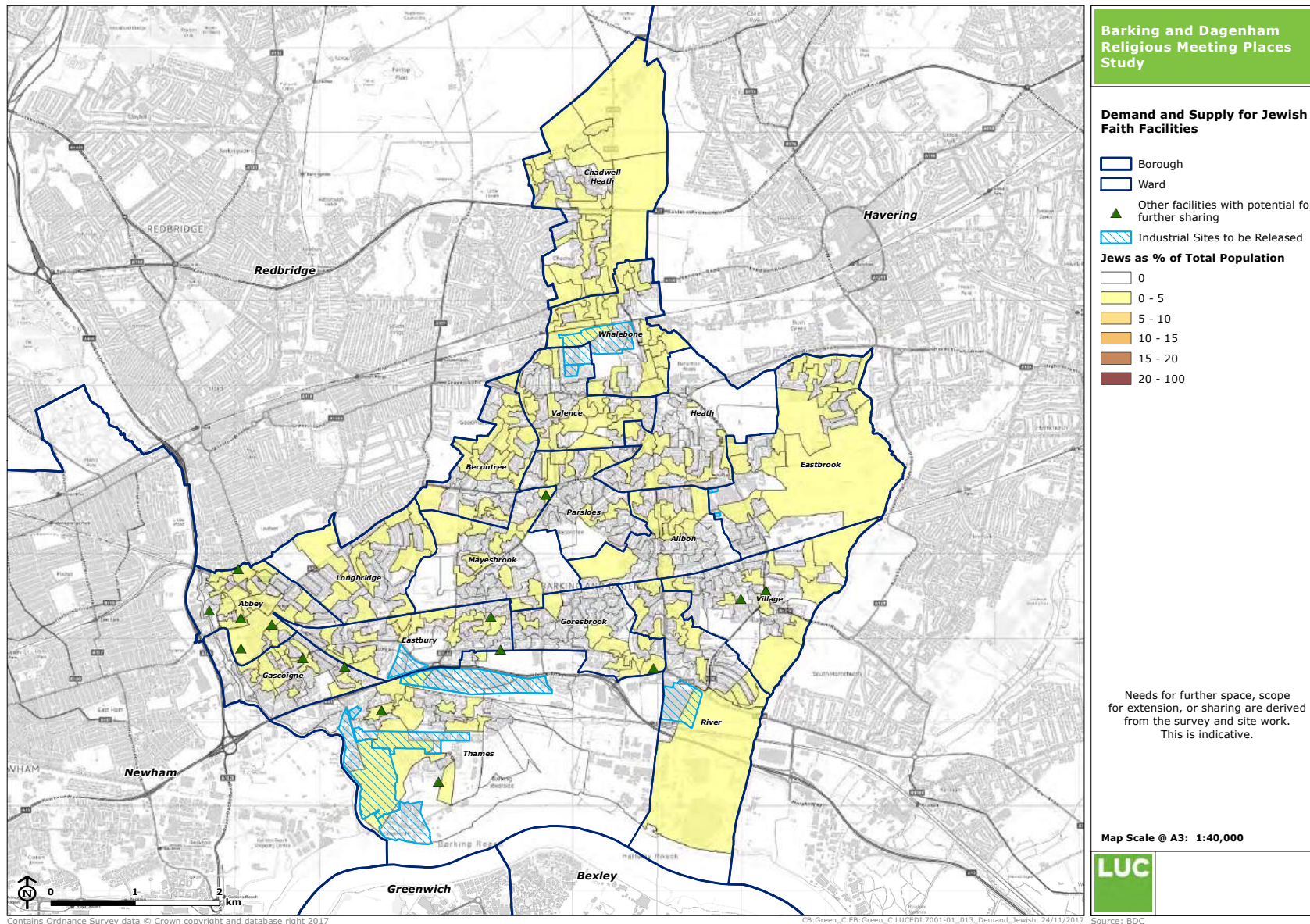
#### 4.10.6 Jain groups

- The size of the Jain community in Barking and Dagenham is unclear, as this is not captured in the census. One Jain group was identified in the borough.
- The Jain group do not currently have their own building but rotate their meetings between members' homes. The survey respondent from the Jain group did not provide any information on the size of the group but given that the group currently meets in members' homes, we assume that the group is currently quite small. The size of the group was reported to be unchanged over the past five years.

#### 4.10.7 Jewish groups

- The number of Jews in Barking and Dagenham declined by around 120 between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. This represents a decline of around 22 percent.
- The 2011 census data indicates that the Jewish population is spread across the borough (Figure 23).

Figure 23: Jewish population (percent) 2011



- There are currently no Jewish groups meeting in Barking and Dagenham. The former Barking and Becontree Synagogue (shown in Figure 23) is vacant.
- As part of the research for this study contact was made with Redbridge Synagogue. A representative there suggested that when the Barking and Becontree Synagogue closed in 2014: the few members that remained transferred to nearby synagogues such as Redbridge and Chigwell & Hainault. It was reported that there are currently 35-40 members of the Redbridge Synagogue who used to be members at Barking and Becontree. However, it should be noted that there is a significant distinction between membership and attendance. It was reported that a significant number are members for the purposes of their burial needs (ensuring that they can be buried close to family members).

#### 4.10.8 Baha'i groups

The size of the Baha'i community in Barking and Dagenham is unclear, as this is not captured in the census. A Baha'i contact was identified in the borough but they did not respond to requests to participate in the study. It is understood that Baha'i meetings currently take place in members' homes.

# 5 Needs/Opportunities Assessment

## 5.1 Existing need

### 5.1.1 Need for new facilities

Figure 24 shows faith groups' stated need for new facilities. Christian groups are quite evenly split between those who need additional space now and those who do not need additional space. However, there are also a significant number of groups who indicated that they are likely to need additional space in the future. When analysing this demand more closely, it is apparent that the demand for additional facilities is driven by the groups outside of the traditional denominations – this is shown in Figure 25. Most Muslim groups need additional space or are likely to do so in future.

The Hindu and Jain groups who responded to the survey both indicated that they have a need for additional space now. Neither of these groups have their own dedicated facility in the borough at the moment.

Figure 24: Groups' need for additional space, by religion

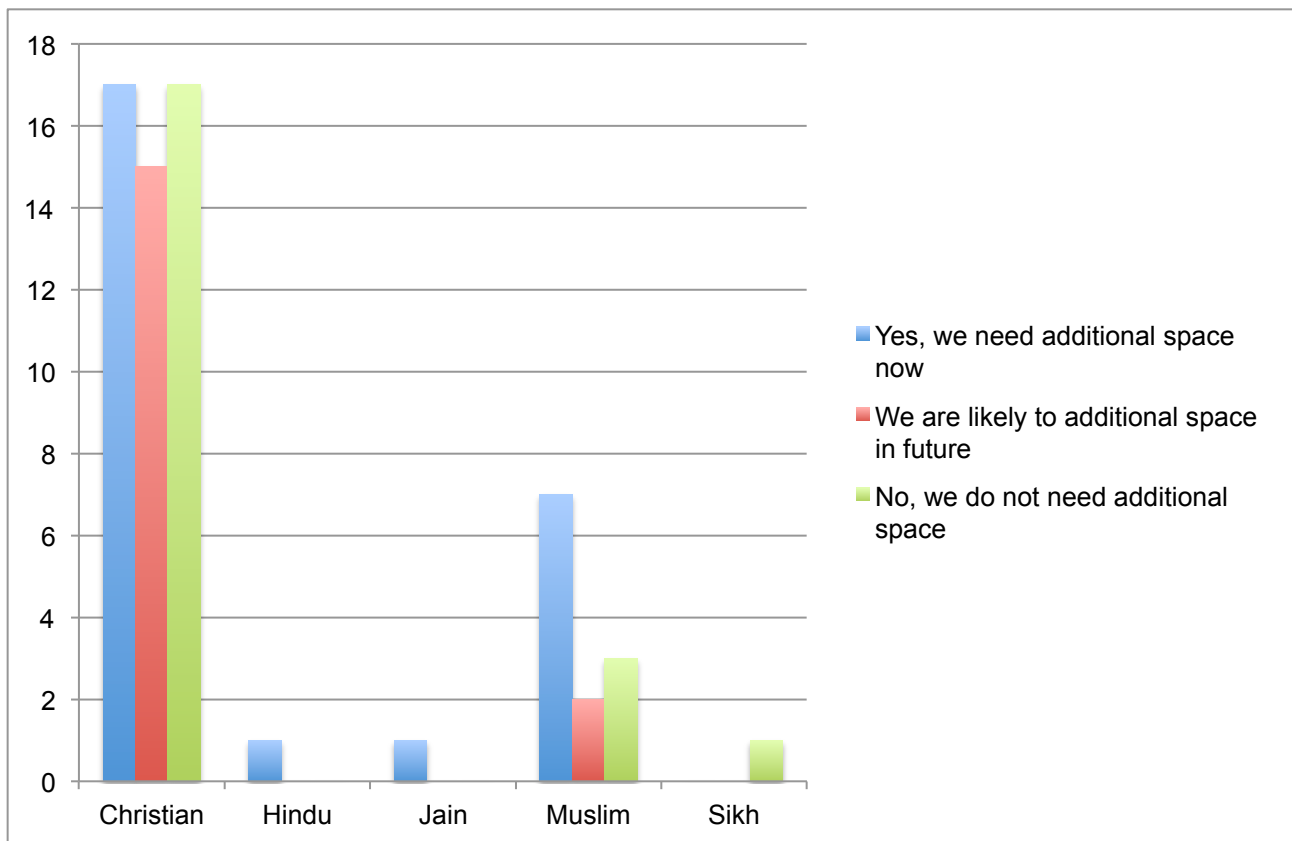
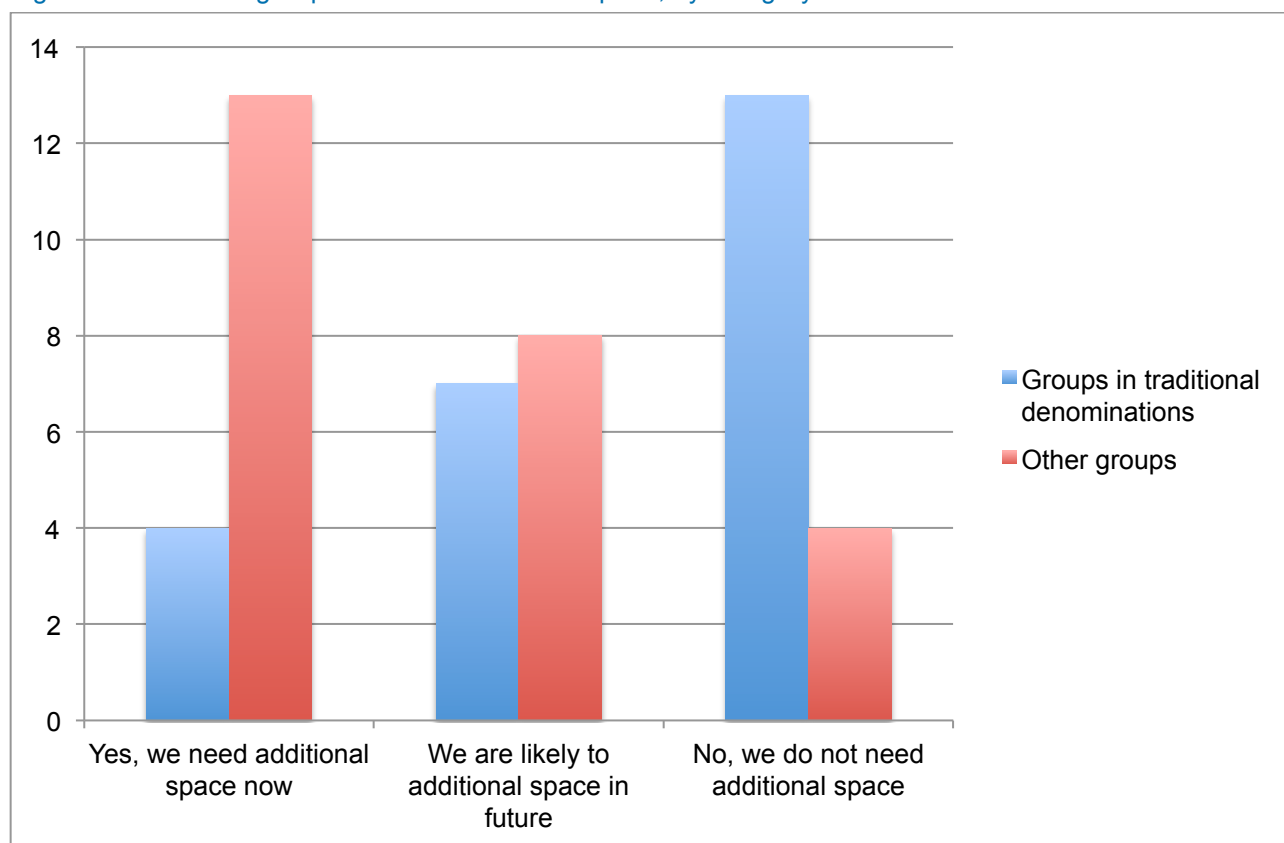


Figure 25: Christian groups' need for additional space, by category



Those groups who indicated a need for additional space were asked to provide further details and the responses highlight considerable diversity in the drivers of need.

A number of the Christian groups within the traditional denominations indicated a need for additional space to accommodate worshippers at their main meetings. However, a significant number of groups indicated that the need was being driven by a desire to deliver a wider range of activities. One of these groups, for example, referred to multi-million pound plans to reconfigure their site in order to allow them to engage more effectively with their local community – through provision of a coffee shop and, with partners, provision of English language classes, health education, elderly support services and a contact centre for estranged families. Others refer to making their buildings more 'fit for purpose', e.g. to establish disabled access or to get more storage.

There are similar drivers amongst other Christian groups. A number of these groups refer to a need for new facilities to accommodate provision of community services, including:

- a summer night shelter;
- education and training programmes aimed at the unemployed;
- youth projects;
- drug and alcohol projects;
- a food bank; and
- support services for older people and those with disabilities.

However, a substantial number of these groups refer simply to a need for their own facilities or to a need to accommodate a growing congregation.

Among Muslim groups, similarly, the need for additional space is being driven both by growing numbers of worshippers and also by a desire to expand the range of activities – educational activities particularly. It is apparent from the responses from these groups that some are operating in facilities which are far from ideal for their purposes. For example, one group is unable to conduct Friday prayers because this would contravene planning conditions, whilst another refers to 90-120 people meeting for prayers in a space which is designed to accommodate no more than 20 people.

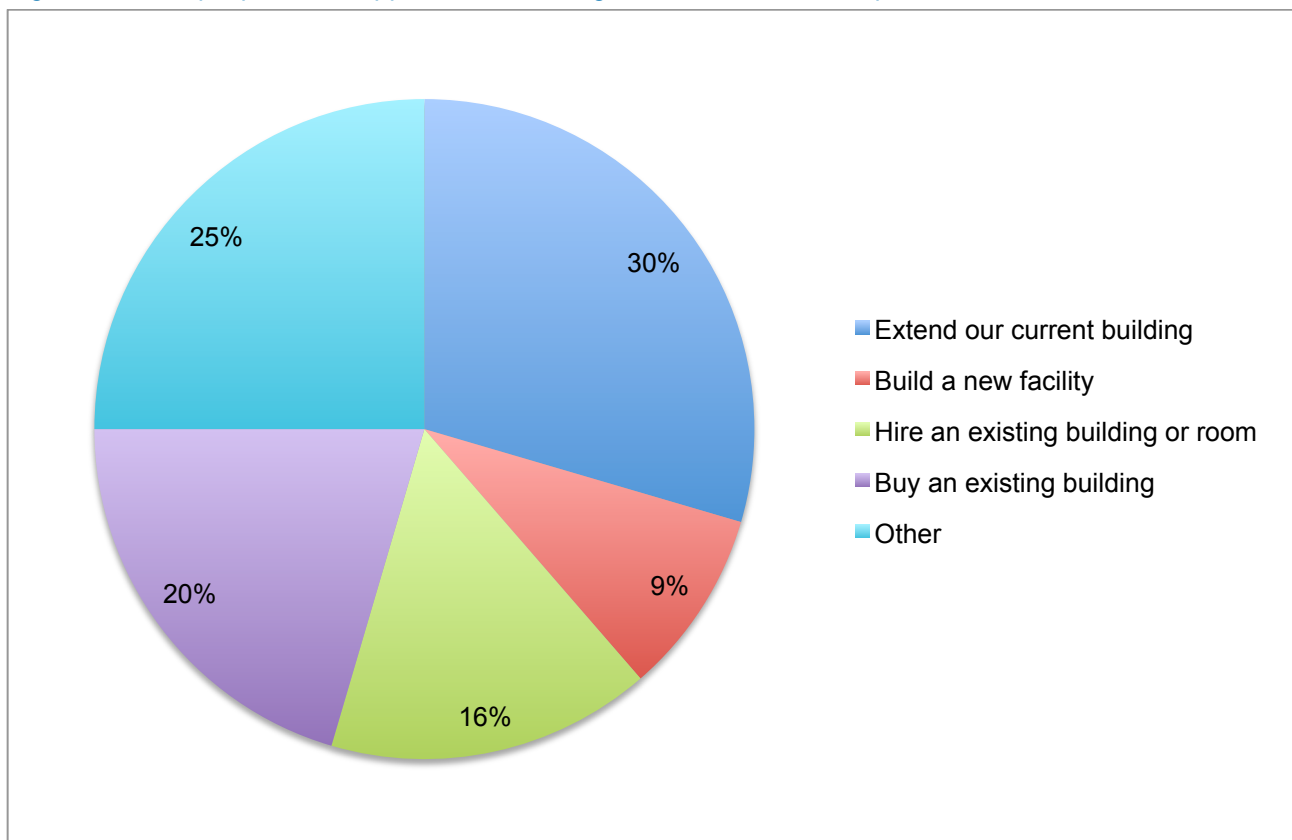
The Hindu group (Community Concord) do not have their own facility in the borough and reported that this constrained their ability to ‘express the faith and spirituality which our religion offers’. The hiring of suitable facilities was reported to be too expensive. They reported that most members of the group visit temples or attend other faith events outside the borough.

The Jain group, similarly, do not currently have a facility in the borough and meet in members’ homes and would like to build a temple and community centre in the Riverside area of the borough.

### 5.1.2 Preferences for meeting needs

Figure 26 shows faith groups’ preferences for meeting their needs for additional space. Of particular note is that only nine percent of those groups who expressed the need for additional space suggested that their preferred approach for meeting this need was through building a new facility. 50 percent of groups wanted to extend or purchase an existing building. Many of those in the ‘other’ category were uncertain about their preferred approach or did not have a preference.

Figure 26: Groups’ preferred approach to meeting needs for additional space



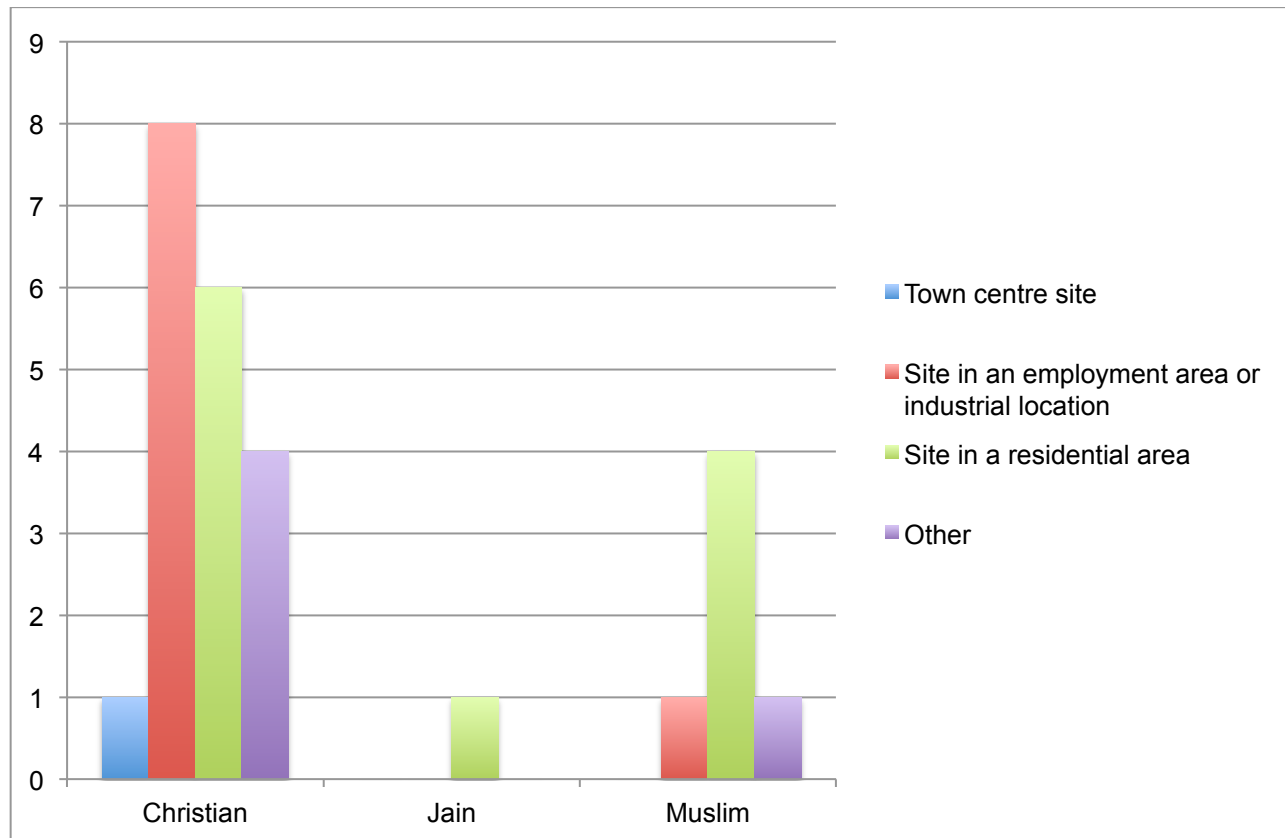
A number of the respondents also indicated that they had already discussed their needs with the council and/or that they hoped or expected the council to facilitate provision of new facilities, either through

supporting planning applications or through releasing now-redundant council-owned land or buildings for use by faith groups. One group reported a belief that the council were intending to provide four new facilities for faith groups in the Barking Riverside area.

