community cohesion – an action guide

guidance for local authorities

community cohesion

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foreword

Community cohesion lies at the heart of what makes a safe and strong community. It must be delivered locally through creating strong community networks, based on principles of trust and respect for local diversity, and nurturing a sense of belonging and confidence in local people. Effectively delivering community cohesion also tackles the fractures in society which may lead to conflict and ensures that the gains which changing communities bring are a source of strength to local areas.

Community cohesion is therefore critical to the quality of life of local people and, as community leaders, local authorities have an essential role to play in facilitating this. Through working with local partners, through influencing local services and through making things happen, local authorities can embed community cohesion principles throughout local life and bring about real change to the lives of the people living in their areas.

Building cohesive communities brings huge benefits by creating a society in which people from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds can live and work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. Cohesive communities are communities which are better able to tackle common problems, to provide mutual support and to work together for a positive future.

Councillor Sir Sandy Bruce-Lockhart
Chairman of the Local Government Association

Fiona Mactaggart
Parliamentary Under Secretary for Race Equality, Community Policy, and Civil Renewal, Home Office

Jeff Rooker
Minister of State for Regeneration & Regional Development

1 introduction

1.1 In December 2002, the Local Government Association (LGA) published *Guidance on community cohesion.* This outlined the principles underlying community cohesion and gave local authorities practical advice about how to build and strengthen cohesive communities in their area. A recent postal questionnaire confirmed that the 2002 guidance has been used by local authorities to plan and review a range of services and improve cultural links between communities.

1.2 Since the publication of the guidance, many local authorities and partners have developed strong policies and programmes reflecting the key community cohesion themes and there is now a growing body of good practice. This includes the development of solid good practice examples from the local authorities funded under the Home Office and ODPM Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme, from the six Beacon councils for community cohesion and from a range of other authorities and stakeholders[1]. The case studies in this guidance reflect this body of good practice as well as selected examples from voluntary and community sector organisations.

1.3 Central government and local authorities have done much important work building community cohesion through a wide range of public services and in a wide range of local conditions. But challenges still remain as communities continue to develop and react to the changes of a Britain that is diverse in every sense. Local leaders must continue to drive progress on building community cohesion and developing what has already been put into place. Building community cohesion is a long-term commitment.

1.4 To assist local authorities in this key task, the LGA and its partners are publishing updated and expanded guidance on community cohesion.[2] This takes the form of two partner documents.

Community cohesion – action guide: guidance for local authorities

The document you are reading now, which will be of particular interest to heads of service delivery and other practitioners. This practitioner guidance includes descriptions of the application of community cohesion in key policy areas, pointers for successful implementation and case studies drawn from different local authority and other contexts. This is essential reading for all heads of service delivery and programme managers – community cohesion principles must be embedded in mainstream services, not just in special projects. Obviously, it is also aimed at those practitioners specifically concerned with building community cohesion.

Community cohesion: guidance for local authority leaders and key partners (to be published early 2005)

This document is intended primarily for local authority chief executives and leaders, members with community cohesion portfolios and those in strategic leadership positions of local strategic partnerships. It will set out the challenge of community cohesion for local community leaders and provide a strategic overview and framework for promoting community cohesion across local authorities and their partnerships at a local, regional and national level. It will look at the statutory and regulatory framework and at delivery mechanisms, such as community strategies and local public service agreements, which community leaders can use to achieve their vision and take into account the response to the consultative document *Strength in Diversity: Towards a Race*

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1 Further information about the Pathfinder Programme is available at www.communitycohesion.gov.uk
Further information about the Beacon Scheme can be found at www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/beacons

2 *Guidance on Community Cohesion* 2002 has been updated and incorporated into the current guidance but is still available from the LGA and Home Office websites for reference. Please see www.lga.gov.uk

Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy, published by the Home Office this summer. The guidance will include case studies showing how local authorities have responded to the challenge of embedding community cohesion within their strategic planning processes.

2 defining community cohesion

2.1 This guide adopts the definition of 'Community Cohesion' established by the LGA and its partners and first published in the 2002 guidance. A cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;

- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;

- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and

- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

2.2 Since each local authority is unique in its demographic and social make-up, the meaning of community cohesion in your area will need to reflect an understanding of these local circumstances.

