



# KSIMC of Birmingham Strategic Plan 1434/2013

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*"The right of the people of creed (milla) is harbouring safety for them, compassion toward them, kindness toward their evildoer, treating them with friendliness, seeking their well-being, thanking their good-doer, and keeping harm away from them. You should love for them what you love for yourself and dislike for them what you dislike for yourself. Their old men stand in the place of your father, their youths in the place of your brothers, their old women in the place of your mother, and their youngsters in the place of your children."*

*- Imam Zain-al-Abideen (AS)*



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# Executive Summary

The Roadmap Team was set up to undertake an assessment of the needs of our Community, research the current opportunities and challenges, and come up with recommendations of how the KSIMC of Birmingham should operate in order to best serve the needs of the Community and the wider society.

This document provides a high-level view of the KSIMC of Birmingham and its journey from the past and into the future. The document begins by giving an overview of how KSIMC of Birmingham has reached to this point. It then analyses the community using the Census that was conducted in 2011/2012 and feedback that was obtained from Consultation Sessions held over the recent years (particularly December 2010). A review is undertaken of the community's strengths and weaknesses, alongside opportunities and threats by the external environment. A key finding from this exercise demonstrates how our Community serves different demographics of people in different ways, from Cradle to Grave.

An interim report was produced in March 2011 and shared with the members during the AGM held in April 2011. The team received feedback from various members and Sub-Committees, and incorporated this into this report. Thereafter the report was presented at the AGM in 2012, and was received positively. The team were asked to incorporate the Census and analysis and present the report for adoption at the AGM in 2013. The team wishes to thank all those who took the time to provide feedback and also appreciates all those who spent their New Year's Eve in 2010 thinking about the future of this Community and its needs.

A key observation from this exercise is that our Community should continue to consult its members and work in a more structured manner if we wish to get the most out of the efforts everyone puts into this organisation. To support this, the Roadmap team have come up with some practical recommendations along with 12 'Areas of Focus' for KSIMC of Birmingham to operate under:



## Areas of Focus

- Islamic Education & Worship
- The Wider Community & Society
- Serving those with Special Needs
- Secular Education
- Health & Wellbeing
- Economic Development, Employment & Welfare
- Strengthening Families
- Operational Excellence, Sustainability & Volunteer Development
- Community Spirit
- Focal Point
- The Youth
- The Seniors



As per the following clause 6bii of the constitution:

*“The Executive Committee will be accountable to its Members for the delivery of the Strategic Plan as adopted by the Members, and will be required to provide regular updates, at a minimum on an annual basis at the Annual General Meetings”.*

**This document must be used by all Executive Committees and Sub-Committees of KSIMC of Birmingham to determine their strategy and plan for the term once they have taken office, and must provide progress updates to the members at the AGMs.**

The document also includes some *key recommendations* to consider, some of these include:

- ✓ *Every project carried out in the Community should be planned and budgeted for in advance.*
- ✓ *The office team should be strengthened and its responsibilities expanded to include support for and management of volunteers.*
- ✓ *A programme should be in place to ensure volunteers in key positions mentor and actively involve others so that leadership potential is developed in all areas of our Community.*

The Roadmap team have also come up with a mission statement for the KSIMC of Birmingham, which reads as follows:

***“Creating a spiritual and vibrant Community based on the values and practices of the Islamic Shia Ithna-Asheri faith by developing the potential of its members, engaging with the wider society and serving the needs of humanity worldwide”***



## About KSIMC of Birmingham

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The KSIMC of Birmingham is a religious Organisation setup by the Khoja Community. Most Khojas originally come from the states of Gujarat and Kutch in India. At the turn of the 20th century a group of Khojas migrated from India to Africa to identify business opportunities, and made Africa their home. The Khoja Community have always kept economic progress at the front of their minds, and ensured they invest in their education in order to obtain a better quality of life. From 1950 onwards, this Community began its migration to the West for education purposes, and the Ugandan exodus in 1972 resulted in an influx of migration into the West, including the United Kingdom.

Birmingham was one of the places the Khoja Community chose to settle in, and the first Khojas arrived to Birmingham in 1968. Times were tough during this time, as people had been uprooted from their homes and faced the challenges of settling in a new country. At that time, the Community and family were all that people had. The first Khojas in Birmingham started conducting Majalis at each other's houses.

By 1973, the population of Khojas in Birmingham had grown. As people's houses were no longer big enough to accommodate, a house on Chesterton Road was rented to serve as a centre. For about two years, Chesterton Road was mainly used for gents' gatherings whilst ladies continued to congregate at people's houses.