Groups who reported a need for additional space and whose preferred approach to meeting this need was not to extend their existing building were asked whether they had geographical preferences for the additional space needed. The results (shown in Figure 27 and Figure 28) indicate that:

- Christian groups in the traditional denominations are more likely to prefer sites in residential areas, which is likely to reflect the fact that they often serve a specific geographical location;
- Muslim groups are also more likely to prefer sites in residential areas, which is likely to reflect the fact that many of the groups serve an existing local community and need proximity to residential areas due to the frequency of prayers;
- Christian groups outside of the traditional denominations are more likely to prefer sites in employment or industrial areas. The reasons for this are not entirely clear but one respondent suggested that they would prefer such a location as it is less likely to cause disturbance to neighbours. In the past industrial spaces have been less expensive than D1 spaces.<sup>5</sup> In some cases industrial sites meet group-specific room sizes or design needs – large spaces are more difficult to find in other locations; and
- where groups said they had a preference for an ‘other’ location for their site, this was specified in terms of characteristics, such as a site with good public transport links or near a community they serve.

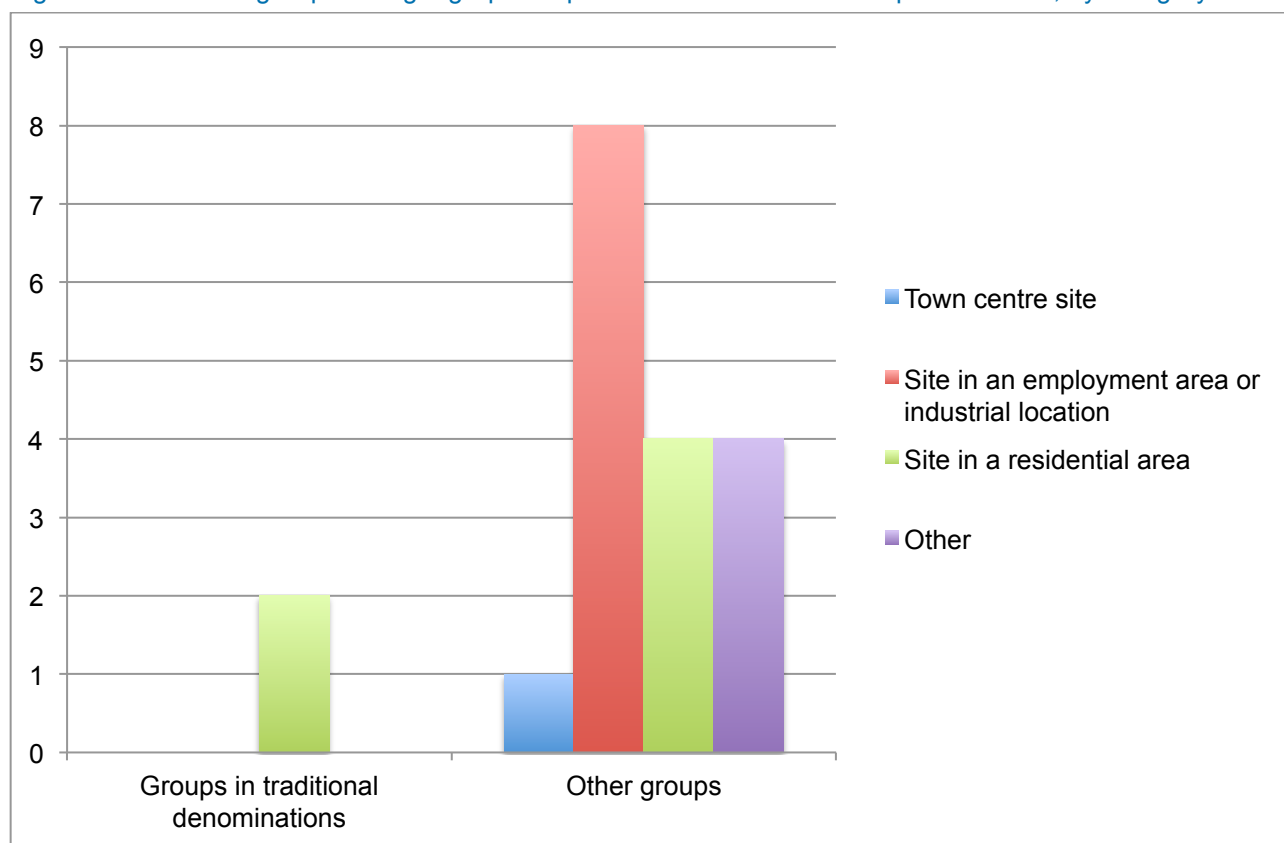
Figure 27: Groups with geographical preferences for additional space needed, by religion



<sup>5</sup> Source: Cabinet note, Planning for Religious Meeting Places - Amendment to Planning Advice Note 4, 24 April 2012.



Figure 28: Christian groups with geographical preferences for additional space needed, by category



Groups who reported a need for additional space and whose preferred approach to meeting this need was not to extend their existing building were also asked whether there was a specific geographic location that they would like the facility to be in. The results (shown in Table 13 and Table 14) indicate that:

- Christian groups within the traditional denominations are more likely than other Christian groups to have a specific geographic location in mind for a new facility. These are mostly the communities in which they are currently located;
- most Muslim groups have a specific geographic location in mind for a new facility, again usually linked to the communities in which they are currently located; and
- the Jain group have a specific preference for a location (Barking Riverside).

Table 13: Number and percentage of groups with geographically-specific preferences, by religion

Religion	No. of respondent groups with geographically-specific preferences	No. of groups responding to the question	% of respondent groups with geographically specific preferences
Christian	10	18	56%
Jain	1	1	100%
Muslim	5	6	83%

Table 14: Number and percentage of Christian groups with geographically-specific preferences, by category

	<b>No. of respondent groups with geographically-specific preferences</b>	<b>No. of groups responding to the question</b>	<b>% of respondent groups with geographically specific preferences</b>
Groups in traditional denominations	2	2	100%
Other Groups	8	16	50%

## 5.2 Likely future demand

### 5.2.1 Projecting future need - methodology

In this section, we set out projections of future demand for religious space for each of the main religions. The discussion is organised into three parts: firstly, building on Table 3 above, we describe the methodology we used to generate the projections; secondly, we present population projections for each religion, which are then further broken down in ethno-religious categories; and thirdly, we project religion-specific spatial needs in terms of changing floor space requirements (square metres), based on joining the religious population projections to the primary data generated by the project fieldwork. Data is presented for the borough as a whole.

The methodology for generating the projections of likely future demand involved a number of assumptions which are set out here. The approach is considered adequate, up to date and relevant. The 2015 GLA projections of ethnic group change for London Boroughs was apportioned ethnic groups to religions based on the cross-tabulation of ethnic group by religion from the 2011 Census (Table LC2201EW). This was then apportioned to the council's Borough Preferred Option (BPO) demographic figures. To allow for the likely fluctuation of religious groups as proportions of ethnic groups over time, we also calculated the same proportions based on the 2001 ethnic group by religion cross-tabulation (Table ST104), and took an average of the two sets of values in forward projections. Although this is no guarantee of greater accuracy of the projections, it served to correct for likely over- and under-estimation of specific groups that would occur if projections were based on the 2011 Census proportions alone, and hence did not allow for inter-census trends. The charts presented below are accordingly based on the averages between these two sets of figures. Finally, these apportioned data were then applied to the council's Borough Preferred Option (BPO) demographic projections for the same period, to adjust for proposed changes in housing development in the Borough and the anticipated impact of this development on total population.

To cross-check the robustness of our calculations on the relationship between religious populations and attendees, as well as to make up for missing data in some cases, we utilised data from the 2015 wave of the British Social Attitudes Survey, which includes questions on religious identification and regular attendance at religious services. These questions were used to calculate proportions of religious groups regularly attending a place of worship, taken to mean one or more times a week.

There are of course important caveats to take into consideration here. Firstly, in terms of the religious population projections, because of the way these have been approached they are unable to take into account a number of factors known from sociological research to affect religious belonging and behaviour, and which we would expect to have an impact on religious group size over the long term. These include: generational and gender differences in religious observance within religious groups; religious conversion and identity 'switching' over time; and processes of secularization, particularly likely to affect younger cohorts. Secondly, given that the projections inevitably build on the broad population categories used in the census (i.e. religion and ethnic group), this assessment of needs cannot easily be broken down into

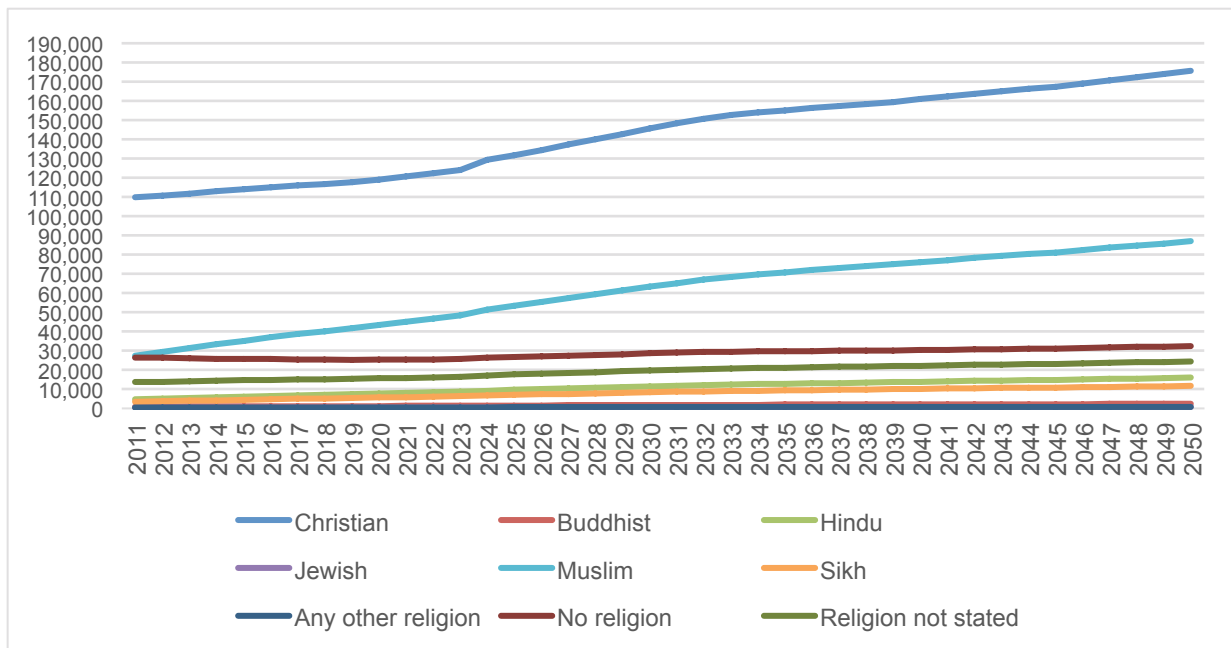
finer categories of religious tradition or theology. While the approach accounts for changes in religious group size over the time period, it is based on current data and knowledge. It is not possible to predict with certainty what groups will grow or decline over the time period, but based on past trends this is likely to involve changes to a number of groups within all denominations. Future provision for faith groups will need to be flexible and the changing nature of faith groups will need to be accounted for.

In terms of evaluating future needs for places of worship, we used the survey and site work findings to calculate current ratios between attendees and religious sites. Assuming for the analysis that these ratios will be constant over time (i.e. that as the size of religious populations grows the proportions of regular worshippers will remain the same), we were able to project the year-on-year change in overall spatial needs. Given the survey results reported in Section 5.1 above, current patterns of use will reflect an existing mismatch between supply and demand, particularly for groups experiencing marked growth – above all Muslim and African Christian groups. This mismatch between supply and demand translates into smaller facilities operated by some groups who may be using facilities which are smaller than their full spatial needs. As such, calculations based on current ratios of land use include a degree of this spatial inequality. While there will be some degree of variation between land-use ratios due to different spatial practices, there is also likely to be a substantial portion of spatial under-provision in denomination or group specific calculations because of current mismatches between supply and demand. The final ratio used was arrived at through a series of calculations and sensitivity tests, as outlined in section 5.2.3..

### 5.2.2 Projections of religious growth

Projections of overall change in religious groups to 2050 are presented in Figure 29. These show marked patterns of growth for the Christian and Muslim populations, and also (from a much lower base) for Sikhs and Hindus. For both Christians and Muslims, our calculations suggest that growth is likely to slacken off towards mid-century. By 2050 it is predicted that the Christian population will have added 65,940 residents since 2011 (around 160 percent increase) to a total of 175,845. The Muslim population is predicted to add 59,681 residents since 2011 (an increase of 318 percent), to a total of 87,048. These are projections based on current knowledge produced using the methodology set out above, including the assumptions.

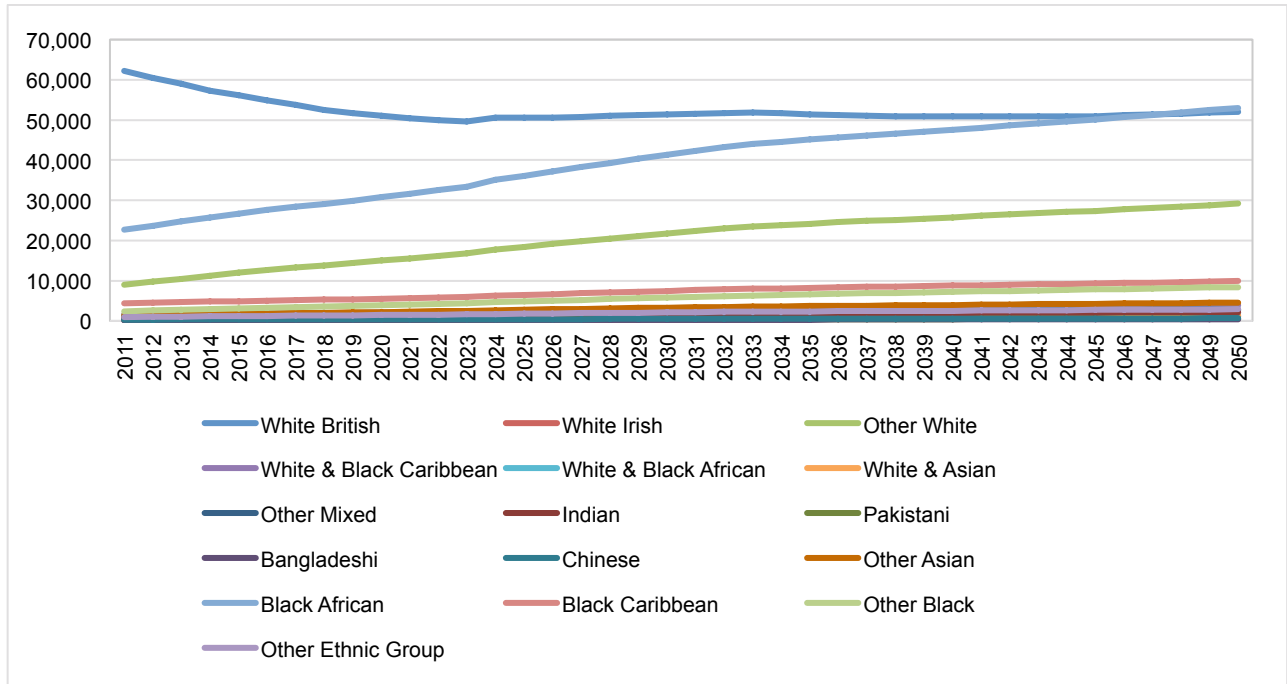
Figure 29: Projected overall changes in religious populations in the Borough, 2011-2050



However, in terms of identifying particular dimensions of future need, it is important to break these overall religious group projections down by ethnic group, to reveal significant differences ethno-religious differences. In the case of Christians, the differences are particularly marked, as shown in Figure 30.

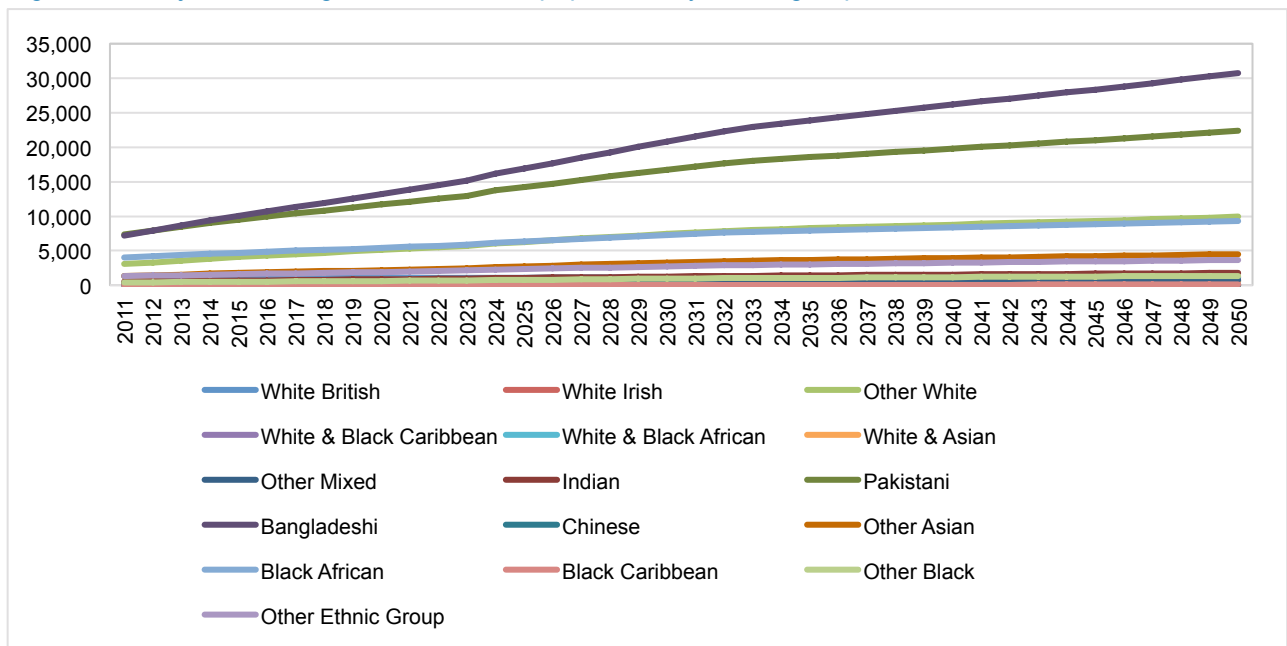
Above all, while the White British Christian group is projected to fall further (consistent with the fall in the overall Christian group between 2001 and 2011 reported above), other ethnic groups among the Christian population are projected to rise significantly for the foreseeable future, ultimately off-setting the White British trend. The key groups in this regard are the African, Other White and Caribbean Christians.

Figure 30: Projected changes in the Christian population by ethnic groups, 2011-2050



Similarly, within the Muslim population, there are particular ethnic groups whose growth over time accounts for the lion share of the projected change. As shown in Figure 31, the Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups, and to a lesser extent the Other White and Black African groups, explain a large part of the overall Muslim growth trend.

Figure 31: Projected changes in the Muslim population by ethnic groups, 2011-2050



Linked to an anticipated growth in the Indian ethnic population, the final growth trends worthy of highlighting here are for the Sikh and Hindu groups, whose adherents are predominantly of Indian ethnic

heritage. As shown in Figure 32 and Figure 33, growth of the Indian ethnic group, and to a lesser extent the Other Asian group, accounts for a sizeable increase to mid-century of Hindus and Sikhs respectively.