2.3 Promoting community cohesion involves addressing fractures, removing barriers and encouraging positive interaction between groups. Community cohesion is closely linked to integration as it aims to build communities where people feel confident that they belong and are comfortable mixing and interacting with others, particularly people from different racial backgrounds or people of a different faith.

2.4 Although this guidance is broad in scope, nevertheless there is also a degree of emphasis on race and faith issues. This is because divisions along race and faith lines are often the most pressing issues for local agencies to address. However, addressing cohesion will help to develop more positive community relations generally. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 will therefore be a key mechanism for the delivery of community cohesion.

2.5 Whatever your local circumstances, building cohesion between communities is a necessary step towards improving people's quality of life and their opportunity to achieve their potential. Viewed from outside, a cohesive community is one in which people will want to live and invest.

3 vision, values and strategy

3.1 An effective community cohesion strategy underpinned by a shared vision is vital for every area. Local authorities, in their community leadership capacity, are best placed to begin the process of developing the vision and to ensure, with their partners, that this takes shape as a published community cohesion strategy which informs all of the key policy areas of the authority and the activities of all local stakeholders[3]. The most effective vision will be one developed with local people and partnerships and which is rooted in ideas and values which local people understand and support. As well as feeding into a strategy for community cohesion work in the area, the vision could be further communicated via a short statement setting out general principles such as inclusion, equality and the benefits of diversity[4].

3.2 People should be encouraged to share a sense of responsibility, for themselves, their family, friends and neighbourhood. A vision statement can be used to set out the rights and responsibilities of local people in contributing to the local area. For example, all residents have the right not to be discriminated against or to be involved in decision-making which affects them. They also have a responsibility to behave as responsible citizens and to show respect for others' cultures and contributions.

3.3 An effective local vision will be drawn up through open and thorough discussion with your local community. This will give you the opportunity to check its resonance with local people and will itself begin to make the vision real. It will also give people of different groups a chance to come together and to develop greater trust and respect.

3.4 Your discussion could encompass the following topics:

- what makes for a cohesive community?

- how to develop pride in the local area;

- what are the values which we believe should underpin our vision for a cohesive community?

- working together to address common concerns;

- welcoming newcomers and helping both them and the local community to adjust;

- combating discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age; and

- promoting cross-cultural and inter faith contact.

3.5 Make particular efforts to engage those who may not usually get involved in formal consultation, such as young people, asylum seekers and refugees and Gypsy and Traveller groups.

3.6 To make your vision into a reality, you must ensure that it appears within key strategy documents, including your community strategy. Consider the best way to communicate it to others through channels such as local press and media, leaflets or a poster campaign.

Practical steps

- Make connections with local organisations from the community and voluntary sector, the faith sectors, trade unions and the business community. Encourage them to participate in formulating and spreading the vision.

- Use existing channels like race equality councils, black and minority ethnic networks, local inter faith bodies, the youth service, parish and town council networks and voluntary bodies to consult with local people.

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3 Issues of strategy development will be covered in some depth in the partner document due to be issued by the LGA in early 2005.

4 The round four beacon theme of Community Cohesion offers examples of authorities who have developed a strategic approach to cohesion. Details of where to obtain information on the participating authorities are given at the end of the chapter.

- Involve elected members and the local strategic partnership (LSP) so that they 'own', and provide strong leadership to back up your vision.

- Ensure that consultations are accessible to all and that you are including hard-to-reach groups.

- Involve the local press and media from the beginning of the process: they are key in shaping local opinion.

- Formulate and publish a public statement of your vision for building good community relations and to tackling problems where they exist.

- Make it clear that diversity in your area is valued.

- Embed the vision within other strategies and frameworks so that it translates to action on the ground.

- Make sure that you are communicating your vision effectively to people in your local area and that there is local ownership so that 'your' vision becomes 'our' vision for the community. Be innovative.

- Explore the possibility of getting endorsement from local celebrities.

East Lancashire Together Pathfinder: developing a common set of values

East Lancashire Together (ELT) is an alliance of local authorities, other public bodies and voluntary and community groups, committed to promoting respect and understanding between communities. One of their key tools was the development of a common set of values, drawn up in consultation with a range of partners, which describe the quality of community life they aspire to.

- Having a diversity of groups, faiths, cultures and ages is a key strength of our society and a major source of civic and community wealth.