By 1975, the Community had grown further so a property was purchased on Forest Road. This was a detached house, with the upstairs used for ladies' gatherings and the downstairs used for gents' gatherings. A Madrasah was also set up at Forest Road on Sundays and weekdays to ensure the teachings of Ahlul Bayt (AS) was passed onto the future generations. This property could not cater for large congregations such as Ashura Majalis, so Tindal Hall and Sherbourne Hall were hired on these occasions.

In 1977, the search began for a piece of land to construct a purpose built Centre and in 1980 work started on the current Clifton Road site. The Imambargah was officially opened in 1981 and the Masjid in 1982. Within five years the Centre had to be extended and a Nursery was also opened.

The next step was to identify ways that the Community could be made financially self-sufficient, and the Community began to invest in properties that would provide rental income. The first investment property was purchased in 1989 and this has continued since that time. Incidentally, this first building was occupied by the Al Mahdi Institute. This Hawza has become a vibrant Centre for Islamic learning, which is respected not only in our Community but throughout Birmingham's various religious and educational circles.

In October 1996, work began on the Syeda Zainab (AS) Building, which is adjacent to the mosque. This was opened in 1998 and apart from being used for the Madrasah, it is also used for the Nursery and secular tuition classes under the name of ME School of Excellence.

The KSIMC of Birmingham has grown at an incredible rate because of the reasonable cost of living and the various job opportunities that are available. Around 30 students from Khoja Communities across the world, most notably Africa, move to Birmingham every year, and many settle in



Birmingham after their studies. Furthermore, the Centre is also visited by Afghanis, Iranians, Iraqis and Pakistanis to mention a few.



As the Community enters its next phase of growth, it faces a number of challenges both internally and externally. Traditionally, the centre has only been seen only as a place for prayers and conducting majalis. The use of this centre is evolving into one where social activities and engagement with wider society are conducted. With an increased population and the emergence of a second generation, the Community adapts to new realities. One of the ways that it can continue to adapt is by planning on a more long term basis and formalising some of the structures and processes that are currently in place. This document highlights some of the ways this can be achieved.



# Community Analysis

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This section seeks to analyse our Community in the following ways:

- 1) The demographics through the recent Census that was conducted
- 2) Consultation with the Community
- 3) Our Strengths and Weaknesses (Internal factors)
- 4) Our Opportunities and Threats (External factors)

## Census

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A Community may be studied in a variety of ways, an important factor being the analysis of its demographics. Often anecdotes and ‘hearsay’ create perception of needs that may not reflect the actual requirements.

The Community census that was conducted in 2011/2012 was aimed at providing valuable information that would help the Community focus its resources on the needs based on demographics. **All Sub-Committees should make use of this analysis to determine how they shape their services.**

Key headlines from the Census are as follows:

- *The average number of people per household within our Community is 3.6*
- *The median age of the Community is 31, indicating that we are a young Community*
- *There is a significant number of elderly (over 65 years) people in the Community*
- *Over half of Birmingham Jamaat's population was not born in Birmingham*
- *The percentage of the Community today that was born and raised in Birmingham is 32%*
- *A significant population still rent the property they live in*
- *A large number of males and females between the ages of 25-34 are single*
- *The number of males unemployed within our Community is significantly high and is a cause for concern (15%)*
- *30% of Community members do not have any qualifications*
- *English is by far the spoken/understood language within the Community (96%)*
- *87% use car as their primary means of travel to mosque*
- *An overwhelming majority have access to computers and the internet within their home*



## Consultation with the Community

On 31 December 2010, members of our Community were invited by the Roadmap Team to discuss what they felt were current issues faced by our Community. This event was attended by approximately 150 men and women from all sections of the Community. Prior to this during the ten nights of Muharram 1432 Community members were asked to send their suggestions and views through various modes like text message, e-mail, suggestion boxes, and Facebook.



*The questions asked and discussed during the consultation event were as follows:*

**1. What do you want your Community to do for you and for others in partnership with you?**

This was an important opening question to get people thinking about what expectations they have from the Community. These expectations were different for different individuals and were very much based on their age and their social, economical and health situations.