Figure 32: Projected changes in the Hindu population by ethnic groups, 2011-2050

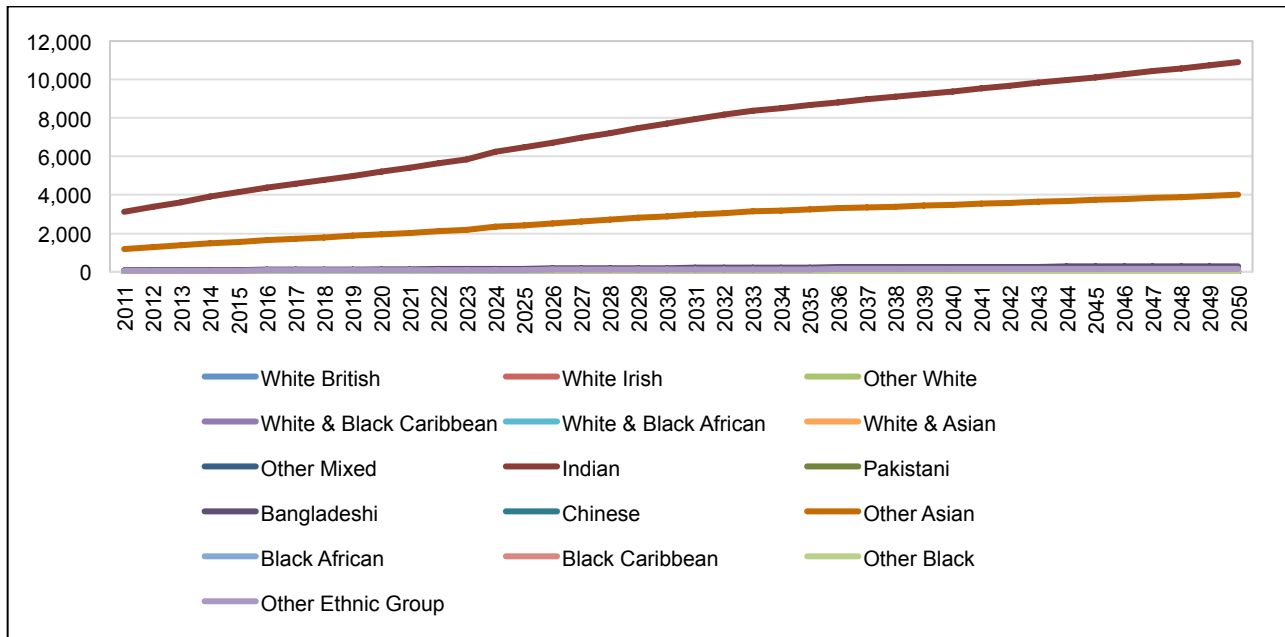
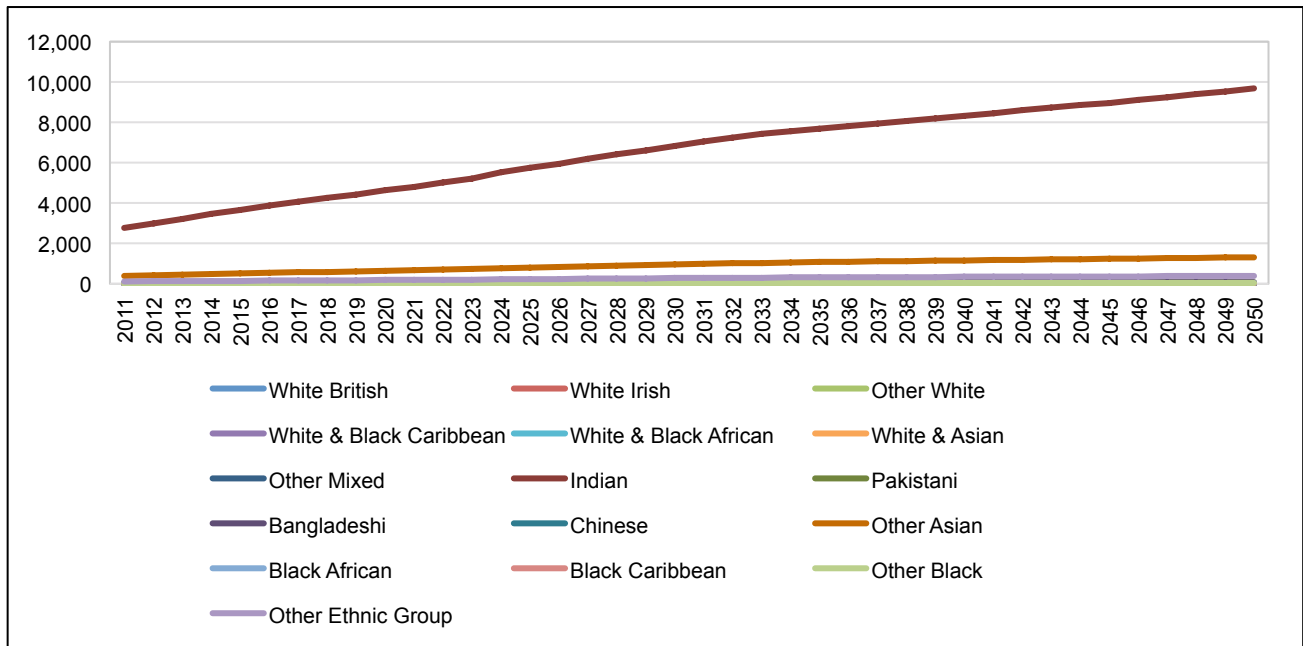
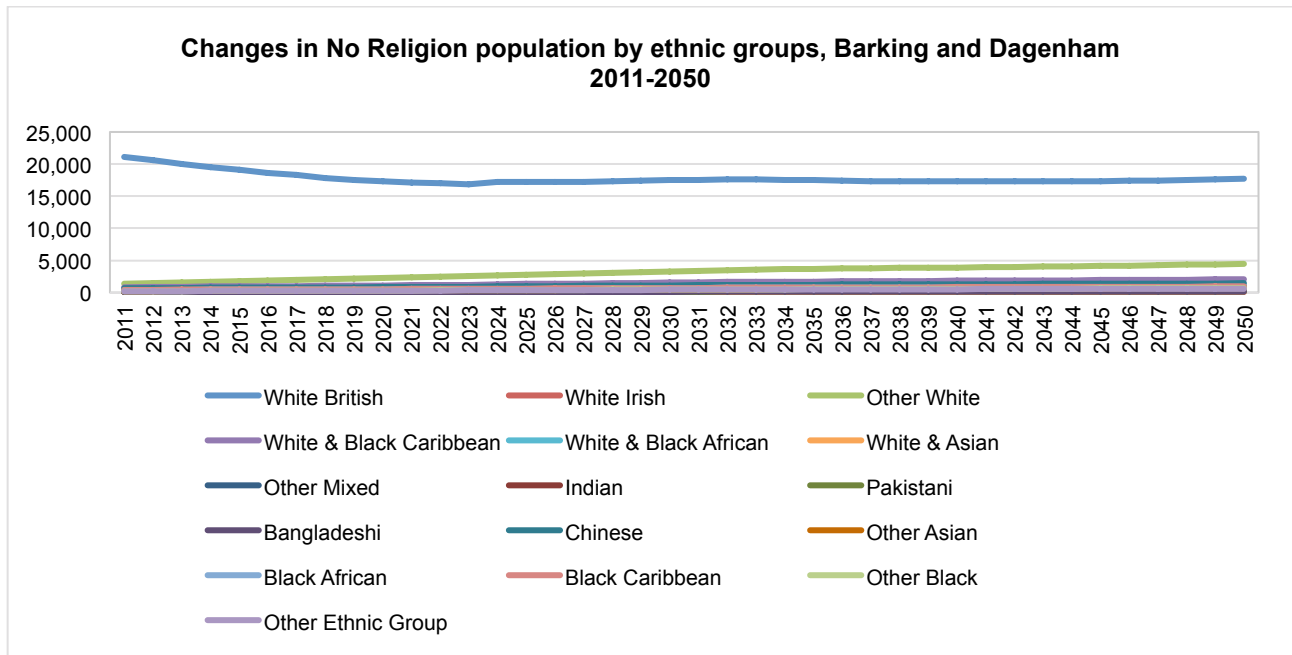


Figure 33: Projected changes in the Sikh population by ethnic groups, 2011-2050



Finally, it is worth noting the predicted changes for those of 'No Religion'. As per Figure 34 below, there is projected to be an on-going decrease then levelling by 2020 out of those of White British ethnicity with 'No religion', and an increase in 'Other White' ethnicity of no religion. Overall those with 'No Religion' remain relatively stable to 2050.

Figure 34: Projected changes in those of “No Religion” by ethnic groups, 2011-2050



### 5.2.3 Projecting future demands for space

#### 5.2.3.1 Method

The method for projecting floorspace requirements can be summarised as series of steps:

1. Generate projections for religious groups (as above);
2. Apply attendance ratios for each group, drawn from the British Social Attitudes Survey, to generate projected regular attendees in each group;
3. Apply a floorspace ratio, drawn from local survey data, to demographic calculations to generate projected principal meeting room floorspace requirements for religious groups to 2050;
4. Apply a filter for purpose built facilities to floor space requirements to arrive at the amount of purpose built floor space needed. This presents an estimate of purpose-built facilities needed, as part of the multi-pronged to supply recommended including new buildings, intensification of use of current sites, sharing, and intensification of use in industrial and employment areas; and
5. Convert to projected floor space requirements per household using average household size used by the GLA.

This is described in more detail below.

The projections for religious groups were generated as described in the previous section (step 1). Then projected totals of attendees for the religious groups were generated using data on attendance from the 2015 wave of the British Social Attitudes survey. Proportions of worshippers belonging to different faiths attending a place of worship on a regular basis (i.e. once a week or more) were calculated (Step 2).

Ratios of spatial units (square metres) to worshippers were calculated from the data collected, and these were then used to project forwards (Step 3). The site and survey database was used to identify median current spatial provision of principal meeting room space per number of regular attendees for groups in the Other Christian denominations and for Muslims, for which data was available. These groups were

selected as there is a predicted demographic levelling of groups in the traditional Christian denominations, as in Figure 39. As noted above there is a possibility of current spatial inequalities being replicated in a measure which focuses on these groups. A median measure was used which should account for this to some degree, particularly as some of the groups in other Christian denominations have substantially large facilities (with an assumed limited amount of spatial under provision), and the Muslim groups have on average substantially smaller amounts of facility space than the median (thus the combined median will address spatial under-provision to some degree). While derived from the two key groups which make up future demand, the measure used is intended to account for all groups.

There are number of assumptions about floor space ratio used. Floor space ratios were derived from faith facilities for which there were entries for both the number of attendees and floor area; there were a number of cases in which data was missing, and these were left out of the calculation. Shared spaces such as community halls and commercial sites hired as faith facilities were not included. Numbers of regular attendees are as reported by participants. The assumption made in applying the spatial ratios forward is that both the ratios of space to worshipper and underlying relationship between attendees and their respective religious populations are stable over time. This is of course a strong assumption, but defensible in the absence of previous time-series data from which to project forwards. The calculations include for all groups to be inclusive

A measure of principal meeting space was used instead of total building size. This is because it is not known what form future developments will take, and it is thus more attractive to be flexible in the ancillary and secondary spaces provided. Religious facilities will need a measure of ancillary and secondary space such as for meeting rooms, which should be considered in future calculations. Some amount of this could be shared. The amount of shared ancillary spaces used by faith groups would be an important part of a wider community space audit/social infrastructure assessment for the borough. However, this study did not assess wider community spaces as a whole. The need for this to be done has been noted in the recommendations..

The calculated median principal meeting room space per regular attendee is 1.22m<sup>2</sup>. The minimum ratio of principal meeting room space per regular attendee for all groups for which data was available was 0.17m<sup>2</sup> and the maximum was 14.79 m<sup>2</sup>. Due to the wide range a median was considered appropriate, not a mean.

The selected ratio was then applied to the overall totals of attendees for religious groups, to derive an aggregate floor area for the current year. This was then applied forward to produce aggregate floor space totals to 2050.

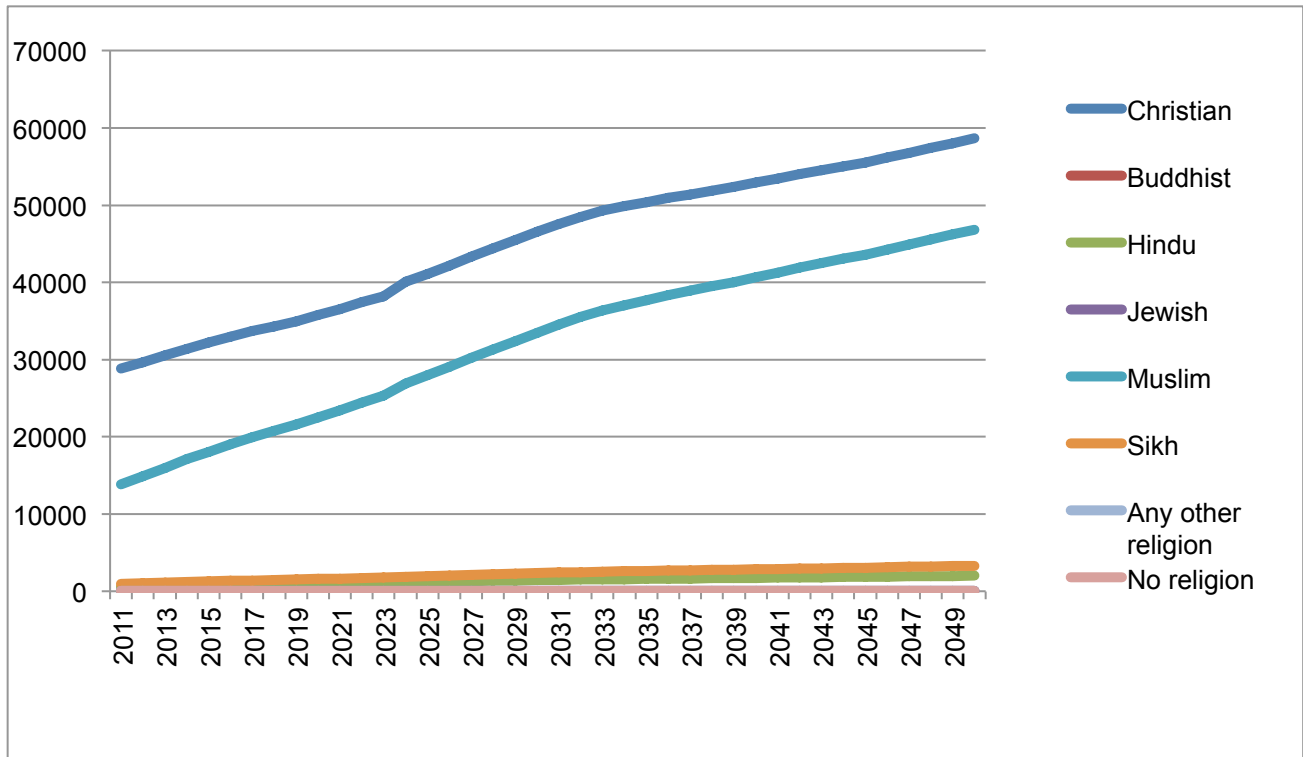
However, it should not be assumed that all floor space needs will be met with new dedicated faith facilities. This report recommends that a multi-pronged approach is necessary; future demand for principal meeting room space will be met with a range of different types of supply including the provision of dedicated worship spaces for hire and for purchase, shared spaces, intensification of use in current faith facilities, and intensification in industrial and employment sites. To calculate the proportion of purpose-built sites only, the proportion of current purpose built sites in the borough was calculated (57.39%), and applied to the total aggregate floor space. This assumes that the ratio of purpose built faith facilities will remain constant in the future.

The final next step is to take the purpose built floor space total for 2050 and generate a floor space requirement per numbers of new households. Projections for average household size for Barking and Dagenham are produced by the Greater London Authority ('households\_central trend\_2016 base'). The projected average household size for 2050 in Barking and Dagenham is 2.44 in this trend.

### 5.2.3.2 Results

The British Social Attitudes attendance data was applied to the BPO demographic projections to derive the numbers of projected religious group attendees to 2050. As noted above this is those who attend religious facilities regularly, defined as once a week or more. This is presented in Figure 35.

Figure 35: Projected Attendance to 2050 for Religious Groups (British Social Attitudes 2015)



The calculated median principal meeting room space per regular attendees (square metres) can then be applied to the total number of religious attendees projected for 2050, as per Figure 35. This gives a gross floorspace requirement, for which an adjustment factor can be applied to allow for dedicated religious meeting room places only. This gives a calculated 2017 need of circa (c)39,200m<sup>2</sup> and a gross 2050 projected need of c77,700m<sup>2</sup>.

The facility database has documented that there is currently (2017) c34,000m<sup>2</sup> of dedicated religious meeting room space, identifying an existing need of c5,200m<sup>2</sup>. This difference corresponds to the existing needs identified in the interviews and group survey. Existing needs will need to be taken into account when determining planning applications and developing the local plan.

There will be a requirement for a further(net) c38,400m<sup>2</sup> to accommodate population growth between 2017 and 2050.

This is a large amount of floor space, reflecting the substantial growth planned for the borough by 2050. It also evidences the pronounced demand in the borough for religious meeting places. Given this growth there is a clear need for a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach in providing supply.



### Ratio of space per households for major new development

The net principal meeting room floor space for 2050 (38,400m<sup>2</sup>) can be divided by the numbers of households predicted by the GLA for 2050 (2.44), creating a ratio of square metres per new household which should accommodate religious growth to 2050 in purpose-built facilities in new developments. It should be noted that this accounts only for future need for new households. This calculation comes to 0.66m<sup>2</sup> per new household.

This figure can be applied on a per household basis. The council required this formula to be worked out in terms of housing sites to be released in the emerging local plan. These sites and housing numbers are derived from the Housing Land Assessment/ Housing Trajectory provided by the council in 2017.

**Table 15 : Housing Capacity of Sites and Associated Religious Meeting Place Requirements**

<b>Site and Housing Capacity (numbers of houses)</b>	<b>Calculated religious facility requirement (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>
Ford Stamping Plant: 2,900	1,914
River Road: 5,305	3,501
Creekmouth: 3,441	2,271
Chadwell Heath: 3,753	2,477
Thames Road/ Barking Riverside Gateways: 3,000	1,980
Castle Green: 15,000	9,899

There may be a need to revisit these calculations based on site specifics or changes over time given flux in population demographics, the assumptions in the calculation method, as well as long timescale of local plan. These calculations represent only a portion of the new households for 2050, remaining needs will have to be supplied.

These numbers represent a starting place for faith provision in a Community Needs Strategy in these masterplan areas. Depending on site constraints, density, built form, existing local groups, adjacent areas, and other factors the calculated religious facility requirement can be refined. Provision for different groups will be a key issue, and need to be considered carefully. The use of a pastoral plan produced with local groups, as in Case Study 2, in section 5.4.2, may be useful. Refinement will need to be done in a manner which implements the multi-pronged approach recommended. This should consider all supply options set out in this report, but in particular:

- retention of existing sites, and where sites are not retained, lost facilities will need to be accounted for in floor space requirements;
- increased intensification of existing faith facilities through sharing or extension (those which add to current sharing practices);
- intensification of use of existing community (D1) space (those which add to current practices);

- shared spaces, including particularly the use of ‘multi-plex’ style multi-faith facilities with dedicated principal meeting rooms for different groups but shared ancillary spaces;
- providing opportunities for faith facility hire and for purchase; and
- delivery over the development timescale.

Space for secondary and ancillary works in religious facilities will also be needed. These should be considered as part of need for wider community facilities. The calculations in this report do not account for all community facilities in these areas, just principal meeting rooms for faith groups.

In practice there could be a number of different solutions for faith sites in these new developments which will depend on local context. For example proposals could include a combination of a multiplex site in a tall building (as in Case Study 3, Section 5.4.2), multiple dedicated sites to hire and purchase at market rates, intensification of use at nearby places of worship or community sites, or intensification elsewhere in the borough. It is possible that there is a key site with good transport links that would provide a better ‘multi-plex’ faith site than in a masterplan area. Similarly there could be a large established place of worship nearby which could use financial support to intensify their site. This will depend on local context and also local group support, so engagement with groups by the developer at an early stage will be needed. The proposals will need to be provided by developers in the Community Needs Strategy.

## 5.3 Potential supply

### 5.3.1 D1 uses

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts various uses of land and buildings into categories known as ‘Use Classes’. Generally, planning permission is required to change from one use class to another but changes of use within a use class are permitted development.

Faith facilities fall into Use Class D1: Non-residential institutions. This category also includes a range of community facilities, such as health centres, crèches, schools and public libraries, which could be used for, or converted for use for faith activities, unless planning conditions preclude this.

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham defines community facilities as follows:

*Sometimes called social infrastructure, this refers to (but is not limited to) children’s play and recreation facilities; education facilities (early years, primary and secondary); children’s centres and child care facilities (including private nurseries); health, medical, social and residential care facilities; policing facilities, public libraries; adult learning facilities; one stop shops, community centres, halls and meeting rooms; public sports and leisure facilities; religious meeting places; public conveniences; cemeteries and crematoria; open spaces and green spaces (including allotments); and emergency and services.<sup>6</sup>*

The council provided a list of community facilities in the Borough. This included a range of D1 facilities and facilities in other use classes, such as Leisure facilities (Use Class D2), offices/depots/warehouses (Use Classes B1, B8 and B2) and shops (Use Class A1). It did not include some D1 use classes, such as museums and law courts. The types of uses included in the council’s list of facilities are presented in Table 16.

<sup>6</sup> London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (2015) Issues and Options Report

Table 16: Community facilities in London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Corporate	Educational	Commercial Investments
Adult Social Care Services	Infant	Advertising Hoarding/Substation
Library & Community Facility	Junior	Children's Centre/Nursery
Leisure Facility & Heritage	Primary	Community Centre/Social Club
Office/Depot	Secondary	Health/Social Care
Car Park	Special	Land/Infrastructure
Children's Centre		Leisure/Café
Employment, Skills & Youth Provision		Office/Depot/Warehouse
Park, Allotment, Cemetery & Green Space		Shop
Housing Advice & Landlord Services		
Surplus		

The purpose of this analysis is to review the potential existing supply of facilities and/or space for faith groups. As such, it has been assumed that existing community facilities are likely to have demonstrable demand and therefore will focus on opportunities to use existing facilities for faith activities, rather than converting them. This is with the exception of those uses marked by the council as 'Surplus', which are assumed to be surplus to demand and therefore potentially available for use by a faith group.