- Mutual respect and equality of opportunity between different groups, faiths, cultures and ages should be one of the fundamental tenets of civic and social behaviour and working to achieve this is one of the hallmarks of an enlightened and mature society.

- Community cohesion is best achieved through continuous dialogue, mutual understanding and frequent social interactions between different groups, faiths, cultures and ages, encouraged and facilitated by strong community leadership.

- Disadvantage in all its forms represents the principal barrier to community cohesion, especially when it is experienced more by one group than another. Overcoming disadvantage in all its forms is therefore a fundamental goal of the network and its members.

- Racism and prejudice will not be tolerated and will be confronted.

ELT then worked hard to get a range of other public agencies and community organisations to sign up to these values and be part of a wider network of understanding and action in support of community cohesion.

Contact **Ian McHugh**, Director of East Lancs Together
Ian@elp.org.uk

Stoke-on-Trent Pathfinder: publishing a community cohesion charter

The Stoke-on-Trent Pathfinder developed a community cohesion charter[5] to present community cohesion in a user-friendly way that addresses local issues. A conference was held at which key stakeholders were invited to discuss and sign up to the charter. Politicians, public sector organisations and local agencies engaged in wide discussion of how community cohesion principles could be applied to local needs. The charter states that Stoke-on-Trent should be a place where:

• the diversity of people's backgrounds is appreciated and valued;

• there are positive relationships between individuals from different backgrounds in the workplace, schools and the community;

• all have a right to be part of a just society, where racial, religious or cultural differences exist in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect;

• every individual is treated equally and has the same life opportunities; and

• together, listening and responding with openness and respect, we will move forward in ways that acknowledge genuine differences, building on shared hopes and values.

This commitment will establish a strong and cohesive community based upon a common understanding of respect, security and justice.

We will strive to ensure that we:

• respect other people's freedom within the law to express their beliefs and convictions;

• learn to understand what others believe and value and allow them to express this in their own terms;

• recognise that all of us at times fall short of the ideals of our own traditions, and never compare our ideals with those of others;

• work to prevent disagreement from leading to conflict; and

• respect the right of others to disagree with us.

Contact **Sylvia Mactaggart**, Community Cohesion Co-ordinator, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
sylvia.mactaggart@stoke.gov.uk

Blackburn with Darwen: 'Belonging to Blackburn with Darwen'

The 'Belonging to Blackburn with Darwen' local strategic partnership campaign aims to build more cohesive communities by strengthening citizenship and forging pride of place.

The 'Belonging...' campaign uses ordinary – and some extraordinary – citizens to get its message across. A poster and outdoor media campaign under the heading: 'many lives... many faces... all belonging to Blackburn with Darwen', features local people saying why they are proud to belong to the borough and outlines some of their achievements.

All these citizens have a stake in the borough and its future and all have signed up to a 'charter of belonging', which is clear and uncompromising in its rejection of racism, prejudice and intolerance. This formal charter was signed by the members of the LSP, and a shorter summary was distributed across the borough so that the spirit of the charter is available to all.

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5 This charter draws in places on parts of *Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs* published by the Inter Faith Network in 2003.

Contact **Habib Patel**, Policy Department, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Tel: 01254 585465
habib.patel@blackburn.gov.uk
www.bwdlsp.org.uk

Hounslow Borough Council

Hounslow is one of the six London boroughs involved in the West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder (WLCCP) which is jointly lead by the West London Alliance and the West London Network (comprising the six Councils for Voluntary Services). Political leaders have recognised a sincere commitment to community cohesion is necessary to maintain good community relations and to reflect the social, cultural and religious needs of those they represent. Key executive members, together with leaders of opposition groups and committed Independents have demonstrated this through their endorsement of the following published statement, underpinning a shared commitment to cohesive policies:

"As councillors and community leaders we are elected to serve all people in our wards. We recognise the importance of building a cohesive community, founded on principles of citizenship and equality of treatment. In our dealings with constituents, fellow councillors, the media, faith groups, community organisations and businesses we will endeavour to assist in building and maintaining good relations between different sections of the community. We will not, in campaigning materials or in our dealings with constituents and other members of the community, seek to create or exacerbate divisions between different groups within the community. We are committed to correcting and overcoming misperceptions and prejudices in working to create a safer and strong community. We are committed to the creation of an environment in which the traditions and values of different groups in society are understood and respected. We will work to truly make Hounslow a community of communities through celebrating diversity and building cohesion".