**2. What worries you most about the Community?**

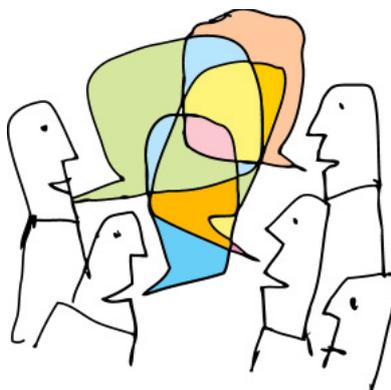
This question indeed stimulated much debate within the small groups. Burning issues within our Community were discussed with some thoughts on outcomes.

**3. What would you change about the Community?**

The groups were asked to think about an ideal Community, in an ideal world, with infinite resources. Since so many different people with different views came together, there was a rich variety of answers and proposals.

**4. How do you think our Community can play a part in wider society?**

Is it time to give back to our country/city? Here, our responsibilities as Shia Muslims were discussed and how these should be fulfilled.



Attendees were split into smaller groups and each group discussed all 4 questions, with everyone having an opportunity to contribute. Ideas were captured on flipcharts and these were analysed thereafter, with themes emerging that have fed into recommendations in this report.



Many operational issues were also identified by Community members, which were shared with the appropriate sub-Committees. Examples of such issues include investing further in Madrasah education, lack of support structures for the youth, support structures for new mums and helping those who come from abroad settle.

After this event, the Roadmap Team also took the time to visit a senior citizens gathering in order to get their views on the same questions as above. During the discussion with the seniors, it became clear that our seniors have a lot of experience that must be shared with the young so that the lessons of the past are not forgotten and we avoid making the same mistakes again. Furthermore, listening to the needs of the seniors made the Team realise the importance of understanding the needs of Community members at the various stages of their life and tailoring the services provided by the Community to these needs.

*Finally, the Roadmap Team also asked various Sub-Committee heads to fill in a questionnaire asking them the following questions:*

1. *What does your Committee do/what are you trying to achieve?*
2. *How are you going to do that i.e. what is your plan (in short form) to try and achieve this?*
3. *What are the obstacles that you face in trying to achieve what you want to?*
4. *What help or support do you need (generally)?*

*These questions were aimed at understanding the following:*

- ✓ *How the various structures within the Community work together*
- ✓ *The common challenges that are faced by the volunteers*
- ✓ *How these challenges can be overcome*

The Roadmap Team has made a sincere effort to consult with all sections of the Community. However, it is quite possible that many people who will have wanted to take part in the debate did not get a chance to fully share their ideas. For this, the Team would like to apologise. The process of consulting the Community proved that our members have a deep love for the Community, and that they have wonderful ideas. Therefore, it is the hope of the Roadmap Team that consultation and debate within the Community will continue.



### Internal – Strengths and Weaknesses

As we have already discussed, the Community has grown into a very populous and multicultural Community. In order for future success we must understand what resources will allow us to cultivate growth and also what may inhibit it. As the Holy Prophet said, “Whoever knows himself, knows his Lord.” Whilst this is aimed at individuals, from a Community perspective it is also required because if we take a deep look at what enhances the Community and what hinders it we can ensure that we enable success and overcome any barriers.

The analysis below is a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of our Community that people have expressed. We have tried to keep the number of these to a minimum and under broad headings in order to maintain focus on key aspects of the Community’s current state. It is important to note that the weaknesses are not a criticism but are intended to be points upon which we can all improve together.

#### STRENGTHS

<i>Strength</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Shi’a Islamic Faith	The Shi’a Islamic faith provides the Community the perfect set of principles and mechanisms for individual and communal success. In addition, our faith provides us role models who have lived the principles to their fullest extent.
Established Institutions	Existing organisations and Committees have successfully delivered activities for the benefit of the Community. They have developed the structures, systems and institutions to ensure that these teams are placed to deliver successfully in the future.
Family & Networks	Strong relationships both within the local Community and with the wider Khoja and Shi’a populations allow the Community to benefit from wider access to ideas and



	resources.
Culture of Giving	Community members donate their time, ideas and resources towards Community projects. Volunteers often work unsociable hours to ensure an excellent service for others, as well as making significant financial donations to ensure every project is funded.
Location	The United Kingdom has an established legal framework (including the right to freedom of religion and association) as well as relative wealth, infrastructure and opportunities. In addition, the Birmingham area is seeing significant investment in regeneration of certain areas and local and national transport links, including New Street Station, High Speed II and Birmingham International Airport.