### 5.3.1.1 Suitable facilities for faith groups

It is considered that not all D1 uses or community facilities will necessarily be suitable for faith group activities, particularly worship, which is the focus of this review. For example, clinics and health centres are unlikely to allow external groups to enter, particularly out of hours, due to the presence of sensitive, confidential information and technical, expensive and potentially dangerous equipment on site. Likewise, law courts are unlikely to allow use by external groups for security reasons. This may also be true for museums, but many museums have community or education spaces, which could be suitable for faith groups, if present. It is uncertain whether spaces that are not usually available for hire, e.g. museums and adult social care services, would consider allowing access to their building after hours for faith groups. However, those where it is uncertain whether space is for hire have been included as potential supply in this review.

It is considered that some of the community facilities identified by London Borough of Barking and Dagenham are also unlikely to be suitable for faith groups. Firstly, this review focuses on D1 uses, as these can generally be used as a place of worship without the need for planning permission (unless precluded by planning conditions); therefore, residential institutions, offices/depots/warehouses, outdoor spaces, leisure and sui generis uses are not considered to be a potential supply for faith groups. Only the following types of facility included in the council's list of community facilities are potentially suitable for faith groups:

1. adult social care services (day centres only);
2. libraries, community facilities / centres and social clubs;
3. leisure facility and heritage (museums/visitor centres only);
4. children's centres (corporate) and children's centres/nurseries (commercial);
5. employment, skills and youth provision; and

6. all 'educational' facilities (it has been assumed none of those listed are residential).

Facilities marked as 'surplus' by the council may present opportunities for new faith facilities through conversion. Likewise, it is possible that the 'land/infrastructure' category may include possibilities for developing new faith facilities, but current use and availability for redevelopment are unclear from the information from the council, therefore these sites have been excluded from this analysis. A total of 33 sites are in this category.

Many of the facilities listed above are only likely to be available for use by faith groups 'out of hours', such as adult social care services, libraries, children's centres/nurseries and educational facilities. As such, these are unlikely to be suitable for faith groups with a set timetable for worship, particularly where this falls in the daytime on weekdays.

### 5.3.1.2 Potentially suitable supply in Barking and Dagenham

The type, location and number of potentially suitable, existing D1 provision are summarised in Table 17.

Table 17: Type, location and number of existing D1 provision in Barking and Dagenham

(those preceded by '+' are those marked as 'surplus')

Type of provision	Location (ward) and number of facilities																Total	
	Abbey	Alibon	Becontree	Chadwell Heath	Eastbrook	Eastbury	Gascoigne	Goresbrook	Heath	Longbridge	Mayesbrook	Parsloes	River	Thames	Valence	Village		Whalebone
Adult social care services		1					1		1									3
Children's Centre / Nursery	3	1	2	1		1	2	1	2 +1	+1	1	3	1	1		3	1	23+2
Employment, Skills and Youth Provision	1		1				1											3
Leisure Facility & Heritage						1									1			2
Libraries, Community Facilities / Centres and Social Clubs	3			1		1	3	2	3	1	3 +1	2	1	4	2	4 +1	3	33 +2
Educational (Schools) <sup>7</sup>	5	3	3	4	2	3	2	3	6	5	5	3	4	5	3	4	2	62
<b>Total</b>	10	5	6	6	2	6	9	6	12 +1	6 +1	9 +1	8	6	10	6	11 +1	6	<b>126 +5<sup>8</sup></b>

<sup>7</sup> All entities included in the data received from the council are included here. Where sites as separated into 'Upper' and 'Lower' or relate to an infant school and a junior school under the same name, these have been treated as separate sites as it has been assumed they have separate facilities.

<sup>8</sup> Note that there is one additional site categorised as 'Surplus', Padnall Hall, but the current use of this site is unknown.

Table 17 demonstrates that there are 131 existing D1 facilities in Barking and Dagenham, of typologies that could be suitable for faith groups. These facilities are distributed across the Borough, with Chadwell Heath having the lowest number of facilities and Heath and Village having the greatest number of facilities.

### 5.3.1.3 Potential new faith facilities

Five facilities are categorised as 'surplus', suggesting that these could be available for conversion to a permanent faith facility. This is likely to require considerable investment from a faith group and is therefore likely to appeal to larger groups. Whilst issues such as parking and public transport may still be an issue at these sites, the faith group would be able to use the facility at any time (subject to planning conditions).

### 5.3.1.4 Adult Social Care Services

It is considered generally unlikely that adult social care services are likely to offer space to hire, as they are likely to be specialised facilities to meet specific needs of their visitors.

### 5.3.1.5 Educational facilities and Children's Centres/Nurseries

Almost half (47 percent) of potentially suitable facilities are schools. Whilst a little outdated, the Barking and Dagenham "Wider Community Access: School Lettings audit" (2009) suggests that roughly a third of schools do not have any space available to let. Assuming this is still the case, this reduces the likely availability of schools as supply to around 41. In addition, some schools may only let facilities to people and groups associated with the school or for activities that will directly benefit pupils, such as after school sports clubs. Schools affiliated with certain faith groups may be less willing to hire out their space to groups of other faiths for the purposes of faith-related activities, particularly worship.

Due to the fact that nurseries tend to be smaller facilities than schools and do not tend to have large halls, as schools do, it is assumed that the number of children's centres/nurseries with space available to hire is likely to be fewer than for schools.

### 5.3.1.6 Employment, Skills and Youth Provision

The facilities in this category consist of an adult learning centre and youth clubs. Vibe Youth and Community Centre is the only one of the three facilities identified by the council as being available for hire. The Sue Bramley Youth Club and Community Centre is also available for hire, but this has been categorised as a 'library & community facility'.

### 5.3.1.7 Libraries, Community Facilities/Centres and Social Clubs

This category of facility is the most likely to be available for faith groups to use, due to the fact that community facilities/centres provide a meeting space for local communities. Whilst social clubs tend to be primarily used by certain groups of people, they often hire out their meeting spaces. Libraries are less likely to be suitable for use by faith groups as they do not often have a single, large meeting space. The only library known to let space in the borough is Barking Library, although there are only two other libraries currently in use.

### 5.3.1.8 Leisure Facility and Heritage

Two potentially suitable facilities were identified in this category: Eastbury Manor House and Valence House Museum/Visitors Centre. Both of these facilities have space available for hire.

### 5.3.1.9 Estimate of total potentially suitable D1 provision

It is estimated that a maximum of 86 D1 sites within Barking and Dagenham are potentially suitable for use by faith groups and five sites are potentially suitable for redevelopment as a faith facility, based on the following assumptions:

1. facilities for adult social care services would not be available to hire;
2. a third of schools would not have space available for hire;
3. half of children's centres/nurseries would not have space available for hire; and
4. 'The Vibe' would be the only facility in the 'employment, skills and youth provision' category available for hire.

However, it is important to note that the actual number of sites likely to be suitable for use by faith groups may be substantially lower than 85 for the following reasons:

- willingness of the owners and/or operators to let space to faith groups;
- many of these facilities may not have rooms of a suitable size for the needs of faith groups;
- planning conditions may prevent use of the facility as a place of worship;
- there are likely to be restrictions regarding times that the facility is available for use; and
- there may be other issues, such as lack of parking or accessibility by public transport.

It is estimated that a minimum of 31 sites are likely to be available for some extent of use by faith groups. This is based on the number of libraries, community facilities/centres and social clubs, less the two libraries not available for hire. Again, the actual suitability of these sites is likely to be lower than this, due to potential planning conditions and restrictions regarding times the facilities are available. Whilst schools, children's centres, nurseries and libraries are likely to be unusable on weekdays (particularly during the daytime), community facilities/centres and social clubs are likely to have more restricted availability at weekends.

### 5.3.1.10 Conclusion

Between 31 and 86 existing D1 facilities in Barking and Dagenham are likely to be available for use by faith groups and there are five potential sites for new, permanent faith facilities in the Borough. However, the suitability of these sites is likely to be limited by a number of factors. Existing D1 could make a potential contribution to meeting demand for faith facilities, but further work is needed to quantify the availability and suitability of this, as discussed in section 7.

## 5.3.2 Scope for extensions/intensification

Data from the site visits suggests that over half (59 percent) of the 61 purpose-built Christian faith facilities are likely to have scope to extend, although this would be at the expense of parking for over half (58 percent) of these facilities. None of these was considered to have potential to build additional storeys. Half (17) of non-purpose-built facilities are likely to have scope to expand, which is a slightly lower proportion than for purpose-built facilities. Just over half of these non-purpose-built facilities are community centres<sup>9</sup>, four are industrial buildings and the remainder are offices, a bank and a cinema.

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<sup>9</sup> All community centres used by faith groups are operational, therefore faith is not the primary purpose of these buildings.

Approximately half of those non-purpose-built facilities with scope to expand would be at the expense of parking. Some 41 percent of non-purpose-built facilities with scope to expand may be able to build additional storeys onto the existing building.

Both Jehovah's Witnesses faith facilities were considered to have scope to expand, although this would be at the expense of parking.

One of the two purpose-built Muslim faith facilities was considered to have scope to expand, whereas four of the non-purpose-built facilities have scope to expand. Of these four, three are community centres, one would have scope to expand at the expense of parking, and one (an office building) may have scope to build additional storeys.

The single Sikh faith facility is not thought to have scope for further expansion, as the facility already has planning permission to extend onto land previously owned by the council.

## 5.4 Sharing sites

This project has a particular remit to consider site sharing and multi-faith sites. These results are reported here. Fieldwork data is reported, followed by an identification of key issues, a review of good practice in sharing using case studies, and conclusions provided.

### 5.4.1 Scope for sharing

Survey and interview participants were asked if the buildings they used had potential for further sharing. Responses suggest that 44 percent of the buildings used have potential for further sharing.

Respondents were also asked if they had any interest in sharing multi-faith sites or intra-faith sites. The survey questions included asking if there was interest in sharing worship space, or community use space, and provided the opportunity for explaining the answer. The inclusion of a question on community use space reflected the substantial number of non-worship activities that faith organisations undertake (such as children's groups, poverty relief activities etc.- see section 4.8). A targeted session was also held to discuss this at the scoping workshop. A multi-faith site would be shared between all religious groups, whereas an intra-faith site would be shared within religious denominations (e.g. shared by Christians, shared by Muslims etc.).

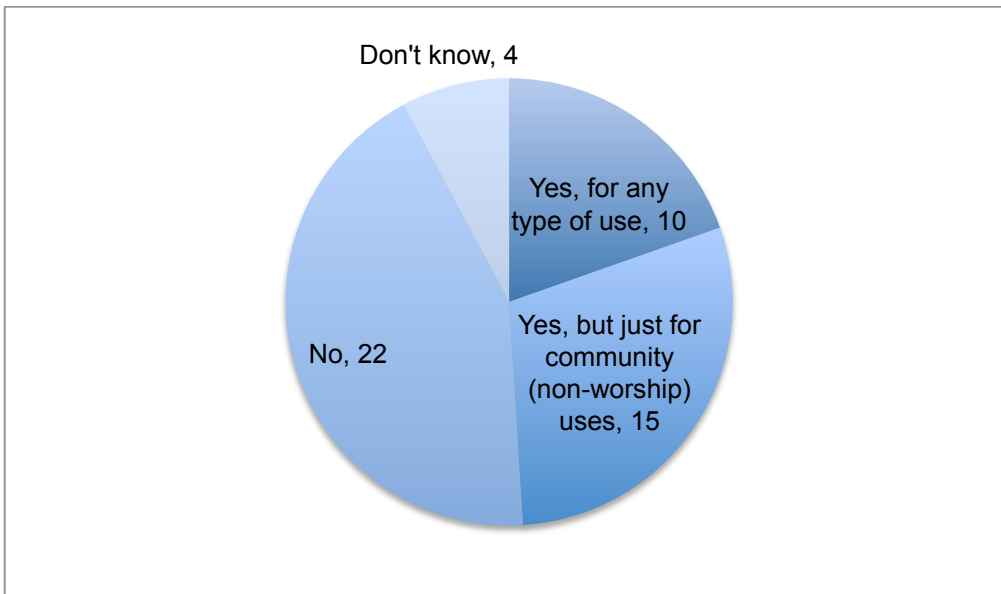
Respondents were also asked if they knew of "any sites or buildings in Barking and Dagenham which you think would be suitable for a new faith facility for either worship or other uses?" 23 respondents provided names of possible sites, which were provided to the council.

The quantitative survey data is presented first, followed by an analysis of the qualitative responses from the interviews, survey and workshop. The qualitative data analysis first outlines the practical difficulties of sharing, and then discusses evidence which points to ways to promote and improve sharing practices. Then a review of case studies on site sharing is provided, identifying key considerations and success factors. The final part of this sub-section provides a concluding discussion on the scope for sharing.



### 5.4.1.1 Survey data on interest in site sharing

Figure 36: Interest in different types of multi-faith sharing, All Groups



There was divided opinion on multi-faith site sharing. Almost half of respondents were open to some type of multi-use sites (25 out of 51) (combining the interest in sharing worship sites as well as shared restricted to community use), the largest portion supporting sharing for non-worship uses. A slightly lower number (22 respondents) were not interested in sharing.

Interest in sharing sites was notably differentiated by religion, as shown in Figure 37.

Figure 37: Interest in different types of multi-faith sharing, by religion

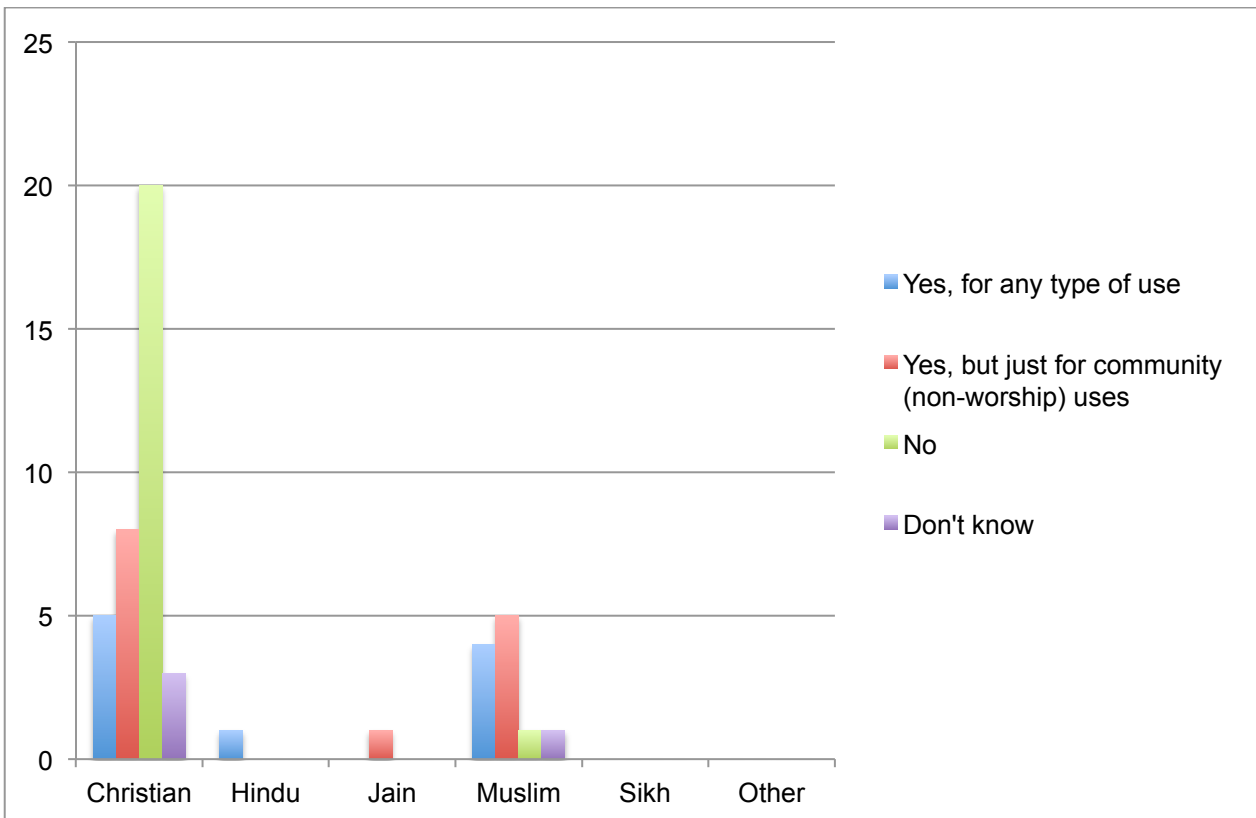
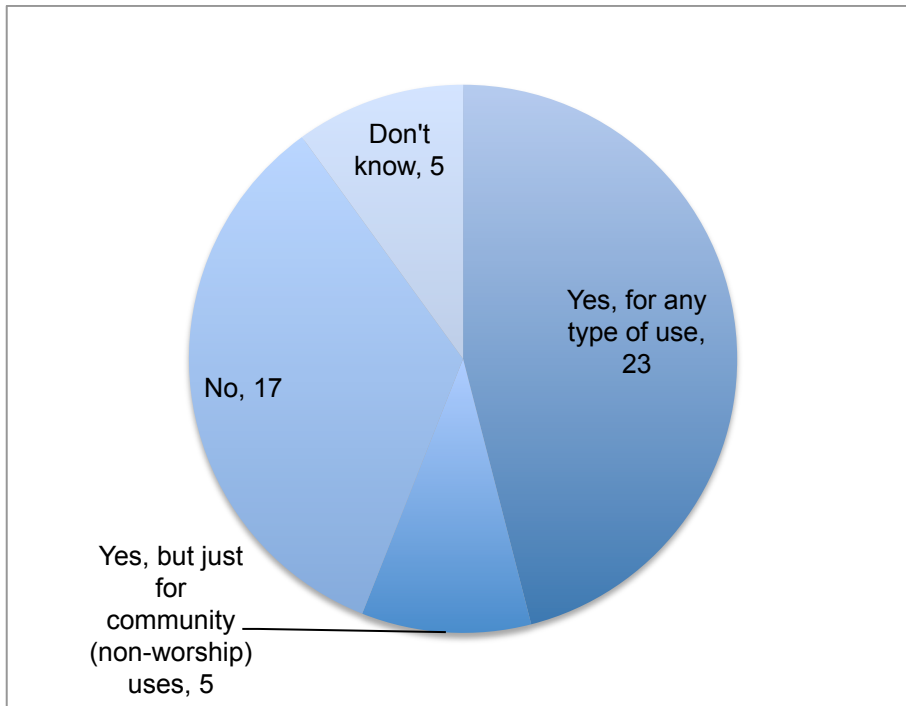


Figure 37 shows that there is a substantial portion of Christian respondents who had no interest in multi-faith site sharing. This is due to a number of practical and theological concerns, some of which were expressed in the survey, interviews and the scoping workshop, as discussed further below. The other religions showed relatively greater support for sharing. For all religious denominations there was consistently greater interest in sharing for community, or non-worship, purposes.

There was more interest in intra-faith sharing. This is presented in Figure 38 and Figure 39.

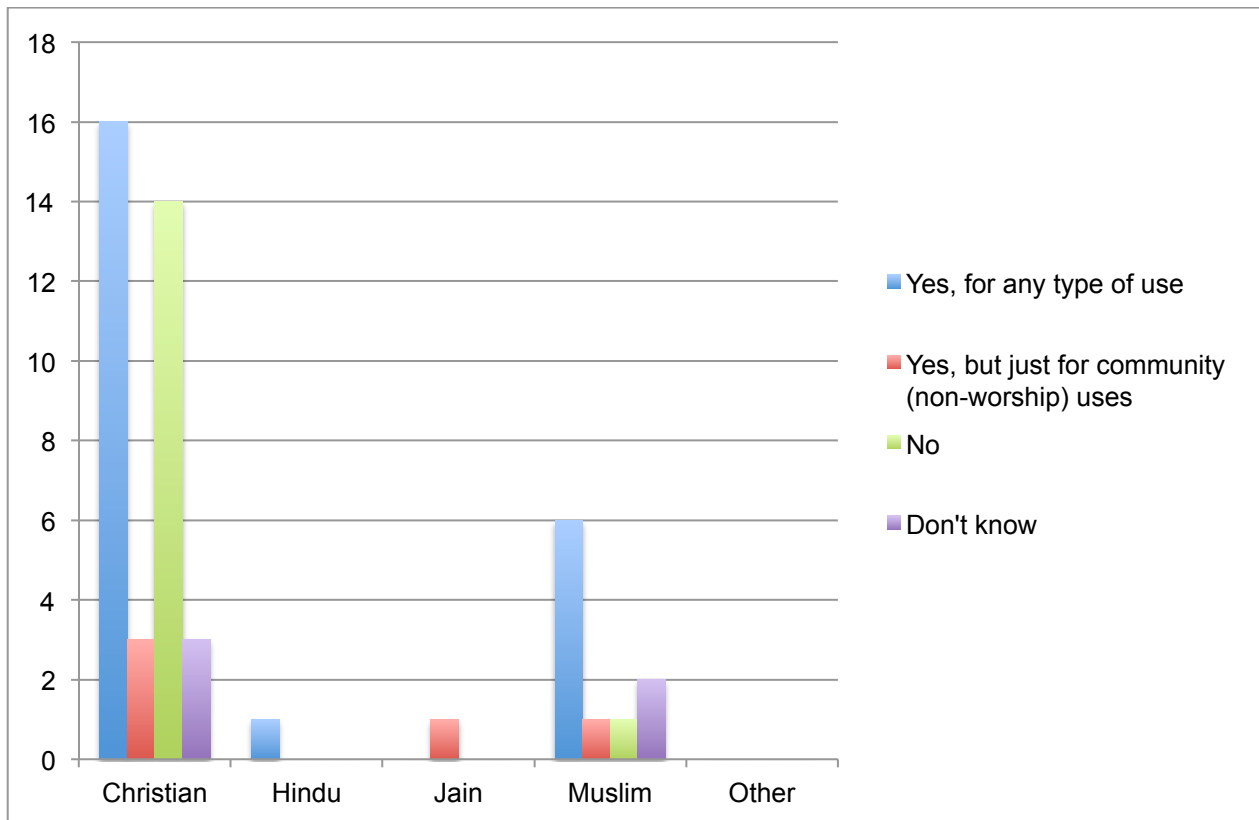
Figure 38: Interest in different types of intra-faith sharing, all religions



Combined interest in intra-faith sharing of any type was slightly higher than for multi-faith sites (28 out of 50 respondents to this question), with a substantial increase in interest in site sharing for worship uses.