As well as the signed statement Hounslow, as a borough, have shown commitment to the community cohesion agenda by developing a comprehensive plan demonstrating how the entire council and its partners will be addressing community cohesion. Hounslow's work has been used as an exemplar within West London sub-region. The other five boroughs are now developing their own plans for incorporating community cohesion into mainstream activity.

Contact **Jennifer Gunn**, Community Development Officer, Community Development and Regeneration Unit, London Borough of Hounslow
Telephone: 020 8583 2420
jennifer.gunn@hounslow.gov.uk
*www.hounslow.gov.uk/home/a-z_*
services/c/communitycohesion.htm or see the
WLCCP section at www.westlondonalliance.org

More information

The Beacon Council scheme, led by the Improvement and Development Agency, to disseminate good practice across local government, included community cohesion amongst its themes for round 4. Further information can be found at *www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/beacons*

In addition, the IDeA's Knowledge database contains a considerable amount of further information and resources on community cohesion at *www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do? pageid=79005*

The Pathfinder scheme, co-ordinated by the Home Office and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit at the ODPM, highlights authorities employing innovative methods of engagement with local communities *(www.communitycohesion.gov.uk)*

A full list of all the local authorities selected to participate in these schemes and further details of their work can be found in chapter 21 of this guidance.

4 measuring community cohesion

4.1 Measuring community cohesion is not easy. However, a detailed understanding of your communities is essential to planning service delivery and monitoring progress toward more cohesive communities. Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, listed public authorities have a duty to monitor the impact of their policies on race equality and arrangements should be set out clearly in their race equality schemes. As local authorities you should therefore already be collecting and analysing data on the ethnicity of their communities and your process for measuring community cohesion should build and expand on the processes you already have in place.

4.2 There are three key stages to developing a better understanding of community cohesion in your area:

- **Stage 1** Gain a clear understanding of the nature of different communities and how they relate to each other. You will need to put in place a system to identify who your communities are through mapping social, economic and demographic characteristics of an area, such as ethnicity, age, culture, educational attainment and faith.

- **Stage 2** Establish a community cohesion baseline by considering programmes that are targeted at improving community cohesion. Decide what outputs and outcomes will demonstrate the overall success of the initiative and what data will support this. You will need to identify and collect realistic and valid[6] measures of progress.

- **Stage 3** Regularly measure your progress against the baseline. Adjust your policies and programmes in the light of your findings.

Building a picture of community cohesion

4.3 The Home Office published a booklet *Building a Picture of Community Cohesion*, in July 2003 to help local authorities think about and develop a plan for effectively measuring community cohesion (Stages 2 and 3). The booklet proposed a number of indicators to help local authorities and their partners improve their understanding of what community cohesion looks like on the ground. Used together, the indicators provide a useful reflection of levels of community cohesion in an area. The indicators are based on data that are already available or which can be fairly readily obtained at a local level.

4.4 The booklet is available at *www.communitycohesion.gov.uk*

4.5 Further information is available in the Audit Commission Library of Local Performance Indicators, along with a technical note to assist data collection at *www.local-pi-library.gov.uk/index.shtml*

4.6 Bear in mind that local knowledge and an understanding of local issues are important for interpreting the data in relation to community cohesion. For example, on the one hand, a high number of police recorded racist incidents may be a cause for concern or an indication of community tension, but, on the other hand may reflect public confidence in local reporting arrangements and service provision. Interpret the indicators within your local context and use them to build up an understanding of community cohesion and provide a platform for discussion, rather than simply using them as a measure for the performance of local authorities or local partners.

Measuring community cohesion

4.7 There is no single measure of community cohesion. Local authorities will need to think carefully about developing a measurement strategy that gives them a clear understanding of local community cohesion challenges and also measures changes in community cohesion levels.

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6 A valid measure is one which measures what it is intended to measure – ie the relevant use to which the measure is put.

4.8 Measuring community cohesion will enable local authorities and partners to measure progress against the community cohesion aims that are an integral part of their community strategies.