### WEAKNESSES

<i>Weakness</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Systems and Structures	The Community could be considered to lack clear structures, systems and plans to ensure effective leadership, management and governance of the Community's parts. This results in the occasional accidental wastage of effort and resources; and prevents the efficient running of the Community.
Insularity	The Community could be considered to lack deep relationships with key individuals, organisations and the wider Community in the locality of the centre. This results in the Community lacking the ability to attract and influence others' outlook on topics which directly affect the Community and therefore play a wider role in society.
Reliance	The Community could be considered to be reliant on a small group of volunteers, who have become responsible for delivering a significant proportion of the services provided by the Community. This results in huge pressures on these volunteers and a limited perspective if the group does not have representation from a cross-section of the Community.
Engagement	The Community does not fully harness the talents, skills and capacity of Community members.

### External – Opportunities and Threats

Our religion and culture both have a great heritage of adapting to the circumstances that we have faced and making the most of the opportunities that we have available to us. At the same time, we have also understood that being a minority means that there are a number of opportunities and



threats that we must be aware of in order to not only survive, but thrive in a non-Islamic environment.

### *OPPORTUNITIES*

<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Engagement	The Community has the opportunity to engage with the local population, local and national government and other institutions to achieve the aims of the Community.
Technological Advancement	Technological advancements will allow the Community to perform its activities to a greater extent and with more efficiency. As a result, the Community should ensure that it makes full use of technological advancements to achieve its aims whilst at the same time carrying the Community with it.
Global Rebalancing	As emerging economies continue to undergo economic development, opportunities for trade and investment will continue to materialise. These opportunities will naturally advantage our Community, given our Indian and African roots.

### *THREATS*

<i>Threats</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Discrimination/ intolerance	Groups which have anti-Muslim and/or anti-Shia stance may impact the safety of the Community, and our ability to engage with the wider population on a local and national level.
External Influences	Negative aspects of the values of wider society could increasingly influence Community members (particularly youngsters) to a greater extent than Shia values. This may result in increased risks of intoxicant addiction, and other social ills.
Community Fragmentation	Differences in the application of Shia beliefs or actions within the Community may cause fragmentation of the Community. These could be issues of fiqh (for example the sighting of the moon on the first day of each Hijri month) to issues of Islamic principle (for example differences in the interpretation of the Qur'an). This could also be seen in a widening gap between different generations.



## The Local Environment



In order to develop a robust strategic plan, to the Roadmap Team sought to understand the environment in which we operate. We have therefore set out some key issues and challenges facing the UK and the West Midlands which have a bearing on our Community. These could be viewed as threats and opportunities.

Birmingham is a thriving, multi-racial, international city at the economic heart of the West Midlands. It has a diverse population of close to a million people; and it is estimated that by 2024, 50% of the population will be of a non-white ethnicity.

Birmingham is home to a strong tradition of enterprise, with world-class companies, centres of academic and industrial excellence and first class international sport and leisure facilities.

There are a number of sizeable

investment projects taking place, including a £125m expansion of Birmingham International Airport, a £630m upgrading of New Street Station, an updated £190m Birmingham Library and the regeneration of Eastside and Snow Hill costing £300m. These programmes follow on from the redevelopment of the Bull Ring shopping complex, with Birmingham achieving the status as the UK's second retail hotspot.