This interest is also evidenced when the data is considered by religion, Figure 39, which shows that there is the most support in all groups for intra-faith sharing for any type of use.

Figure 39: Interest in different types of intra-faith sharing, by religion



The study findings indicate that the majority of faith groups would either not be interested in multi-faith sharing or would only be interested in multi-faith for community (non-worship) uses. On the other hand, almost half of the groups would be interested in intra-faith sharing for any type of use (including worship).

#### 5.4.1.2 Practical difficulties

The survey, interview and workshop evidenced strong opinions on site sharing. It needs to be appreciated that it is very likely that there will be those who are strongly averse to sharing sites. Site sharing of any type also raises a number of practical and theological issues, which are set out below. This is not an exhaustive list, but identifies key issues raised by participants:

##### Worship-related

- timing constraints over worship times as only one group can use a shared site during key worship periods;
- consecration of worship space makes it inappropriate to share for worship;
- because the timetabling of Islamic prayers changes every day (prayers are set according to the exact pattern of the sun), they cannot be easily scheduled into a weekly time slot;
- shared spaces often have low-quality design; this is a loss of the high quality and inspiring spaces which are part of many faith practices;

### Community activities-related

- faith group community activities present challenges for sharing arising from timing and the particular needs of the community groups. For example afterschool clubs can be a key community element for some organisations, but the afterschool time period may also be important worship time for other groups;
- there are also challenges of mixing spatial uses with vulnerable populations (such as children) with other groups;

### Practicalities

- congregations are substantially different sizes, ranging from less than a dozen to hundreds of attendees, and thus have substantially different room size requirements;
- varying needs (noise levels, worship space requirements etc.) which are difficult to accommodate within a shared space;
- need for storage of materials; and
- varying needs and associated design issues with shared spaces. An example was given of a room for worship containing the main access to toilets which children in an adjacent after-school programme needed to use.

There were some concerns and successes raised by participants regarding the operation of the existing multi-faith site in Barking Riverside. It would be valuable to look into this in more detail to learn from experiences and apply this learning to future sites. This study noted that:

- The place of worship provided in Stage 1 of the Riverside development was allocated for shared use by the Salvation Army, the Methodist Church and the Church of England (see Site Specific Allocations DPD allocation SS SC8A.) The site has been managed by the Salvation Army and has been in high demand. The extent and practicality of multi-faith use is not clear, and has changed over time.
- Some participants raised questions over the transparency of the allocation of this site and its on-going use.
- Participants understood that three further sites are to be provided in Barking Riverside, but participants were not clear on when these will be available, how these sites will be allocated and managed, and how big they will be. There was also confusion over who is responsible for providing these sites (developers or the council), and how residents can be involved in process of allocation for future sites.

### 5.4.1.3 Ways forward: Existing sharing practices, community spaces, design issues and the ‘multi-plex’ model

While there are pronounced difficulties in site sharing, and notable opposition to sharing, the study also identified a basis for developing sharing practices in the Borough. Four key points are noted, which are explained in the following paragraphs.

#### Build on existing sharing practices

The survey demonstrated that 44 percent of the buildings used have potential for further sharing, and that there is interest in shared spaces, particularly for intra-faith sharing and for community activities. There was also evidence of successful sharing practices within and between denominations in the interviews and the workshop. These successful practices could be built on to provide more sharing.. There is also an important opportunity to learn from experiences of sharing the religious meeting place in phase 1 of Barking Riverside.

Overall it should be noted that successful site sharing requires substantial investment through engagement with groups, such as working with those currently sharing sites to build on their expertise, identifying and supporting local social or denominational networks to identify solutions to needs, and remaining involved through management.

#### Community facilities

There are strong overlaps between religious meeting places and other community sites, all which are within the D1 provision in the planning system. The study highlighted the very wide range of community services provided by faith groups and the demand for further facilities to facilitate delivery of such services. There is evidence of demand for space within faith facilities that is given over to non-worship, social and community use. Additionally faith groups use a variety of community sites.

At the workshop one working group expressed strong support for a ‘multi-cultural’ centre (as opposed to a faith centre), arguing that this could be useful in improving community cohesion. Faith facilities play a central role in the provision of community facilities, and the provision of faith facilities needs to be considered within a wider assessment of need for community facilities. Providing community centres which could be used by faith groups is one part of the multi-pronged approach which is needed to meet demand.

#### Design and management is important

Some of the issues identified with shared faith spaces could be overcome with careful provision of new sites, such as high quality design, provision of ample storage,, and transparent management structures. Care will need to be taken with the design of any future shared sites. This will need to include participation by faith groups to ensure bespoke requirements are understood and met. There will need to be transparency in the selection of groups involved in design processes, as well as subsequent allocation and management of any shared sites.

#### The ‘multi-plex’ model

At the scoping workshop there was a degree of consensus that dedicated worship space within a larger shared building was likely to work better than sharing a single room or small suite of rooms. Sharing of larger buildings was conceptualised in a number of ways such as in a ‘multi-plex cinema’ model or a multi-level building. In these models each organisation or denomination would have devoted space (such as a single screen in a multi-plex, or a room or a floor of a multi-storey building) which they could adapt to suit, such as with storage, iconography, and other design requirements. A multi-storey building could have commercial/community use space on the bottom floor, then separate areas above to be used by different denominations for worship. Design quality and transparency in selection, allocation and management would be important. See Case Study 3, below.

## 5.4.2 Case Studies and Good Practice

Four case studies on multi-faith religious meeting places are discussed here to illustrate relevant key issues and identify success factors in providing multi-faith sites.

The Faith and Place network ([www.faithandplacenet.org](http://www.faithandplacenet.org)) was used to research known permanent multi-faith facilities in the UK. A small number of responses were received (which is of note in itself), most of which referred to multi-faith spaces in institutions such as hospitals or universities. Little evidence was found of successful multi-faith sites in new developments in the UK; what evidence does exist is in informal documents and reports which could benefit from thorough review.

The case studies have been selected as relevant to the Barking and Dagenham context, which is for the development of multi-faith sites for a growing population. Data provided is from the public domain, at the sources noted and accessed in July 2017.

### **Case study 1: Cambourne Church, a partnership of the Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed, and the new town of Cambourne, Cambridgeshire**

Source: <http://www.cambournechurch.org.uk/>;

Cambourne is a new settlement near the City of Cambridge, with a projected final population of 10,000 residents. The Cambourne development began almost 20 years ago, and works are on-going. Cambourne was selected as a case study as it is a new settlement, and the experiences of the Cambourne Church illustrate the challenges of providing shared worship space in a new development.

Cambourne Church brings together four Christian Denominations (Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed), and shares space with the Roman Catholic Church (for Saturday mass) and the Indian Orthodox congregations (once a month meeting).

The Church began at the early stages of development in Cambourne; meetings in 2001 are described as “*The waiting room of the doctor’s surgery (now the dentist’s) became the first meeting place. This was a time of dreams and visions. A time to bring your own chair to church and for wellies to cope with all the mud!*” ([www.cambournechurch.org.uk](http://www.cambournechurch.org.uk))

The search for space continued through a disused school ‘portacabin’ turned into a community centre, which led to the establishment of a church school (Vine Inter-Church Primary School). Use was also made of a community centre.

A one-acre site was provided for a faith facility through the S106 process, but that this did not have any funding associated with it. The site was thus developed over time as funds were raised. A building was completed in 2009, which provides a number of worship and community activities, as well as a café. Fundraising continues for a quiet chapel. Initial interest in the site was largely Christian, so an ecumenical site was an early solution (Cearns, Edward. 2012. “Partnerships, People and Places Faith in New Developments.” East of England Faith Council.)

Evidence in 2017 is that there are now a number of faith groups in Cambourne (including Hindu, Catholic, Muslim, and Christ Church), which meet at various public buildings including community centres and the village college. It was noted that the Muslim community was ‘at the point of needing its own facility’, and that 300 community groups in Cambourne compete for six possible meeting places, including those provided by the Church (Cearns 2012).

Key issues and success factors:

- a site was provided through S106 funds as an ecumenical site, with groups funding the building;

- predominately infra-faith sharing has emerged;
- some multi-denominational sharing has occurred by with the parameters set by the group managing the site;
- early and sustained link to community facilities (provision of a school, café, etc); and
- challenges arising more recently due to diversification of religious groups.

## **Case Study 2: Cambridge research on provision of sites in new developments**

Sources: Cambridgeshire Horizons and Three Dragons. 2008. "Facilities for Faith Communities in New Developments in the Cambridge Sub-Region."; and Cearns, Edward. 2012. "Partnerships, People and Places Faith in New Developments." East of England Faith Council.

Following on from early experiences in Cambourne, and given the scale of development proposed in Cambridgeshire, research was commissioned on best practice in the provision of faith communities in major new developments (Cambridgeshire Horizons 2008)..

The guidance proposes that faith buildings should be planned-in from the start for new developments of more than 2000 dwellings, with 0.5 hectares of free land or equivalent provided for faith groups. The research notes that sites of less than 0.5 hectares are too small to provide adequate space for growth in attendees and community services. The document suggests eligibility criteria, including charitable status, evidence of resources to deliver and manage a facility, and requiring community activities to open to all local residents.

Cearns (2012:4) notes the creation of a 'pastoral plan' for a site by a faith-based stakeholder group. This plan was produced by all those with interest in a particular development site, covering both faith and wider community needs, and provides a vision for a multi-faith centre and details on design of this and other community requirements. A 'pastoral plan' may be useful in creating an agreed approach to future development of faith sites in a particular development site. This would require joint working between faith groups, developers and the council, but it could be valuable to co-produce an agreed approach, solidified in a document.

These documents also suggests that developer contributions should be dependent on local needs and context, and could include providing a site, providing a smaller amount of land but fund a building, or providing a financial contribution based on the value of land which could be used in varying ways, including towards the expansion of an existing facility.

These documents note that providing interim space for faith groups at early stages of a new development can be of considerable benefit in facilitating the social life to new communities, but that there is also a need for longer term provision, including providing access to sites which can be acquired by faith groups. To provide sites for acquisition, D1 space can be allocated within a new development, but there are likely to be significant demands for this with associated impacts on land value. There is also the possibility of bidding option for sites in employment areas.

Further research would be valuable on experiences in Cambridgeshire, as it is not clear how this guidance has been implemented. It is not clear how relevant these suburban new town experiences are to the greater London experience of Barking and Dagenham

Key issues and success factors:

- identified need to planning in faith facilities from the start of a new development;
- use of 'pastoral plan' or similar to establish requirements for a particular area;
- eligibility criteria for groups seeking sites may be useful;
- provide means for faith groups to be involved in new communities from initial stages through to obtaining their own sites at later stages. Multi-faith spaces may be most appropriate at initial stages; and
- flexibility in the provision of faith facilities is key, and should reflect local contexts. Providing faith facilities could include many things including a site, a multi-faith building, funding for improvements off site, or provision of sites within other areas.

### **Case Study 3: House of Religions, Bern Switzerland**

Sources: <https://www.bern.com/en/detail/house-of-religions-dialogue-between-cultures> ;

<http://www.haus-der-religionen.ch/>; (accessed 17/10/17; translated from German by google translator)

This 30,000 square metre free-standing building houses shared community spaces, dedicated worship spaces, apartments, shops, services and offices, in a location well connected to the transport network. It is in an urban location, and was taken forward as a regeneration project. The design includes five dedicated sacred spaces over two floors, and shared spaces to engage in a neutral meeting areas which invites inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue.

The vision for the building began in 2002, funds were raised, and the building was opened for public use in 2014. The site was intended for use by religious groups who did not have any facilities in the local areas. In 2017 it housed Christians, Alevites, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhist groups, with Jews, Baha'i and Sikhs involved in the event programme but not with their own sacred space.



Figure 40 : Photos of House of Religions Berne: External view, shared cafe space, a sacred space and sharing practices in neutral space



Source: Google images and © HdR, <http://www.haus-der-religionen.ch/bilder/>

Key issues and success factors:

- strong local support and vision;
- dedicated sacred spaces for under-served religious groups, with other faith groups sharing the programme, and open to all community members;
- links between worship spaces and adjacent shared spaces provide benefits for community cohesion;
- large building of mixed uses. While information was not available on specifics of apartments, employment areas and other uses within the building, it is clear that the size and extent of uses would figure in the financial viability of this type of development; and
- substantial contributions to regeneration and community facilities (providing cafes, public space, etc.).

## Case Study 4: Best Practice Results from University of Manchester Research Project on Multi-Faith Spaces

*Multi-Faith Spaces: Symptoms and Agents of Religious and Social Change*, a collaborative research project between the University of Manchester and University of Liverpool from 2009-2013. Sources: <http://cargocollective.com/wwwmulti-faith-spacesorg>; [http://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/mui/marg/research/projects/current-projects/multi-faith-spaces/ProfileMultiFaithSpaces2\\_003.pdf](http://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/mui/marg/research/projects/current-projects/multi-faith-spaces/ProfileMultiFaithSpaces2_003.pdf)

This academic research project examined over 200 multi-faith spaces in the UK and ten other countries, and undertook over 200 interviews. This project provides recommendations on architecture, design, objects, use, management, disputation and best practice for multi-faith spaces. Project outputs included a free exhibition which can be put up in any public space, which has been done in a number of locations in UK, Europe and North America. The guidance on best practice for multi-faith space notes the following relevant key issues and success factors.

- There are no universal best practice guidelines for multi-faith spaces, and much depends on local practice and negotiations. Often it is best to begin at the smallest level with basic design, timetabling and staffing, before addressing larger issues around strategy, dialogue, and theology.
- Multi-faith spaces rarely occur in isolation, and typically occur in relation to affiliated spaces and actors, such as single-faith buildings, secular spaces used by faith groups, and pastoral and well-being services.
- Multi-faith spaces can provide space for a wide range of activities, ranging from quiet prayer and meditation to loud worship practices. This is a large remit for any one building which is shared for different uses. When done successfully buildings can be a community resource for a wide range of groups and individuals, including those of 'no religion' seeking space for quiet contemplation.
- At times separated spaces will be required for separate activities; some incompatibilities appear irreconcilable. Key points of incompatibility include: the need for some form of gender segregation within Islamic prayer; the presence of food and alcohol; the burning or spraying of perfumed material; the use of representational art and figurative idols; and audible and/or uncontrolled ritual expressions of faith.
- Management protocols are important; for instance, when seeking to control the noise or when attempting to supervise safe and effective changeovers during periods of rapid sequential use. Whilst some incompatibilities will be solved through the unification of space, or by allowing groups to use a singular space sequentially, others are solved by accepting the partial limitations of shared space.

### 5.4.3 Conclusions on site sharing

This study identified a number of considerations for developing future shared faith centres. It is important to note at the outset that shared sites, whether multi-faith or intra-faith, are very unlikely to accommodate all demand. Requiring groups to share where there is little support, or without transparent means of allocation and management, can lead to conflict. There are a number of practical considerations for shared sites which need to be addressed, including getting design details right, and learning from experiences in current shared spaces in the area. Substantial investment, both of time and money, is required for a successful multi-faith space.

While there are pronounced difficulties in site sharing, and notable opposition to sharing in local faith communities, the study also identified a basis for developing sharing practices in the Borough. There was evidence of successful site sharing which could be built on, and opportunities to learn from site sharing generally. There was more support for intra-faith sharing than multi-faith sharing in the survey. However, there was preliminary support for a 'multi-plex' model of sharing (when this was explained at the scoping workshop) which has dedicated spaces for worship and storage, around wider shared spaces to promote shared understandings and community cohesion.

There appears to be a reasonable amount of confusion about the term 'multi-faith' sites, which leads to misunderstandings. In practice 'multi-faith' sites described a range of differential uses, the most common being a small shared faith area in institutions such as in airports, hotels or universities (often a single room). These spaces are less appropriate in new residential developments, where historical precedent is for stand-alone places of worship in residential areas (i.e., the neighbourhood church). Sites shared between different faith groups or denominations can in practice be many things, such as shared between groups within a single denomination or faith tradition (what we have termed 'intra-faith') with multi-faith sharing at times managed by the site organisers; or sites managed by a multi-faith organisation (such as an inter-faith forum) which seek a degree of parity between different faith uses. Design is also important to reflect on, as there can be substantial differences between a 'multi-plex' model which has dedicated spaces for different uses, or a space shared by all groups for worship and community uses.

Existing shared practices could be built on; these currently often link to community facilities and community activities, providing the basis growth of further faith works within the wider mantle of D1 community provision. The work of this study identifying future faith requirements needs to be linked to wider work on community infrastructure provision.

There is no established best practice for multi-faith or intra-faith spaces, and successful sites emerge over long periods of time. There are notable challenges including funding, consents, design, and mediating between demands. The case studies show that building on local social networks (and likely individual supporters) is key, but institutions need to have longevity beyond small groups or individuals. Design and management are fundamental to a successful shared site. There is a need for different types of spaces in a multi-faith site in new developments, moving these beyond the provision of a single room or small space which appears to have been common in the UK in recent years.

Where successful, multi-faith sites can provide investment and key community facilities which address both worship needs and provide space for dialogue between faiths and cultures. The experiences of House of Religion in Bern are highly relevant to Barking and Dagenham, given the similar urban settings, and the preliminary support of some participants in this project for the 'multi-plex' model with dedicated sacred spaces. The financial mixed-use model may also be helpful in developing a design which is supported by developers.

Multi-faith sites are one part of a wider strategy for the provision of faith facilities in a new development. The UK case studies illustrate that there is limited established practice for providing religious sites in new developments for diverse faith groups. Relevant research has established a number of criteria for providing faith sites in new development which are relevant to Barking and Dagenham:

- need to plan in faith facilities from the start of a new development;
- use of a 'pastoral plan' or similar to establish requirements for a particular area;
- eligibility criteria for groups seeking sites;

- provide for faith groups for all stages of new developments, including initial stages development (where small multi-faith sites may be useful) through to facilitating sites for long-term lease or purchase;
- flexibility is key, and could include providing site and building a multi-use space, providing a multi-faith site or an area of D1 provision, funding for improvements off site, or providing sites in other areas; and
- The multi-plex model may be particularly appropriate in an urban setting.

# 6 Engagement with faith groups

## 6.1 Approach

This chapter provides a summary of this project's outcomes on engagement with faith groups. Engagement with faith groups in the planning system is discussed first, followed by the council's engagement with faith groups generally. A section on good practice is provided in conclusion, which provides references for good practice and then details on the Faith Covenant specifically.

## 6.2 Planning system

Participants were asked how well the planning system works for faith groups, and asked for suggested changes to the planning system. They were also asked if they were aware of the council's Planning Advice Note on religious meeting places. This data is discussed in this section.

### 6.2.1 Key planning issues highlighted by participants

While planning issues experienced by participants were not a targeted outcome, the data identified a number of issues faced by faith groups which may be under appreciated. These are presented at the outset.

- Transport links to places of worship can be an issue. Many sites did not have good transport links. In other cases buses could be at capacity, particularly at peak times. One group promoted bicycle use; others put in place various strategies to help parking issues (see section 4.7). Others questioned assumptions about availability and suitability of public transport and bicycles in suburban contexts of Barking and Dagenham.
- Change of use applications were a key challenge for faith groups. This is also noted in the planning data review, where two-thirds of planning applications relating to places of worship over the past five years have been related to change of use.
- Many of the groups using sites which need a change of use application were new groups, serving an emerging or new local population. These new groups may have less capital and less understanding of the planning system.
- There was also evidence of groups having difficulties with landlords. Examples were given of landlords misrepresenting the importance of having correct planning use class, or the ease of getting it changed. There were also stories provided of increasing costs, lost deposits, and health and safety issues. Some faith groups had limited previous knowledge of planning and health and safety issues, and as such found it more difficult to address issues. This raises the possibility of 'rogue landlords' in industrial areas, maximising profit from faith groups without complying with land use and health and safety requirements. 'Rogue landlords' have recently been associated in English local authorities with houses of multiple-occupation, but similar practices may occur in industrial or employment areas with faith groups.
- Where places of worship were occurring in areas without correct use classes, there could be issues experienced by faith group occupiers from adjacent land uses. This could include traffic, noise, and air pollution from surrounding sites. These sites could be difficult for faith groups to use, such as retro-fitting disabled access.

## 6.2.2 Faith group opinions on planning system

In cases where groups submitted a planning application for development of a faith facility, evidence suggests that professional agents were used to obtain planning permissions. A number of examples were given of faith groups making upgrades to their building or surrounding area, and working with the council to make these improvements. This included public works such as a zebra crossing and construction of new buildings with community use space. Some participants were very complimentary of the assistance provided by the council. Multiple participants described their experiences of gaining an improved understanding of planning, and building relationships with councillors and planning officers, through a process of obtaining planning permissions.