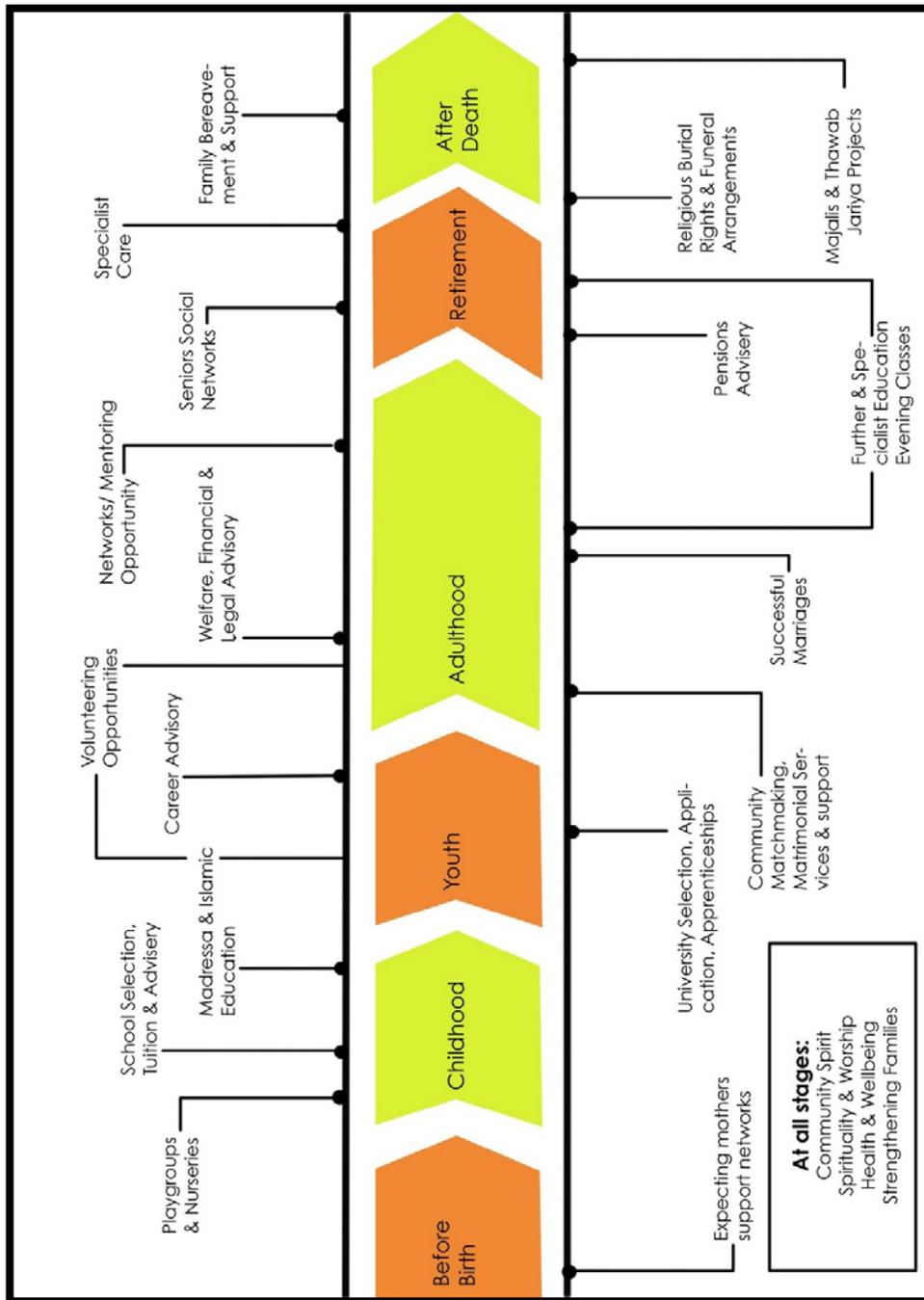
Birmingham also suffers from the after-effects of the decline in heavy-manufacturing and mining in Britain in the 80s and 90s. The unemployment rate in Birmingham is more than 60% higher than the English average, and has the lowest number of people aged 20-24 educated to degree standard. This particularly affects certain sectors of first and second generation migrants, with almost one in every two Pakistani and Bangladeshi men outside employment.

Given the wider local and national context, there are significant opportunities for our Community to take the lead and exploit the Big Society window by developing services in partnership with Central and Local Government and other agencies which are targeted at the range of needs of our Community. Birmingham City Council is also looking to localise a number of services by creating the environment for communities to “shape” their areas. This provides an opportunity for the Community to step up and enrich our Community beyond the traditional roles of a Mosque.



# From Cradle to Grave

This process has enabled the team to create an illustration of the general requirements of Community members at the different stages of their lives. This snapshot is shown below:





## Areas of Focus



A key observation from the exercise of developing a strategic plan is that our Community should consult its members more and work in a structured and integrated manner if we wish to get the most benefit out of the efforts everyone puts into this organisation. To support this, the Roadmap team have come up with twelve areas of focus for KSIMC of Birmingham to operate under. Each of these areas of focus is explained below.

### *Islamic Education & Worship*

*“The best of people is he who longs for worship and embraces it, loves it with his heart, throws himself into it with his whole body, and devotes himself exclusively to it...” Prophet Muhammad (SAW)*

The Community should continue to revolve around our Shia Ithna-Asheri beliefs and the promotion of the individual and social implementation of these principles and values. This requires the Community to provide opportunities for increased understanding as well as to facilitate the gatherings of worship and spirituality. English is by far the spoken/understood language within the Community (96%). The Tableegh Committee should therefore look into providing further lectures in English whilst catering for the Urdu audience as much as possible.

### *Secular Education*

*“Knowledge is the lost property of the believer.” Imam Ali (AS)*

The Community should support its members to obtain an excellent education at every stage of life; in order that they fulfil their potential and have opportunities for personal development, regardless of income. The Community should produce academics and scholars that are of benefit to human understanding in all fields. 30% of Community members do not have any qualifications, and hence the Education Committee should look into holding events to encourage members, particularly the younger ones to obtain qualifications in order to improve their job and salary prospects.

### *Health & Wellbeing*

The Community should encourage and provide facilities for its members to lead healthy and fulfilling lifestyles. This should encompass all areas of health, including physical health and mental wellbeing.



## *Economic Development, Employment & Welfare*

*“The best of goodness is giving financial assistance to one’s brothers.” Imam Ali (AS)*

The Community should ensure that each individual and family in the Community is able to meet its material needs and desires. This involves support during times of hardship, as well the guidance and opportunities to get back to economic independence. Access to advice and opportunities should be provided for those looking to change their circumstances; for example moving jobs, from employment to entrepreneurship or from education to the workplace. Since the average number of people per household within our Community is 3.6 the economic needs of our Community are significantly higher than that of the average household in the UK. In this economic climate, it is imperative that these needs are addressed and the Economic Upliftment Committee can play an important role in addressing this need. A significant population still rent the property they live in, and perhaps the Community can explore ways of providing support and advice to those wishing to purchase their own properties. The number of males unemployed within our Community is significantly high and is a cause for concern (15%). The Economic Upliftment Committee should be looking into opening channels of communication with those not in employment in order to work together with them to find suitable employment. They should also consider holding events which can equip people to seek work. The Welfare Committee should advise those who are unemployed in order to ensure they are claiming the correct benefits from the government and have the means to live in a dignified manner.

## *Strengthening Families*

*“Maintaining relations with one’s kin improves one’s character, brings about open-handedness and cheerfulness, increases in one’s sustenance and delays one’s appointed time of death.” Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS)*

The Community should promote bonds within and between families. This should include facilitating marriage, helping couples to parenthood; as well as providing support for those who may have unique family circumstances, (e.g. widows and orphans). A large number of males and females are single between the ages of 25-34. Those who wish to get married within this age range should be provided with suitable opportunity, advice and support in finding a spouse.

## *Serving Those with Special Needs*

*“The one who strives for the sake of Allah to fulfil the need of his Muslim brother, Allah has written for him a million good deeds.” Imam Jaffer Sadiq (AS)*

The Community should ensure every single person has unrestricted access to its services and facilities; with the respect and dignity offered to those who may not have the same needs. This includes individuals who may have special educational needs, disabilities or other requirements.



### *The Youth*

*“Learning something during one’s youth is like engraving in stone, and learning something when one is old is like writing on the surface of water.” Prophet Muhammad (SAW)*

The Community should ensure that its facilities and services particularly focus on encouraging the youth to make Islam and the Community a key part of their identity, as well as developing the interest in skills in becoming life-long volunteers and members of the Community. After all, the median age of our Community is 31 years.

### *The Seniors*

*“Verily venerating me includes honouring the old men of my Community.” Prophet Muhammad (SAW)*

There is a significant number of elderly (8% are over 65 years) in the Community, and the Seniors Committee should ensure that the Seniors have access to services and facilities that is afforded to other age groups, as well as meet their specific needs. This could include financial planning for retirement, housing requirements, access to healthcare and bridging any potential cultural or language barriers.

### *Community Spirit*

*“My nation will thrive as long as they love each other...” Prophet Muhammad (AS)*

The Community should engender in each individual the desire to be an active individual within the Community, serving the needs of others as well as taking maximum personal benefit for themselves. Individuals should feel at home and welcome within a non-judgemental, safe and inclusive Community. Over half of Birmingham Jamaat's population was not born in Birmingham. Although it may be possible that immigration will continue to reduce due to tougher immigration policies, immigrants should be identified and provided with any support possible during their inevitably difficult transition. It is also worth noting that the percentage of the Community today that was born and raised in Birmingham is at 32%. It is important that their needs and cultural difference to immigrants from East Africa are not overlooked. This is especially important for the Sub-Committees that are in charge of organising events such as lectures, Madrasah and youth events.

### *The Wider Community & Society*

*“Neighbourliness causes the lands to thrive and increases life spans.” Imam Ali (AS)*

The Community should make a positive impact on every aspect of the local and national Community, as well as promoting Islamic ideals. This should include building links with bodies such as national and regional government, faith organisations, charities and schools. The Community should engage with other Islamic schools of thought in a constructive manner.



### *Focal Point*

The Community should become the ‘go-to’ place for Community members and families, serving as the ‘third-place’ alongside education/work and the home. It should be an integral part of each individual’s life, providing a sense of belonging, a support network and a key part of their identity. The centre should provide an avenue for third-party organisations to assist members of our Community.