A substantial number of respondents were confident of securing funding to invest in new buildings or other improvements (e.g. parking facilities), but needed assistance in finding sites and obtaining planning permission.

There were also a number of critical opinions expressed about planning. These points are summarised below, with comments on development control and enforcement provided together, followed by comments on policy.

Critical opinions on development control and enforcement included:

- the planning system can be confusing;
- concern over political aspects of planning decisions, noting that planning officers' recommendation could be overturned by elected members;
- concern over mobilising of opposition groups to planning applications;
- concern over onerous planning conditions;
- questioning the practicality of some planning conditions, like time of use specifications for Muslim groups (7am to 9pm etc.) when prayer times vary depending on sunrise/sunset; and
- concern over apparent inconsistency of enforcement actions, with some groups feeling 'targeted' by enforcement actions.

Groups from a number of different denominations raised concerns of exclusion or unequal treatment. There were perceptions of 'preferences' for certain groups, or 'picking on' other groups. In particular, enforcement and traffic police targeting particular sites or areas was perceived as unequal treatment. Participant perceptions are part of a wider context of the need for enforcement and council duties. However, it should be noted that these perceptions would be relevant to the council's equality obligations, and more generally can contribute to social division. These perceptions evidence a need for transparency and building cohesion between faith groups, and between faith groups and council. Improved engagement could help to address these perceptions, i.e. high quality engagement which builds relationships and social networks. There is also evidence of a need for improving faith groups' knowledge of the functions of the council and how they are intended to benefit all (through health and safety, traffic management etc.), as well as the planning system specifically.

Participants expressed a number of opinions on planning policy; key points are paraphrased below. These are included here as data, and do not represent conclusions from this study:

- planning should use more than economic gain in decision making;

- the council should allocate faith spaces in future plans as per demographic projections;
- faith groups can employ a number of people, but in industrial land use areas this employment can be considered insufficient or the wrong type of employment;
- there should be greater flexibility in D1 change of use;
- there has been a council interest in multi-faith sites provided by developers, but what about provision for new purpose-built sites outside of developer control? Multiple organisations requested the designation of land for faith site development, with the intention that they would provide all the funds for development; and
- traditionally and historically new developments have occurred around religious buildings, such as the church at the centre of a village or settlement. Now new developments appear to be centred on housing without faith space playing a central role, if included at all.

### 6.2.3 Planning advice note

Of the 26 respondents to the question, only two were aware of the council's planning advice note on religious meeting places.

### 6.2.4 Suggestions for improvements to planning

The following were suggestions provided by participants, with some rationalisation and commentary by the research team. These are included here as data, and do not represent conclusions from this study:

- many groups provided details about space needs, and asked for the council to facilitate their requirements. This illustrates that in conducting this study hopes may have been raised that council will allocate/facilitate spaces;
- concerns over unequal treatment and lack of transparency should be addressed; and
- experiences in the stage 1 Barking Riverside multi-faith place of worship should be considered to improve future provision of sites. This should include clarification to residents and faith groups on provision of more faith sites within future stages.

A number of groups wanted more engagement from the council on development control applications. This included:

- prompt responses to queries;
- more information available online;
- easier access to information on D1 use and change of use for those looking for sites to hire;
- a simple 'How to' Guide for faith groups; and
- a detailed plan of action for faith groups looking for space.

## 6.3 Engagement with faith groups

Participants in the survey and interviews were asked open-ended questions about the council's engagement with faith groups, and this was also discussed at a session within the scoping workshop. This is discussed here; the data on planning and engagement specifically is presented above.

This project investigated the council's engagement with faith groups, but it should be noted the faith groups themselves have an important community engagement role with their congregations, and local communities.

Figure 41: Engagement Terminology

<p>The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) uses the following terms in their Guidelines on Effective Community Involvement and Engagement (2007). These are included here for reference.</p> <p><b>Public (or Community) Involvement</b></p> <p>Effective interactions between planners, decision-makers, individual and representative stakeholders to identify issues and exchange views on a continuous basis;</p> <p><b>Participation</b></p> <p>The extent and nature of activities undertaken by those who take part in public or community involvement;</p> <p><b>Public (or Community) Engagement</b></p> <p>Actions and processes taken or undertaken to establish effective relationships with individuals or groups so that more specific interactions can then take place;</p> <p><b>Consultation</b></p> <p>The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, and normally with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.</p>
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### 6.3.1 Data on engaging with faith groups

#### 6.3.1.1 Demand for high quality consultation

Many participants welcomed the opportunity for engagement provided by the interviews, site visits and the scoping workshop. Together this demonstrated a demand for high quality consultation.

While evidencing demand, there were a number of comments on the quality of consultation used by the council. Some participants at the workshop voiced strong opinions that consultation should occur 'with' faith groups, not be done 'to' faith groups. A number of participants noted the need for follow up from projects like this. There was a degree of scepticism about the outcomes of this project. Some participants felt that local authorities and national government could improve their understanding of faith groups and the contributions they make to their congregations and to area-based communities in local boroughs.



### 6.3.1.2 Collective groups such as Faith Forums

There were concerns over the roles and efficacy of various collective groups or faith forums.

There is a multi-faith forum in the Borough which once was quite large but by the time of the fieldwork in 2017 had become less active. The multi-faith forum was in the process of being re-established during the fieldwork.

Some participants were strongly supportive of collective groups, while others expressed varying reasons for not participating. Some participants advocated for religion-specific collective groups (e.g. Christian, Muslim, etc.). Some argued that collective groups were used to advance a particular group's or denomination's perspective. Others were very positive on the potential of an inclusive collective group. One participant noted that without strong links to councillors the multi-faith forum may be less effective, and suggested councillors attend meetings of an inclusive collective group to be formed.

Given these mixed opinions, it is unlikely that a collective group formed under current conditions will be strongly supported by all or a large majority of faith groups. This lack of support may be exacerbated by rates of change and population churn such as in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, as any one group may have limited links to the wide variety of different faith groups in the area. Given the number of groups and rates of change in groups, it would be helpful to have clear membership criteria for any collective group, as well as transparent plans for management and re-evaluation (such as annually re-considering membership). There are models for criteria from other inter-faith forums, such as the Northampton Inter Faith Forum<sup>10</sup>.

### 6.3.1.3 Addressing conflict

The study identified that demand for faith facilities is high, needs are complex, and there is the potential for conflict about the provision and use of facilities between groups and between groups and the council.

The data on planning enforcement (discussed above) evidenced that groups from different denominations raised concerns of exclusion or unequal treatment in their interactions with the council. There was also the potential for conflict and exclusion with regard to collective groups such as a faith forum.

One participant argued that when complaints are made against faith groups, the council should not take them just at face value but to engage to resolve issues.

Other participants expressed a desire to avoid confrontational meetings between faith groups and between faith groups and the council.

Together this data illustrates a context of conflict influencing engagement practices. It evidences a need for building engagement between faith groups, and between faith groups and the council. There is also a potential for contributing to social division if perceived exclusion or unequal treatment is not addressed.

Improved engagement which is high quality, inclusive, and transparent, could help to address perceptions of conflict, and build social and civic networks. Building engagement and social cohesion is challenging in all circumstances, and particularly challenging where issues of exclusion and conflict arise. Developing inclusive strategies is also notably difficult when there are a large number of groups

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<sup>10</sup> See [www.niff.org.uk](http://www.niff.org.uk) ; accessed 11/10/17

(as in a very socially diverse, or ‘super-diverse’ setting such as Barking and Dagenham), as the possibility of exclusion becomes more pronounced given the proliferation of groups, and the substantial number of different needs which can change as groups change.

A number of participants argued for improved transparency of engagement and decision making by the council, seeking to build an atmosphere of trust between the council and faith groups. Importantly, this study evidenced a strong demand for engagement from some faith groups. This is a good basis for works to improve the engagement with faith groups. As faith groups play a fundamental role in wider social cohesion in the borough, building these networks could have benefits well beyond immediate congregations.

As this report was finalised in the second half of 2017, early results on engagement were communicated to the council to inform their evolving engagement strategy. This helped to influence the councils’ engagement practice before the technical aspects of this report were complete (such as planning projections).

#### 6.3.1.4 Practicalities of engagement

A number of practical comments were received on engagement practices. These can be considered to help build more effective engagement practices.

Faith organisations are often run by leaders and management committees. Both tend to have limited time. Leaders or management committees may also have limited skill sets so may need extra support in engaging, such as through translation services or sensitivity to different cultural or religious needs.

It is not clear what methods of engaging were most successful with current groups. One participant noted that translation services were particularly valuable. Another said they had too many emails from the council to manage. One group noted that evening meetings are preferable to daytime as most faith leaders are volunteers. The data collection experiences of this study evidenced that varying techniques are needed to engage with faith groups (see section 2.2 on data collection). Some groups responded to emails and letters, others responded to face to face visits. Evening meetings received a good response.

As noted above some expressed a preference against meetings with the council or other groups as these could be confrontational. One participant argued that there can be a tendency to ‘talk around’ issues in meetings with little productive outcome, and there should be a clear purpose or agenda for meetings. Another emphasised the value of networking and socializing for faith groups to build relationships and promote tolerance and understanding. Together these varying views suggest that facilitated meetings could be valuable for controversial topics or to build the basis for future productive working.

Some participants were unclear on a wider council agenda for engagement, and felt that it seemed to be composed of a variety of actions without an overarching strategy.

#### 6.3.2 Particular suggestions on improving engagement

Participants raised the following suggestions for improving engagement between the council and faith groups. These are not recommendations from this research, but are provided here to demonstrate the nature of participant’s suggestions:

- a council officer with training/expertise in religious matters would help to understand the nature of faith group needs. This person should have expertise in planning, or someone in planning should have expertise in faith issues;

- hold annual or bi-annual meeting with religious leaders to outline current policy;
- a published policy or annual programme for engaging with faith groups could provide clarity on the council's approach;
- there was demand for wider social investment (not just faith based) and promotion of inclusion and social cohesion; and
- some groups expressed interest in learning about other non-planning services from the council, such as community grants.

## 6.4 Good practice in engagement

There is a large body of good practice which can be drawn on to facilitate engagement, and which has been considered in the development of the recommendations on engagement in this study. Application of the guidance needs to be tailored to specific council engagement programmes, so should be considered in detail with regard to future engagement activities. Selected sources and a brief discussion are provided as context.

Key sources for good practice in engagement on faith groups and planning are set out below. Internet links were accessed in July 2017.

### Planning and Engagement

- Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) 2007. "Guidelines on Effective Community Involvement and Consultation." <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/6313/Guidlelines-on-effective-community-involvement.pdf>.
- Planning Aid, England, London. 2012. "Good Practice Guide to Public Engagement in Development Schemes." <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/6312/Good-Practice-Guide-to-Public-Engagement-in-Development-Scheme-High-Res.pdf>.
- Scottish Government. 2017. "Barriers to Community Engagement in Planning - a Research Study." <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/barriers-to-community-engagement-in-planning-research/Barriers%20to%20community%20engagement%20in%20planning%20-%20a%20research%20study.pdf?inline=true>.

### Planning and faith groups

- Faith and Place network. 2015. "Faith Groups and the Planning System: English Policy Briefing." <https://faithandplacenetwork.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/hum021015ar-policy-briefing-dbl1.pdf>.
- Rogers, Andrew. 2013. "Being Built Together: A Story of New Black Majority Churches in the London Borough of Southwark."
- CAG Consultants. 2008. "Responding to the Needs of Faith Communities: Places of Worship." Greater London Authority.

### Interfaith Engagement

- Interfaith Network. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/dialogue-1>
- Commission on Religion Belief and Public Life. <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/practice/commission-on-religion-and-belief.asp>

- Council of Europe: 12 Principles For Interfaith Dialogue At Local Level  
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&id=2383611&Site=COE&direct=true>
- Great Britain, and Department for Communities and Local Government. 2008. Face to Face and Side by Side: A Framework for Partnership in Our Multi Faith Society. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.
- Faith Covenant. Faith Action, and All Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society 2013. A joint commitment between local authorities and faith communities to a set of principles that guide engagement, aiming to remove some of the mistrust that exists and to promote open, practical working on all levels. <http://www.faihandsociety.org/covenant/>

The RTPI Guidelines (2007) identify seven standards for consultation: integrity, transparency, accessibility, confidentiality, full disclosure, fair interpretation, and publication. The guidance provides a number of recommendations on how local authorities can meet these standards in best practice. Specific recommendations on faith groups and the planning system are provided in the policy briefing from the Faith and Place network (2015).

There are also particular implications for engaging with diverse minority groups which need to be considered. Given that the rate of change in the borough in terms of diversity has been pronounced, there may be a need to improve skills on the implications of diversity for local government engagement.

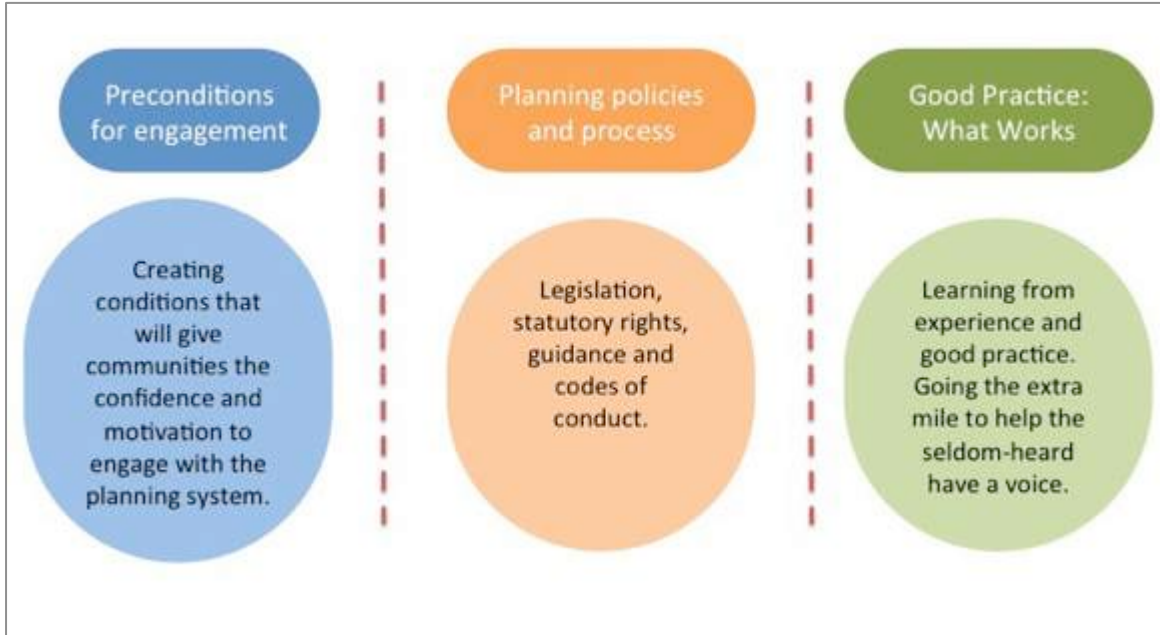
Key considerations for engaging with diverse faith groups are summarised in Figure 42.

Figure 42: Considerations for engaging with diverse faith groups

- Ensure key professionals develop religious literacy and are able to recognise the diversity that exists within, as well as between, religious traditions and groups.
- Try to understand the different cultures and practices within the faith groups in relation to things like dress, physical contact, cultural behaviour, religious practices, language and food.
- Key officers should consider increasing their cultural competence by undertaking a cultural awareness programme and seeking guidance from faith group service providers.
- Faith groups may initially respond better to voluntary sector or independent organisations. Work with these organisations to build trust with the groups.
- Ideally all faith groups should be represented, whatever their size. All groups should be invited to participate.
- Ensure that all materials produced are accessible to all; restrict the use of jargon and observe Plain English standards in documents. Consider the need to translate information into multiple languages.
- Be aware of cultural celebrations, and ensure there are no clashes with events – consult a faith calendar before organising anything.
- Be aware of prayer times when organising meetings and events. If necessary, arrange a break for prayers.
- If providing refreshments at events, provide culturally-specific food such as halal, kosher and vegetarian.
- Go into a community to hold events so the community is comfortable and the location is neutral.
- Consider initially reaching out to your target audience through third parties, for example, service providers, community groups and places of worship.
- Bear in mind that your target audience may lack awareness of policies and services and therefore will not be able to engage meaningfully; consider raising awareness through providers and providing accessible guides.
- Identify and leverage existing authority relationships whenever possible. Coordinate and develop strong working relationships with equality and diversity units (where these exist) or their equivalents.
- Build long-term relationships with key stakeholder organisations and their members so that they become more familiar with public engagement processes and are realistic about them.
- Support faith groups organisations to make wider links with existing networks and statutory organisations.
- Encourage and provide meaningful opportunities for faith groups to join in civic life, e.g. taking part in events, joining boards or steering groups of projects or initiatives in the borough.

The recent Scottish Government research on barriers to community engagement in planning is also of note (May 2017). This provides a recent literature review on engagement in planning and proposes a framework for action based on three pathways to effective engagement. This framework is worth noting as it provides a means of thinking about engagement which is useful in the context of Barking and Dagenham.

Figure 43: Framework for action to effective engagement



Taken from Scottish Government. 2017. “Barriers to Community Engagement in Planning - a Research Study.”

In considering engagement in the borough, there is a need to address the pre-conditions for engagement. This will translate into policies and processes such as codes of conduct. This will improve the borough’s ability to generate local good practice, learning from experience and helping to involve all residents.

In terms of the pre-conditions for engagement, there is a need for a context which supports engagement. Key ways to do this are to fully implement available good practice for engagement, as in the RTPi guidance. This includes being clear about the purpose of engagement, promoting transparency and accessibility, and creating a climate of trust, respect and confidence. The perceptions of conflict evidenced in this study need to be appreciated by the council with regard to future engagement. Improved engagement which is high quality and good practice could help to address this context, and build social and civic networks. This could be useful to the council through improved communication channels, civic networks, and build on faith groups’ community activities. Future engagement could leverage the strong demand for higher quality engagement from faith groups evidenced in this study. This presents an opportunity for the council.

### 6.4.1 Faith Covenant

The Faith Action and the All-Parliamentary group on Faith and Society have promoted a code of conduct called the ‘Faith Covenant’ which both faith groups and local authorities sign up to (<http://www.faithandsociety.org/covenant/>). The faith covenant has been produced by Faith Action ([www.faithaction.net](http://www.faithaction.net)) As of October 2017 the Covenant been used in six local authorities: Birmingham, Leeds, Northamptonshire, Barnett, Solihull, Calderdale, Southampton, and Blackpool. (Source: <http://www.faithandsociety.org/covenant/>; visited 17/10/17).

The faith covenant is a joint working commitment between local authorities and faith groups to agree principles and specific commitments that guide engagement. The covenant seeks to promote transparency and practical working at all levels.

A standard template for the faith covenant is provided which can be modified to reflect local concerns and needs. The covenant establishes agreed principles, followed by separate specific commitments for the local authority and for faith groups. Examples of principles from the Leeds covenant are freedom to practice beliefs and religious observances within the framework of UK law, and that groups should

respect services users from all backgrounds. An example of a council commitment is to improve engagement practices. An example of a faith group commitment is to provide services to all residents without proselytising. The covenant is typically one page, with approximately 4 principles agreed, and 5 commitments for local authorities and for faith groups.

There is limited available information on success factors in implementing the faith covenant, and it was outside the scope of this study to identify these through new data collection. It is clear that:

- adopting a faith covenant is an established means of improving working relationships between a local authority and faith groups;
- strong support for a covenant is necessary within the council and religious groups;
- the covenant is frequently modified to address local priorities;
- there can be useful policy alignments with the Faith Covenant and other council policy priorities, such as promoting cohesion, public health, or improving engagement; and
- on-going reviews (such as annual) of content of the content of the covenant and groups signed up have been used in locations where the Faith Covenant has been adopted.

Advice put forward by practitioners in Leeds, based on their use of the covenant, is:

*“Take your time. It’s better to get it right rather than get something done quickly. Take the time to explain what you are hoping to achieve to all the parties concerned. Then explain it again and again until you are sure people are clear as to why you are taking this approach. You need to get buy-in from your political and officer leadership as well as from the leadership within your faith third sector to make the Covenant a living document that effects real change. Once you have signed a Covenant, make sure you keep the momentum going. Ensure regular and transparent scrutiny of your progress in implementing it.”* (from <http://www.faithandsociety.org/news/2015/08/the-covenant-in-practice-leeds>).

The Barking and Dagenham council and faith groups in the area could adopt this code of conduct. One of the benefits of doing this would be that the covenant has already been implemented in other local authorities, so there will be the opportunity to learn from others’ experiences. Importantly the covenant provides a standard approach which has been tested in other locations, but can be modified to suit local needs. The council has noted that the term “Faith Pledge” may be more popular than “Faith Covenant”.

# 7 Conclusions and recommendations

## 7.1 Conclusions

In recent decades, the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has experienced considerable demographic change, and major change is projected in decades to come. Of local authorities in England and Wales, Barking and Dagenham had the fifth largest growth in residents born outside of the UK and Ireland between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. GLA figures for 2050 project a population growth of approximately 90,000 people (equivalent to 44 percent growth from the 2015 population estimate). The council has ambitions for growth, with the current preferred growth options exceeding the GLA figures.

This population growth is also notably diverse in social and cultural characteristics; for example 72 different non-English languages were recorded in the 2011 census as the main language in the household. This diversity is also reflected in religion. Census data suggests that the area has seen an overall decline in the number of Christians between 2001 and 2011, but this masks significant growth in some Christian groups, particularly strong growth in the African Christian community. There has also been significant growth in the numbers of Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in this time period. The growth in the number of Muslims is particularly large, with the percentage growth in Barking and Dagenham (257 percent) far outstripping that for London (66.8 percent) and for England (74.5 percent), as well as being notably higher than growth in other denominations in Barking and Dagenham.

These demographic, social and cultural changes have resulted in the growth of existing religious meeting places and the demand for new facilities. National planning policy requires local planning authorities to deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. The planning system in Barking and Dagenham, as in many other areas, faces significant challenges in mediating between this demand for faith facilities, competing land uses, and in managing the impacts associated with these developments such as traffic, noise and land use changes.

More broadly, the growth of diverse needs over a relatively short period of time in a location with limited previous history of diversity has generated challenges. There is a need for improved engagement between the council and local faith groups to ensure that development needs are met and to promote the council's cohesion work more generally.

This study provides an evidence base which can be used by the council to produce planning policy and implemented developments with a better understanding of faith groups and their needs. The evidence from the study, and the process through which it has been generated, also provides a foundation for improved communication and closer cooperation between the council and faith groups.

The principal conclusions from the study are summarised below.

### 7.1.1 Faith groups

- The size of the active Christian community is growing and complex. This has, and is likely to continue to, place significant demands on the planning system in terms of planning applications for new facilities and in terms of ensuring that planned provision meets the needs of faith groups. Although affiliation to the Christian religion has declined (as recorded by the census), most Christian groups contacted as part of this study report growth in the last five years. 109 Christian groups were identified in the borough, the largest by far of the faith traditions. Of these, only 39 were in the traditional denominations (defined as Church of England, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed Church and Salvation Army). This illustrates the rapidly changing composition of the Christian community, with significant and growing numbers of newer groups outside of the



traditional denominations. There has been particular growth in newer Pentecostal groups. There was also significant flux in Christian groups, with some groups' presence in the borough being relatively short-lived. There are some large groups in the borough, including at least three with more than 1,000 people regularly attending, one of which has approximately 5,000 people regularly attending.

- Christian groups generate notable transport movements. A number of Christian groups attract people from neighbouring boroughs. There is a higher level of car and public transport usage amongst the newer Christian groups, which is driven by the fact that they tend to attract attendees from a wider area and are often located away from residential areas, e.g. in employment areas, which are less accessible by other forms of transport.
- Growth in the Muslim population is noteworthy, with the growth rate in the borough far outstripping that for London and England. This has placed, and will continue to place, demands on the planning system. The Muslim population is concentrated in the west of the borough. 14 Muslim groups have been identified in the borough, with most of these having formed in the past 20 years. Although most groups serve a local population, the average size of the groups is large and growing. The largest group has a regular attendance of more than 2,500 people.
- The Hindu and Sikh populations are also growing, with both having spatial concentrations in the west of the borough. One Hindu group and one Sikh group meet in the borough, with both reported to have grown steadily in size over the past five years. The Hindu group has no dedicated facility but there is one Sikh Gurdwara in the west of the borough.
- Although there are no known Buddhist groups meeting in the borough and no Buddhist facilities, census data suggests that the Buddhist population is also growing.
- The size of the Jewish population declined by 22 percent between 2001 and 2011, and the synagogue which once operated in the borough has now closed.
- The size of the Baha'i and Jain populations is unclear but is understood to be relatively small. Both of these faiths have groups which meet in the borough.
- Faith groups play a vital and increasing role in community activities and the cultural life of the borough. They are engaged in the provision of a very wide and growing range of services and activities in the borough, in addition to worship and other religious activity, including education provision, sporting activities, welfare and advice services, arts/cultural activities and social events. The majority of participating organisations were engaged in activities which contribute to their congregations' wellbeing, as well as the wider community's. In 2008, CAG and LUC produced guidance for the Greater London Authority on faith groups that noted that faith communities are constrained by inadequate facilities from providing the level and range of social services they have the capacity to offer. This remains the case in Barking and Dagenham in 2017.
- There are significant distinctions between faith groups both in terms of building use and building ownership which the planning system can help to address. Whilst most Christian groups meet in purpose-built religious buildings, only a small percentage of Muslim groups have access to such buildings. Within the Christian category, there are also important differences between the traditional and other denominations. All respondent groups within the traditional denominations meet in purpose-built religious buildings, but less than half of groups within other denominations have access to such buildings. Similar distinctions are observed in terms of building ownership. Whilst most Christian groups own the main buildings they use, only one third of Muslim groups own the main buildings that they use. In the traditional Christian denominations, more than three quarters of

respondent groups own the main buildings they use but only around one third of groups in the other denominations do so.

- There are wider issues relating to building use which need to be addressed in the engagement process with faith groups. 70 percent of respondent groups reported issues in relation to the main buildings they use. Car parking was the most commonly cited issue by faith groups.

### 7.1.2 Current need for additional facilities

There is a need for additional space for faith groups in the borough, particularly for Muslim groups and for Christian groups outside of the traditional denominations. This need is driven by growing numbers of attendees but also by the expanding range of community activities in which these groups are engaged. The Hindu and Jain groups in the borough also need space; neither of these groups have their own dedicated facility in the borough at the moment.

A wide range of approaches will be required to meet this need, making maximum use of existing facilities and identifying opportunities for the provision of new facilities of varying kinds. 50 percent of groups contacted through this study who need additional space expressed a preference to purchase or extend an existing building, with only nine percent preferring a new-build facility. However, the responses suggest a degree of flexibility in this regard on the part of many faith groups.

The planning system will also need to take account of the geographical preferences of different groups. In terms of the types of locations preferred by faith groups:

- Christian groups in the traditional denominations are more likely to prefer sites in residential areas, which is likely to reflect the fact that they often serve a specific geographical location;
- Muslim groups are also more likely to prefer sites in residential areas, which is likely to reflect the fact that many of the groups serve an existing local community and need proximity to residential areas due to frequency of prayers; and
- Christian groups outside of the traditional denominations are more likely to prefer sites in employment or industrial areas. It is not clear from the data whether this was a genuine 'preference' or the result of a sense that spaces which are more suitable for their needs are more likely to be available in such areas.

In terms of specific locational preferences:

- Muslim groups and Christian groups within the traditional denominations are more likely than other Christian groups to have a specific geographic location in mind for a new facility. These are mostly the communities in which they are currently located. This highlights the need for policy to support appropriate intensification of use on existing sites;
- Christian groups outside of the traditional denominations are more likely to have greater flexibility in terms of geographical preferences, although approximately half of such groups indicated some preference; and
- the Jain group have a specific preference for a location (Barking Riverside).

In addition to responding to needs and preferences expressed by particular groups, planning policy needs to respond to other evidence about current and future gaps in provision. Further engagement with faith groups is needed to fully understand the geography of needs but initial analysis suggests that:

- The south and east areas of the borough have the highest percentages of Christians but these are the areas with the fewest Christian places of worship; and
- Although most concentrated in the west of the borough, there is also a relatively high percentage of Muslims in the north of the borough (Chadwell Heath and Whalebone wards) but no Muslim places of worship in this area. GIS analysis also suggests that there may be a shortage of provision in the Longbridge and Thames wards.

### 7.1.3 Likely future demand

Population projections for each of the main religions up to 2050 have been further broken down into ethno-religious categories. Through joining the population projections to the fieldwork data generated in this study, we have also identified space needs in terms of total floorspace space required in 2050, and converted this to a projected floor space requirement per household.

Projections of overall change in religious groups down to 2050 show:

- a marked pattern of growth for the Christian and Muslim populations, and also (from a much lower base) for Sikhs and Hindus;
- for both Christians and Muslims, growth is likely to slacken off towards mid-century, but by that time the Christian population is expected to have grown to around 160 percent of 2011 levels (a growth of more than 65,900, to 175,845), and the Muslim population to around 318 percent of 2011 levels (a growth of around 59,700) to 87,048;
- the White British Christian group is predicted to continue falling to 2020, and then level off;
- other ethnic groups among the Christian population are projected to rise significantly for the foreseeable future, ultimately off-setting the White British trend - the key groups in this regard are the African, Other White and Caribbean Christians;
- the Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups, and to a lesser extent the Other White and Black African groups, explain a large part of the overall Muslim growth trend;
- growth of the Indian ethnic group, and to a lesser extent the Other Asian group, accounts for a sizeable increase to mid-century of Hindus and Sikhs respectively; and
- those of 'No Religion' remain relatively stable to 2050.

With ethno-religious groups identified in this way, a measure of attendance was then used (based on British Social Attitudes Data) to identify the proportions of religious populations who regularly attend places of worship (regular attendance being once a week or more).

When projecting future need in terms of floorspace, calculations suggest a need for circa 38,400m<sup>2</sup> additional purpose-built religious meeting place floor space by 2050. This is a large amount and reflects the substantial growth planned in the borough by 2050. It also reflects the substantial demand in the borough for religious meeting places. It should be noted that these calculations are based on the Borough Preferred Option demographics and a median ratio of principal meeting room floorspace to regular attendees. Methods for this calculation are detailed in section 5.2.

These calculations can be apportioned to per new household, which gives a measure of purpose-built principal meeting room faith space required for new developments (0.66m<sup>2</sup>). This measure can then be

refined in a Community Needs Strategy for major new developments, which should consider local context to implement the multi-pronged approach to supply recommended.

#### 7.1.4 Potential supply

A multi-pronged approach to meeting the demand is needed. There will clearly be a need for new facilities for use by faith groups, both in terms of new-build and conversion of existing buildings for purpose built sites throughout the district as well as in new development areas. Given the competing pressures for land use in the borough however, policy and complementary measures need to ensure that need is also met through maximising the potential of: existing D1 space, intensification of use of existing sites, intensification in industrial and employment land uses, and increased sharing.

The study has identified between 31 and 86 existing D1 facilities in Barking and Dagenham that are in theory available for use by faith groups and there are five potential sites for new, permanent faith facilities in the Borough. For existing D1 provision to make a meaningful contribution to meeting demand for faith facilities, further work is needed to quantify the availability and suitability of this provision, and to facilitate access to it by faith groups.

The visual inspection of facilities carried out during the site visits indicated that there is some scope for intensification of use of existing sites through extensions. There may be further scope for internal reconfiguration, which would allow more intensive use but this has not been assessed. There is clearly a need to maximise this potential, but it will be constrained by knock-on effects, e.g. loss of parking in the case of extensions, and amenity impacts on neighbouring uses. Given that parking is already cited as an issue by many faith groups, it will be important to ensure that intensification of existing sites does not exacerbate such issues.

A reasonable number of both the Christian and Muslim groups who need more space meet in facilities that may have scope for extension. However, there seems to be poor alignment geographically between the groups who need more space and the facilities that have scope for further sharing. This may not be such a barrier in the case of newer Christian groups (who expressed fewer geographical preferences) but would be a barrier for Muslim groups.

Given the extent of demand, and the presence of faith facilities currently in industrial and employment areas, sensitive intensification of use in industrial and employment areas could contribute towards meeting demand. This would need to be done carefully to ensure appropriate impacts to adjacent uses, and to faith users, in these areas. Intensification of use aligns with the recently release London Industrial Strategy. There are a significant number of facilities used by Christian groups within the industrial sites to be released. If these are not accommodated within any redevelopment, this will add to the need which will need to be met elsewhere

The study suggests that around 42 percent of the current buildings used by faith groups are shared with other faith groups and 44 percent of the buildings used have scope for further sharing. Opportunities for further sharing need to be maximised. In theory, facilitating further sharing of existing buildings could play a significant role in meeting demand but, in practice, this is likely to be constrained, Sharing is discussed in more detail in the next section.

#### 7.1.5 Sharing and Multi-Faith Sites

This project included a particular remit to consider multi-faith centres, with a mind to the potential to meet future supply via the provision of multi-faith centres in new developments. We have considered local opportunities for, and the parameters surrounding, the development of shared facilities.

Shared facilities can be considered attractive because of the potential to provide for the needs of multiple groups in one development. There may be perceived additional benefits in terms of community cohesion, integration and education, building on a notion that shared spaces can lead to increased interaction<sup>11</sup>.

The sharing of facilities by religious groups or the use of multi-functional community spaces is attractive in principle, but there are a number of sensitivities and practical challenges. The research evidenced strong opinions on site sharing. It is important to note at the outset that shared sites are very unlikely to accommodate all demand. Requiring groups to share where there is little support, or without transparent means of allocation and management, can lead to conflict.

Substantial investment, both of time and money, is required for a successful multi-faith space. There is no established best practice for shared religious spaces, and successful sites emerge over long periods of time. The case studies show that building on local social networks (and likely individual supporters) is key, but institutions need to have longevity beyond small groups or individuals. Design and management are fundamental to a successful shared site. There is a need for different types of spaces in a multi-faith site, moving these beyond the provision of a single room or small space which appears to have been common in the UK in recent years.

Where successful, multi-faith sites can provide investment and key community facilities which address both daily worship needs and provide space for dialogue between faiths and cultures. The study identified a basis for developing sharing practices in the Borough. Key points are as follows,

- Build on existing sharing practices. Some participants stated that they would be interested in shared use of a new multi-faith facility for acts of worship. There was more interest in the idea of using a shared facility for community uses, or for shared space with dedicated areas for different denominations or groups. There is also a small amount of site sharing already occurring, more likely due to necessity than from preference. It would be valuable to work with residents and current users of Barking Riverside shared faith site to create greater satisfaction over faith provisions in that development.
- Maximising use of community sites, including provision of new community sites. The study highlighted the very wide range of community services provided by faith groups and the demand for further facilities to facilitate delivery of such services.
- Care will need to be taken with the design and management of any future shared sites. Some of the issues identified with shared faith spaces could be overcome with careful provision of new sites, such as high quality design, provision of ample storage, and transparent management structures.
- The 'multi-plex' model. At the scoping workshop there was a degree of consensus that dedicated worship space within a shared larger building was likely to work better than sharing a single room or small suite of rooms. Sharing of larger buildings was conceptualised in a number of ways, including in a 'multi-plex cinema' model. Each organisation or denomination would have devoted space (such as a single screen in a multiplex) which they could adapt to suit with storage, iconography, and other design requirements. Shared spaces would provide valuable community spaces for interaction with possible links to improved community cohesion. Case study 3 (House of Religions, Berne, Switzerland) is an award winning example of this approach.

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<sup>11</sup> As in Department for Communities and Local Government. 2008. "Face to Face and Side by Side: A Framework for Partnership in Our Multi Faith Society."

Relevant research has established a number of success factors for providing faith sites in new development which are relevant to Barking and Dagenham:

- need to plan in faith facilities from the start of a new development;
- use of a 'pastoral plan' or similar to establish requirements for a particular area;
- develop eligibility criteria for groups seeking sites.
- provide for faith groups for all stages of new developments, including initial stages development (where small multi-faith sites may be useful) through to facilitating sites for long-term lease or purchase; and
- flexibility is key, and could include providing site and building a multi-use space, providing a multi-faith site or an area of D1 provision, funding for improvements off site, or providing sites in other areas; and
- The multi-plex model may be particularly appropriate in an urban setting

In commissioning this research, and considering the scale of development proposed in their borough, Barking and Dagenham Council are breaking new ground. However, this research has limits and much further work will be needed to refine the approach to religious meeting places as specific development sites go forward.

### 7.1.6 Engagement

Many participants welcomed the opportunity for engagement provided by the interviews, site visits and the scoping workshop. Together this demonstrated a demand for high quality consultation.

There were a number of comments on the quality of consultation undertaken by the council, such as lack of clarity on the outcomes of consultation, lack of opportunity to influence policies, and lack of an overall strategy for engagement. Together this points to a need for an improved approach. There are a number of sources of established good practice which could be referred to when developing a strategy for engagement with faith groups.

The study also identified that demand for faith sites is high, needs are complex, and there is the potential for conflict between groups and between groups and the council. There were perceptions of exclusion or unequal treatment raised by participants. While individual perceptions are one part of a wider picture, these perceptions evidence a context of conflict for engagement and a need for building engagement and trust between faith groups, and between faith groups and council.

There were concerns over the roles and efficacy of various collective groups or faith forums. Given these mixed opinions, it is unlikely that a collective group formed under current conditions will be strongly supported by all or a large majority of faith groups. Additionally, given the number of groups and rates of change in groups, it would be helpful to have clear membership criteria for any collective group, as well as transparent plans for management and re-evaluation (such as annually re-considering membership).

Improved engagement could help to address perceptions of conflict, build social and civic networks, improve the conditions for engagement which could lead to a well-supported collective faith group.. The data demonstrates a need for social infrastructure for faith groups, and a strong demand for engagement from some faith groups. This is an opportunity, and a good basis for efforts to improve engagement with and between faith groups. As faith groups play a fundamental role in wider social

cohesion in the borough, building these networks could have benefits well beyond immediate faith groups attendees.

There is a need to develop the pre-conditions for engagement, creating a better context to support engagement practices. On the basis of improved pre-conditions, policies and codes of conduct can be developed with meaningful input from faith groups. Consideration also needs to be given to learning from experience and providing a longer-term approach to engagement. The faith covenant or a “Faith Pledge” could be used as the basis for developing a future approach to engagement between the council and faith groups, and supporting improved engagement between faith groups.

## 7.2 Recommendations

Recommendation	Justification
Planning measures	
<p>1. Local Plan policy should promote the retention of existing faith facilities which have planning permission.</p>	<p>NPPF para 70 states that planning policies should plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities.</p> <p>London Plan policy 3.16 resists loss of social infrastructure.</p> <p>Demand for faith facilities has grown rapidly in recent years and is projected to continue. Supply, on the other hand, is constrained.</p>
<p>2. Local Plan policy should promote more intensive use of existing faith facilities (including maximising opportunities for sharing) through encouraging appropriate extension.</p>	<p>London Plan policy 3.16 supports provision of social infrastructure, including encouraging multiple use of premises.</p> <p>Mayor’s Planning for Equality and Diversity SPG advises that, where appropriate, multi-denomination places of worship should be encouraged.</p> <p>Demand for faith facilities has grown rapidly in recent years and is projected to continue. A significant factor in this demand is a desire among faith groups to deliver a wider range of activities and service provision.</p> <p>The study has identified opportunity for further sharing of existing facilities, particularly intra-faith sharing.</p> <p>The study findings clearly indicate that Muslim groups and Christian groups within traditional denominations tend to serve specific local communities, which means that new-build facilities in development locations will not meet the needs of all existing groups. There may also be travel implications from existing populations and groups travelling to new sites.</p>

Recommendation	Justification
<p>3. Local Plan policy should require the provision of new community facilities, including space for groups to practice their faith, through new-build and conversion of existing buildings. This should be in line with the current and projected need for faith facilities outlined in this study, alongside a wider assessment of need for community facilities.</p> <p>We estimate that an additional 38,400m<sup>2</sup> of purpose-built religious meeting space will be required from the 2017 calculated amount of floor space. This equates to 0.66m<sup>2</sup> religious space per new household in 2050.</p> <p>Calculations have been given for faith space needs in major development areas in the emerging local plan. These calculations should form the basis of faith requirements in a Community Needs Strategy for these areas. This should apply the multi-pronged approach to addressing faith demand.</p> <p>On the largest sites, masterplans should explore 'multi-plex' style community space facilities providing flexible space for secular and non-secular groups to hire and provision of sites to buy or take on long leases on commercial terms.</p>	<p>NPPF para 70 states that planning policies should plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities.</p> <p>Mayor's Planning for Equality and Diversity SPG recognises specialist nature of provision of places of worship.</p> <p>Demand for faith facilities has grown rapidly in recent years and is projected to continue. A significant level of this demand is driven by a desire to deliver a wider range of activities and community service provision. Faith facilities play a central role in the provision of community facilities. The provision of faith facilities needs to be considered within a wider assessment of need for community facilities.</p> <p>The calculated amount of religious meeting space is substantial, reflecting the substantial growth planned for the borough by 2050. It also reflects the substantial demand for religious meeting places</p> <p>The study has highlighted that 'multi-plex' space may be a useful model for shared space. It has also highlighted the inequalities in provision which currently exist, with only Christian groups in the traditional denominations having high levels of access to purpose-built religious buildings and high levels of building ownership.</p>



Recommendation	Justification
<p>4. In developing shared sites, the council should note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is some opposition to shared sites, and there are a number of practical difficulties;</li> <li>• there is greater support for shared community spaces, and intra-faith than multi-faith sharing;</li> <li>• in masterplans the potential for ‘multi-plex’ community space facilities should be explored incorporating space for secular and non-secular groups and uses</li> <li>• there are opportunities to learn from existing experiences of site sharing; and</li> <li>• local groups near future development should be engaged to build local platforms of involvement.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared sites could be provided as part of wider approach to meeting needs in new sites.</p> <p>The study findings indicate that the majority of faith groups are not interested in multi-faith sharing or only interested in multi-faith for community (non-worship) uses. On the other hand, almost half of the groups would be interested in intra-faith sharing for any type of use (including worship).</p> <p>There was preliminary support for ‘multi-plex’ design of multi-faith sites, where each group/denomination has its own dedicated space with shared space such as a activity rooms or a café to promote shared understanding and community cohesion.</p> <p>Evidence from case studies and good practice is that successful shared sites occur on the basis of local synergies or cooperative efforts that groups have developed themselves. There are also opportunities to learn from experiences in Barking Riverside. Groups should have a reasonable amount of control over sites (as they will have particular plans for development), and there should be transparent measures for allocation and management.</p>
<p>5. The Local Plan should set out policy for considering planning applications for religious meeting places. This should establish that the council has a multi-pronged approach to meeting need for religious sites, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• retaining existing sites;</li> <li>• extension of existing sites;</li> <li>• promoting sharing;</li> <li>• maximising use of D1 sites; and</li> <li>• provision of new build sites for hire and for purchase.</li> </ul> <p>Planning applications will be considered in terms of how they sequentially meet this multi-pronged approach.</p>	<p>Religious Meeting Places Planning Advice Note (PAN) 4 will be superseded in the emerging local plan. Instead the council will provide specific policy of religious meeting places in the local plan. This will provide a sequential test for planning applications to ensure all possible means to accommodating religious facilities are considered.</p> <p>To consider the extent of sharing possible, the directory of shared space will need to be maintained.</p>