### *Operational Excellence, Sustainability & Volunteer Development*

*“The intelligent person seeks perfection.” Imam Ali (AS)*

The Community should ensure that all its activities are completed perfectly, with a relentless pursuit of perfection and a focus on ensuring that the Community ethos and services are passed on down succeeding generations. This includes ensuring that the Community is run in an open and fair manner, allowing members to provide their input on strategic and operational issues; as well as soliciting suggestions to highlight areas for improvement. The Community should ensure that there are vehicles to promote volunteering and develop volunteers; who will be the cornerstone upon which the objectives above can be completed.



## Practical Steps to move forward

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As a result of the work that has been carried out by the Team, a number of actions have been developed to take this forward. These recommendations have been grouped under the following headings:

- ✓ Volunteer Development
- ✓ Planning Framework
- ✓ Shifting the focus of the EC from operational to strategic
- ✓ Investment in technology
- ✓ Community engagement
- ✓ Collaboration, networking and engagement with external organisations

### Volunteer Development

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As mentioned above, the Community could be seen to rely on a small group of volunteers and as a result, these volunteers are sometimes over-stretched. Furthermore, because of this reliance on the core group, succession planning maybe neglected in future generations. Therefore, in order to ensure that there are vehicles to promote volunteering and develop volunteers as well as ensuring



that the ethos and skills involved in volunteering are passed down, the Roadmap Team recommends the establishment of a volunteer management programme.



The aim of this programme should be to ensure volunteers in key positions mentor and actively involve others so that leadership potential is developed in all areas of our Community. The programme should be headed up by a volunteer co-ordinator and should have the following objectives:

1. Create an email list of volunteers, so that communication between subcommittees can take place easily.
2. Organise Volunteer Development programmes.
3. Ensure succession planning for key positions within

the Community.

4. Ensure that the specialist skills of Community members are well utilised.
5. Create close links between volunteers and the Executive Committee members.
6. Understand and communicate how the Volunteer's efforts contribute towards the progress of the Community.

Through creating such initiatives, , it is hoped that the Jamaat would be able to recruit, retain and develop volunteers to the highest standards possible, reduce its reliance on a core group and do more for Community members and wider society.

## Planning Framework

The next steps to the high level areas of focus discussed in the previous section are to create a planning framework, which converts our vision and strategy into reality. This must be managed through a clear governance and planning process, connecting the General, Executive Committee, Sub-Committees , projects and actions, milestones and timescales into a comprehensive plan.

Over the years, volunteers have worked tirelessly to deliver activities for the benefit of the Community. As the Community has grown, and the number of volunteers has grown, the Community can benefit from greater co-ordination and knowledge-sharing.

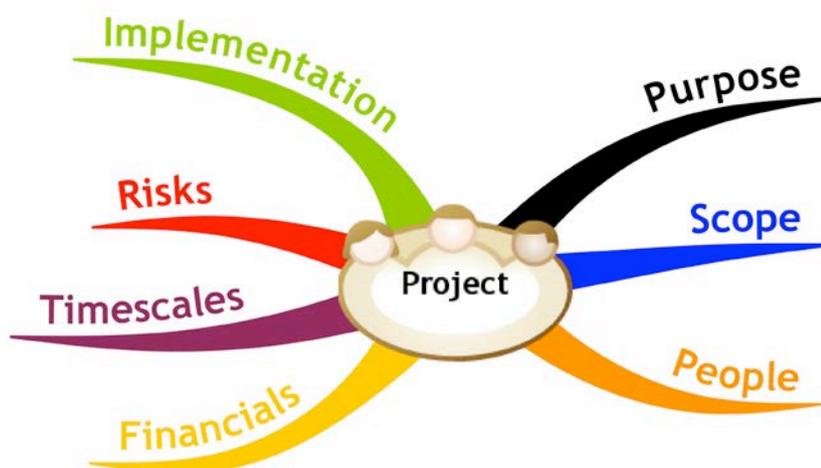
In order to align all Committees and working parties in the Community around these key areas of focus, the Roadmap Team suggests that every Sub-Committee discuss their aspirations each year with (at least one member of) the Executive Committee. In addition, activities for the year should be planned and budgeted for in advance. This discussion process could work along the following lines:

1. At the beginning of each year, each Sub-Committee should meet in order to discuss their plans for the year.
2. The relevant Committees should thereafter meet with the EC member(s) in order to discuss and finalise the Annual Plan (some Committees may want to plan quarterly, etc).
3. During the first Executive Committee meeting of the year, the president and his Committee members should discuss the plans of each sub-Committee and ensure that there is no



duplication. The Head of Finance should ensure that budgets are appropriately set and funding and donations can be found for projects.