Recommendation	Justification
<p>6. For major applications (over 100 homes) a Community Needs Strategy should accompany the planning application demonstrating how the community space needs generated by the development, including faith space, have been met. This should explain how the space has been designed and will be managed to address the practical issues identified in this report. It should consider the potential for the development to meet faith needs within the wider the supply of all forms community space. For masterplans this should explore how a multi-plex facility could be managed and operated and how a variety of spaces to hire and purchase will be provided. Engagement with local faith groups should be considered in this process.</p>	<p>This study has evidenced that existing faith groups provide a wide range of services and that the demand for faith space will grow. This cannot and should not be divorced from the demand for community space in general since there is a large degree of overlap between the wider community services faith groups provide and the community activities people of all religions partake in.</p> <p>The calculations of purpose-built faith facilities provide the basis for considering faith needs within this wider process of assessing community needs.</p> <p>The case studies illustrate the value of engagement with local groups in delivering faith sites in new development, such as through a “Pastoral plan” for a site, and in galvanising support for a shared space.</p>

Recommendation	Justification
<p>7. Explore opportunities for using the Faith Covenant or Pledge as a condition or informative to planning permissions.</p>	<p>The Faith Pledge (or Faith Covenant) provides the basis of agreed principles and commitments by the council and Faith Groups. See Recommendation 16. Often the council's first contact with new faith groups is through the planning system and therefore this is an opportunity to highlight the Faith Pledge and seek agreement to it.</p> <p>The appropriateness of using the Faith Pledge/Covenant as an informative or condition will depend on specifics of the covenant adopted as well as project details.</p>
<p>8. The council should give consideration to specific policy provision for the development of faith facilities in employment and industrial areas, where this can be achieved without the loss of employment or industrial space. This would imply development which forms part of the intensification of use in these areas (as opposed to displacement of employment and industrial uses). The development would also need to be subject to key issues/ constraints being addressed, such as access, safety, parking and noise, to avoid any conflicts between uses.</p>	<p>Intensification and co-location are key themes in the recently released London Industrial Land Demand study<sup>12</sup>. This intensification, particularly where it takes the form of additional storeys, offers significant opportunities for the accommodation of faith groups. This is particularly the case for larger groups which can be challenging to accommodate within residential areas due to issues such as parking and noise. The London Industrial Demand Study refers to the growth of new forms of mixed-use development, primarily incorporating a mix of light and/or clean service-based industrial units on the ground floors, a noise buffer (such as a gym) on the first floor and residential above. The co-location of industrial and faith group uses may be feasible in more locations than would be the case with residential. The largest number of groups are Christian and will use the facilities most intensively on Sundays, when some industrial and commercial uses will not be operational. Issues such as noise, safety and parking constraints may, therefore, be less problematic with this combination of uses, although they will still require careful consideration, and planning.</p> <p>There is demand for change of use of industrial and warehouse uses to places of worship, as evidenced by previous applications and the findings of this study (which may indicate a preference for sites in employment areas amongst many newer Christian groups).</p>
<p>9. The council should explore the potential of intensification and co-location of faith facilities on employment and industrial sites.</p>	<p>The London Industrial Land Demand Study suggests a more proactive public sector role in enabling encouraging intensification of uses on industrial sites.</p> <p>Given the substantial demand for faith facilities, this option should be considered as part of a comprehensive multi-pronged approach to providing supply.</p> <p>It should also be appreciated that faith group participants in this study reported difficulties with landlords in industrial and employment areas, and a lack of appreciation for the challenges of using an industrial or employment site for faith group purposes (See section 6.1.1). This illustrates a possible need for greater local authority involvement in current uses of employment and industrial areas.</p>
<p>10. The council should promote a strategic approach to addressing co-location of individual and faith group uses to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach. This will likely need to be led by the GLA.</p>	<p>The London Industrial Land Demand Study and the Mayor's Industrial Intensification Primer<sup>13</sup> currently do not make specific reference to the potential co-location of industrial and faith group uses. Engagement with the GLA and other boroughs will enable more consistency and coordination and allow sharing of good practice.</p>

<sup>12</sup> CAG, Colliers, Peter Brett and Ramidus (2017) London Industrial Land Demand, for the GLA

<sup>13</sup> Mayor of London (2017) Industrial Intensification Primer (Draft)

Recommendation	Justification
<p>11. A cross-boundary approach to planning for the provision of faith facilities should be promoted. Dialogue with neighbouring boroughs will be needed, and it is likely that the GLA will need to lead these discussions. This might take the form, for example, of a working group of planning officers to share data, knowledge and good practice and to provide a forum for discussing cross-boundary provision.</p>	<p>London Plan policy 3.16 promotes a cross-boundary approach to provision of social infrastructure.</p> <p>Evidence from this study suggests a significant percentage of faith groups in the borough serve populations which extend beyond the borough boundary. This is particularly the case amongst the groups which are growing fastest – Christian groups outside the traditional denominations and Muslim groups.</p> <p>Groups which have congregations outside the borough provide regional value (or value to London as a whole), but impacts are often local. Better means of acknowledging benefits and managing impacts would be valuable.</p>
<p>12. Consider updating aspects of local policy for a more joined up approach between faith groups and planning policy, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop interrelationships between faith planning and the equality impact assessment on local plan;</li> <li>• update the Statement of Community Involvement, which currently makes no specific reference to faith groups;</li> <li>• link outputs from this study with sustainability appraisal (SA) of local plan. Consider including an SA sub-objective on faith groups;</li> <li>• develop means for faith groups to participate in further development of local plan, building on interest generated by this study. Targeted consultation at future local plan stages may be beneficial;</li> <li>• explore use of area-based targeted consultation including faith groups, which may provide greater consensus on local plan challenges.</li> </ul>	<p>There is a need to integrate the outcomes of this study with other council policy.</p>

Recommendation	Justification
Complementary measures	
<p>13. The council should provide and maintain a directory of facilities suitable for use by faith groups, including existing facilities with potential for further sharing community facilities, commercial facilities (e.g. hotels, conference/banqueting facilities) and vacant D1 space. Data from this study provides the starting point for this.</p>	<p>The study has identified significant and growing demand for faith facilities and a shortage of information about existing provision and potential provision.</p> <p>The study has identified significant potential for further use of D1 space by faith groups, including some surplus sites which may be suitable for conversion to a dedicated faith facility.</p> <p>Providing and maintaining a directory of suitable facilities is good practice in faith planning, and was a recommendation from the 2015 briefing on Faith Groups and the Planning System.<sup>14</sup></p>
<p>14. The council should commission a more detailed analysis of D1 availability in the borough in order to determine existing potential supply for faith groups' use.</p>	<p>The study has identified significant potential for further use of D1 space by faith groups but a more detailed audit is needed to understand the extent to which this could meet demand.</p>
<p>15. The council should seek to develop knowledge of providing faith facilities and D1 in new developments.</p> <p>Experiences in the current Barking Riverside multi-faith centre should be considered in particular to improve future provision of sites. This should include clarification provided to faith groups and residents on the provision of more faith sites within future phases.</p>	<p>There is the opportunity to learn from experiences which could be important given the scale of development proposed in Barking and Dagenham.</p> <p>Council planners could engage in skill sharing on providing for faith sites in new developments. The TCPA New Communities Working Group may be useful (<a href="https://www.tcpa.org.uk/new-communities-group">https://www.tcpa.org.uk/new-communities-group</a>).</p>

<sup>14</sup> Faith and Place Network. 2015. "Faith Groups and the Planning System: Policy Briefing." <https://faithandplacenetwerk.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/hum021015ar-policy-briefing-dbl1.pdf>.

Recommendation	Justification
<p>16. The council should seek to build the capacity of faith groups to engage effectively in the planning process. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide easier access to information on D1 use and change of use for those looking for sites to hire;</li> <li>• provide a non-technical introductory guide to planning and property issues;</li> <li>• promote this introductory guide, such as through a training session to interested groups;</li> <li>• ensure planners are aware of this guide for faith groups, so it is provided to groups when needed; and</li> <li>• promote Planning Aid.</li> </ul>	<p>A key element in improving engagement between faith groups and planners is to build the capacity of faith groups to engage meaningfully in planning. (This is a recommendation from the 2015 briefing on Faith Groups and the Planning System).</p> <p>The study findings suggest some faith groups struggle to engage effectively with the planning, find useful data, and expressed negative views of the planning system.</p> <p>Participants had little knowledge of PAN 4, but requested a non-technical introduction to the planning system.</p> <p>There was confusion over how to resolve property issues, such as waste.</p> <p>In the study 70% of respondent groups reported issues relating to the use of buildings they used.</p> <p>The study also identified examples of good practice by faith groups in addressing such issues.</p> <p>Future engagement works should address the wide range of issues reported by faith groups, such as building maintenance, access, parking and waste disposal. The engagement process could usefully seek to identify ways in which the council could be involved in helping to address such issues, as well as sharing examples of good practice among the groups themselves.</p>
<b>Engagement</b>	
<p>17. The council should seek opportunities for improving engagement with faith groups. This makes use of good practice resources. This should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making a formal commitment through the adoption of the “Faith Covenant” or “Faith Pledge”)</li> <li>• developing a longer-term strategy;</li> <li>• maximising inclusion, transparency, and outcomes;</li> <li>• developing a strategy for practical challenges in engaging with faith groups.</li> </ul>	<p>There was evidence of perceptions of conflict and exclusion in engagement with faith groups, as well as lack of accessibility, transparency and an overall strategy for engagement.</p> <p>The study also highlighted that the relationship between faith groups and the council needs to be improved and greater trust and understanding established on both sides.</p> <p>There are principles and examples of good practice in engagement which could be utilised in the borough. A key tool in good practice is the adoption of the Faith Pledge/Covenant (see Section 6.4.1 and Recommendation 6). This covenant provides a template which can be modified to reflect local circumstances. It established principles and commitments that the council and Faith Groups sign up to.</p>
<p>18. The council should maintain a database of faith groups, utilising the data gathered for this study. This could identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scope for sharing</li> <li>• preferred techniques for engagement (email/phone calls etc.), thereby creating a more effective means of engagement.</li> </ul>	<p>The study has illustrated the need for improved data on faith groups in the borough, and the study findings provide a useful starting point for a database of faith groups which could be maintained.</p> <p>Maintaining a database could generate significant benefits for planning, engagement and cohesion. It will be needed to consider the availability of shared space (as per Recommendation 10) and the project has indicated a need for improved communication between the faith groups and the council.</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Justification</b>
<p>19. The council should seek to build the knowledge and understanding of religious matters and planning within the council. Community engagement and planning are key council roles were training could be focused.</p>	<p>Developing improved engagement with faith groups is a two-way process between faith groups and the council. Better internal knowledge of faith groups would be an important step in improving engagement within the council.</p>
<p>20. The council should disseminate the key findings of this study to relevant council officers and members as one part of an initiative to build understanding of faith groups and religious matters within the council, including the key role of faith groups in community service provision and in the cohesion agenda.</p>	<p>Building understanding of faith groups and religious matters is needed to ensure effective engagement and to ensure that faith groups' potential role in delivering strategic council priorities is maximised.</p> <p>The study has highlighted the critical role played by faith groups in the cultural and community life of the people of the borough.</p>

# Appendix A: Scoping Workshop

The scoping workshop was held on 4 April 2017. All faith groups on the contact list were invited, and a number of reminders were sent via email and hard copy letter (See Table 2.2 of main text).

The purpose of the workshop was to build a positive working relationship with faith groups, test preliminary findings and discuss key issues. A short presentation on the study was provided, followed by targeted questions discussed by small facilitated groups. Participants were also invited to comment on a map of known faith facilities in the borough; as well provide comments in writing confidentially.

There were 28 separate attendees at the scoping workshop, from 17 faith organisations. Questions were discussed in four small facilitated groups, through two sessions. The questions were:

## Session 1: Current Needs

- Are there any issues about the amount of space that is currently available to your (or other faith) groups?
- Are there any issues about the quality of the space(s) you currently use?
- Are there any other current issues about the place(s) where you worship?

## Session 2: Future actions

- How best to meet future needs in existing housing areas?
- How best to provide for growth in new housing areas? How could multi-faith or intra-faith spaces provide a way forward?
- How could the council best engage with religious groups in future?

Notes on the discussion were taken by each small group facilitator, which was then used as a qualitative data source, and analysed thematically with the survey responses and interviews.

The outputs from all four groups are provided in summary in the following text. This is included as documentary evidence. These summary texts were not approved by the group members or attendees, but are edited facilitator's notes. Conversations were typically free-flowing and in some cases ranged over the two sessions and all the questions. Descriptions of particular faith facilities or groups have been removed for confidentiality.

## Group 1

- "Not enough space" mentioned by most of the group. Some spoke of exponential growth. Others said growth over the last 30 years; said they currently had to make do with what they've got.
- Some spoke of provision by Muslims for migrant communities that are not well reached by others and have little infrastructure – e.g. Somali, Bengali.



- Muslim members spoke of the need for awareness of space pinch points – for example, on Fridays there may be over 4000 coming through the mosque. Also Eid days. Local Friday market has a mutually reinforcing effect on mosque and market attendance.
- Some spoke of the need for multiple services as 100 was about the maximum size for their building.
- Storage issues a particular problem, especially if the building is rented.
- One slightly semi-serious comment was that bad public transport in some areas of the borough meant that people were incentivized to attend a religious meeting place locally.
- Lots of comments about the difficulties of renting space, although lease arrangements were said to be better. Warehouses are just not ideal. Difficult to install disabled facilities One rented from an Anglican church for 10 years but they have outgrown the space and there are not enough rooms for youth activities, nor is it possible to do activities for the elderly and foodbanks.
- Some strong comments about traffic wardens on Fridays and possibly Sundays, looking to fine those attending mosques and churches.
- Stronger point towards the end of first discussion about local authority (and national government) lacking understanding of religious groups and their contributions to communities and the borough.
- Not enough planning permission is given for faith groups and there is perceived inconsistency around planning permission decisions.
- ·Consultation should be done “with” faith groups, not “to” faith groups.
- ·There was frustration over the constraints over faith group growth.
- When complaints are made against faith groups, councils not to take them just at face value.
- A lengthy conversation on the problems of multi-faith sharing of premises. It was said to be impractical and theologically problematic.
- Intra-faith spaces (once explained) were possible for some faiths, and could be managed, but this needs to come from faith groups themselves, not from the LA. Examples of this already in team working / ecumenical partnerships / Churches Together groups.
- Muslim members questioned whether sharing space was workable – for example, they all need to pray at the same time.
- A multi-space building is a possibility, but need to be aware of different spatial practices.
- The council need people who are au fait with religious language and have the necessary background knowledge – planning department need this as well (i.e. such a person not in isolation from planning).
- Sessions like this very welcome, which involves listening to the faith groups. Desire to avoid confrontational meetings (possibly due to previous experience of such).

- Perhaps a series of consultations would be helpful – to aid ownership of local plans.

## Group 2

- Size of existing buildings an issue due to increased demand/demographics.
- Transport and parking are also issues for existing churches due to increased demands.
- These issues of size were considered to be true for many groups, both established and new.
- Barking Riverside stage 1 was supposed to provide a multi-faith space but there are practical issues of sharing the current space, and not enough information about other spaces which are supposed to be provided at subsequent stages.
- Many industrial sites used as places of worship.
- Transport links to places of worship can be an issue. Many sites suburban and don't have good transport links. Questioned availability of assumptions about public transport and bikes in suburban context.
- S106 provisions
  - Size of site
  - Transparency of management
  - Planning Use classes—Worship and community currently the same which makes planning for worship sites harder to get due to demand for community sites.
- There is a council focus on multi-faith sites, but what about provision for purpose-built sites? If sites were available to build, organisations would likely come forward with money to develop.
- Need to consider not just sites in new developments but also how to facilitate the expansion of existing sites.
- There was a discussion of building high quality buildings which expressed the identity of the groups.
- Create communities in the new developments, not just building houses.
- Use more than economic gain in decision making.
- We are good at planning for schools, but not for space needs of religious groups.
- Religious groups do community work but pay full rates and no subsidy.
- Better communication with council needed. More transparency of council decisions.
- Some council community sites aren't rented out to religious groups for community events - inconsistent approach to this by council?
- There was some support for shared community use sites or intra-faith.
- It was noted that there are some practices of shared spaces now, such as Hindu's using Anglican sites.

### Group 3

#### *Amount of Space*

- Barking Riverside stage 1– in an area of 800 – 1000 homes and holds approximately 100 people. Inadequate and it's on a lease.
- Building in Barking Riverside stage was built as part of the school – not stand alone which would be preferable.
- Scrattons Estate – approximately 1000 homes and no religious building.
- The planning department make things difficult – so many conditions, e.g. parking – why can't they work around it with public parking?
- The car park is going to be taken away. It's ok at the moment, but it won't be in 12 month's time when we have no parking.
- (Name redacted) Church feeds 1000 homeless people per month and offers wider support – all free of charge. More space is needed. Get no help from the council.
- (Name redacted) is also a night shelter for homeless people for 6 months of the year. Want to increase it to 12 months but unable to provide accommodation.
- A number of churches are moving to multi-purpose uses, so we need flexibility when it comes to planning.
- (Name redacted) a big problem with space for parking which really upsets local residents.
- The protocols are too strict = discouraging.

#### *Quality of Spaces*

- (Name redacted) has no lift so disabled members cannot go upstairs.
- Thames Road – is a converted commercial space = difficult and costly.
- If you use council buildings it's expensive and not always available when you need it, especially on public holidays.
- Not many churches have showers.
- (Name redacted) is good because we were forced to acquire a large building; we've got rooms for different groups, but we pay high business rates – even subsidised it costs £22k per year.

#### *Multi-Faith Spaces*

- Not keen.
- Would need strict guidelines in terms of percentage of space and time that different groups could have.

- Lots of different issues to consider.
- Cinemas = multiple screens = could do it like that for different religious groups.
- Would be difficult to manage – you'd need someone external to manage it.
- Intra-faith = more in common.
- Multiple rooms could work.
- Each group wants to operate independently.
- Could use the inter-faith space for additional community services.
- Instead of using space for worship, use it for community services.
- Use unemployed and/or retired people to run the community services.

#### *Future needs*

- Within new housing development for every x number of houses there should be a certain amount of religious spaces.
- Riverside – developers promised places of worship but it does not seem to be happening.
- Religious spaces are added retrospectively – that doesn't work.
- Religious spaces are an after-thought.
- Consider parking spaces alongside housing and places of worship –work out the ratio for what's needed.
- Free parking on Sundays and Fridays around places of worship.

#### *Engagement*

- Employ a full-time liaison officer. They need to understand the issues and needs.
- Forums like this really help.
- The Faith forum is not working currently.
- Council need to create an atmosphere of trust – there's been a lot of meetings but they were just talk.
- Need to follow up with actions.

## Group 4

### *Current situation for religious meeting places*

In the discussion, there were representatives of two groups and each put forward their views in turn. These are not included here for confidentiality, but have been considered within the study.

### *Meeting future needs*

- Council has to plan for future needs – look at rations of people moving in and their needs for [religious meeting places].
- More consultation on how to move forward.
- Allocate spaces as per projections.
- Religious spaces are not limited to worship.
- Multi-faith spaces won't work.
- Intra-faith spaces won't work either.
- Community side could be together.
- Could have space for inter-faith dialogue or education.
- The show stopper is worship – every group has their own way of worship.
- Look at each area – want local facilities.
- Could have private room/hall in office developments (e.g. 1 floor for Muslims).
- Example: East London Mosque/Muslim Centre, which is linked to flats, welfare services and a health services.
- There isn't even a coffee shop or shops in Riverside [*lack of community facilities*].

### *Improving engagement*

- Need transparency.
- Need consultation on plans for Riverside.
- Already have problems with parking – not enough spaces (parking restrictions).

### Notes from Plenary after individual sessions:

- Space! [*need more of it*].
- [*spaces used for*] multiple purposes.

- *[religious meeting places are also] providing communities [i.e. serving wider needs].*
- Parking!
- Smarter management of relationship *[between council and religious groups].*
- *[The council should] plan for future need.*
- Traditionally and historically – religious building came first *[when building new communities]!*
- More consultation.
- New communities, not just housing.
- Transparency of decisions.
- Not just worship – offer community services - *[which could be] multi or inter-faith.*
- Not multi-faith *[places of worship]* - except possibly 'multi-screen' *concept.*
- Follow up with actions *[not just more talk].*
- Full-time liaison person between council and religious groups?.
- Will study be led by economic *[factors]?*.
- Some people would like multi-faith spaces.
- Multi-cultural centre *[as opposed to worship centre] would* work and would improve community cohesion.
- *[People would like to be a given a computer] link to information on Local Plan studies.*

# Appendix B: Report Launch Workshop

A summary of comments received at the report launch in November 2017 will be included here.