4. The Committees should the implement the plans and report back to the EC regularly, and report to the Community frequently.
5. At the end of the year (or more frequently if desired), the plans can be reviewed jointly by the EC member(s) and the sub-Committee; and any changes or new ideas incorporated to the next year’s plan.



The information provided by each Committee will:

- ✓ allow the Executive Committee ensure there is no duplication and all areas are covered off;
- ✓ allow sub-Committees direct access to the Executive Committee;
- ✓ be held on file, so that future Committees and teams can see what projects were proposed in the past
- ✓ allow the Treasury team to understand what funds are required in order to support various projects
- ✓ serve as a historical record as to what work has been carried out for the benefit of the Community.

## Shifting the focus of the Executive Committee from Operational to Strategic

In order to ensure that this Community is aligning itself to the constant changes in the external environment and needs of its members, the Executive Committee must increasingly focus on the strategic aspects of the Community, and delegate the day-to-day running to the Office and various sub-Committees.

The project planning process outlined above will facilitate this, and enable the Executive Committee to develop a strategic focus.



In order to assist the Executive Committee in this transition, it is essential that the Community increases the amount of resources invested in secretarial staff so that they can support the Executive Committee and provide support and management of volunteers at all levels of the Community.

## Investment in technology

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As mentioned previously, technological advancements allow the Community to perform its activities to a greater extent and with more efficiency. As a result, the Community should ensure that it makes full use of technological advancements to achieve its aims whilst at the same time carrying the Community with it. An overwhelming majority have access to computers and the internet within their home. This increases the importance of our website, live streaming and other online facilities. All sub Committees should look into how the Jamaat website can be used most effectively to deliver their services to the Community.

## Community Engagement

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As the membership becomes increasingly diverse, the needs of the Community have become broader. The Roadmap Team recommends that the Executive Committee continue to ensure that all the Areas of Focus are appropriately addressed. For example, given the difficult economic situation in the UK at the time of writing; focus should continue to be placed on Economic Development initiatives.

In order to create a greater sense of belonging within the Community, it is also important to open up a two way dialogue between members and the sub-Committees. Some examples of ways in which this can be done include:

- Having a 'Consultation' meeting on a regular basis where Executive Committee members and some sub-Committees can field questions from members.
- Setting up a moderated online forum for complaints, comments and suggestions also using social media.

Finally, as a membership organisation, it is important that the Executive Committee looks into how members can receive some tangible benefits from paying their membership fee (e.g. discounts at various retail outlets).

## Collaboration, networking and engagement with external organisations

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As the Community has become more established, KSIMC of Birmingham has the opportunity to influence wider society. Falling under the umbrellas of CoEJ and The World Federation of KSIMC, the Community must ensure it develops better relationships with local politicians, media and other organisations.



Therefore, the Roadmap Team recommends that:

- The Resident Alim and Tabligh Committee should work with the Al Mahdi Institute to engage with communities of other faiths;
- The Executive Committee should aim to develop strong relationships with various external organisations;
- An external communications officer should be appointed, to develop links with the local media and organisations.

Within our Shia Community, Birmingham Jamaat should play a lead role in organising topic based networking events with other Jamaats and use these events to disseminate and develop best practice methods.

In order to achieve the above, it would be wise for the Community to appoint a communications officer who would be responsible for co-ordinating the communication of the Community's actions and positions both internally and externally.



## The ‘Glue’ that holds it all together

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As a Community with a population of approximately 1,700 people, annual revenues of over £1 million pounds and nearly 300 volunteers playing a role in its growth, structures and processes must be in place, with the following areas prioritised:

- ✓ A programme should be in place to ensure volunteers in key positions mentor and actively involve others so that leadership potential is developed in all areas of our Community.
- ✓ Every project carried out in the Community should be planned and budgeted for in advance.
- ✓ The office team should be strengthened and its responsibilities expanded to include support for and management of volunteers.

The ‘glue’ that will hold this all together is an executive Committee that is committed to working in partnership its members to achieving the Community’s mission:

***Creating a spiritual and vibrant Community based on the values and practices of the Islamic Shia Ithna Asheri faith by developing the potential of its members, engaging with the wider society and serving the needs of humanity worldwide.***