4.9 The best way to get a rounded view of community cohesion in a local area is by using a 'basket' of indicators to reflect different aspects of community cohesion. The indicators comprise both subjective[7] and objective[8] measures. For example, subjective indicators which focus on local people's perceptions of community relations can be obtained from local residents' surveys, while objective indicators are often routinely collected as administrative data, such as unemployment counts and ethnic composition. A balance of attitudinal and administrative data can be used to develop an informed picture of community cohesion at the local level.

4.10 In building up a profile of community cohesion in your area, it is important to consider your performance at building community cohesion in each of the following policy areas:

- regeneration

- youth

- education

- housing

- employment

- hate crime

- race and faith discrimination.

4.11 The particular experiences of different groups should be considered and contrasted, where possible

through a range of methods such as interviews and focus groups. This information will help you assess the potential impact of initiatives that seek to build community cohesion, which in turn can be used in longer-term planning: for example, identifying settlement patterns in local communities will help to better target future housing initiatives.

Useful sources of data and guidance

4.12 There is a range of data sources that can provide local authorities and their partners with information to build a picture of community cohesion in their area. Local authorities and their partners may find it useful to investigate whether information relevant to local community cohesion is available from local university departments, race equality councils, learning and skills councils, housing associations, police forces, primary care trusts and local health observatories. These bodies should be involved from an early stage in building up a picture of local community cohesion.

4.13 Other useful sources of data may include:

Local neighbourhood statistics and Census data for 2001

4.14 These data can be obtained from the neighbourhood statistics website *(www.statistics.gov.uk)*. The 2001 Census provided details of the different religious groups in local areas for the first time.

Quality of life indicators

4.15 These are voluntary indicators designed by the Audit Commission to help local authorities and their partners in local strategic partnerships (LSPs) monitor their community strategies. They cover three broad areas of economic, social and environmental well-

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7 Subjective measures consider 'soft' matters such as satisfaction with the area and perception of other groups.

8 Objective measures focus on 'hard' facts such as age, sex, ethnicity, hate crime and housing tenure.

being and are intended to complement best value performance indicators (BVPIs).

4.16 Quality of Life Indicator 25 attempts to capture attitudes to community cohesion in a single question: **"Percentage of people surveyed who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds and communities can get on well together."**

4.17 More information about Quality of Life indicators can be found at *www.audit-commission. gov.uk/pis/quality-of-life-indicators.shtml*

Audit Commission Library of Local Performance Indicators

4.18 The library includes a range of other performance indicators which local authorities can use to help them measure how well they are doing at meeting local priorities. Each indicator comes with a full definition and suggestions as to why you would want to collect the information and additional relevant information. See website at *www.local-pi-library.gov.uk*

Commission for Racial Equality guidance

4.19 The CRE publication – *The Duty to Promote Race Equality: A Guide For Public Authorities* sets out the duties of listed public authorities to monitor the impact of their policies by racial group. This is accompanied by *Ethnic Monitoring: A Guide For Public Authorities*. Both are available on the CRE website at *www.cre.gov.uk*

Home Office Citizenship Survey

4.20 The Home Office Citizenship Survey is a biennial survey providing important data for the development and measurement of Home Office community policy. So far, surveys have run in 2001 and 2003, and work is currently in hand for the 2005 survey. It contains national benchmark data, and comprehensively tested and developed questions, covering:

- rights and responsibilities, political efficacy, institutional trust;

- racial prejudice and discrimination;

- neighbourliness;

- active community participation; and

- family networks and parenting.

4.21 Local authorities are encouraged to use the questions and data to add value to their own work.

4.22 More information on the Citizenship Survey, including copies of all reports, is available at *www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/citizensurvey.html*

Practical steps

- Make sure that you understand **all** your communities – where they are, who they are, how old they are, what their needs are and how they live their lives.

- Do a baseline assessment. Ask yourself questions about the impact of each policy area on community cohesion.

- Use *Building a Picture of Community Cohesion* as a starting point for developing a range of indicators for your area.

- Look for other sources of statistics which are already collected by other local agencies.

- Identify and develop both subjective and objective measures of community cohesion to help monitor progress.

- Involve senior management. Measuring cohesion can require the commitment of significant resources and staff time for the collection and monitoring of data.

- Consider the potential for 'piggybacking' relevant community cohesion questions onto other council

initiatives and other consultation or information collection exercises, such as Best Value Reviews or electoral surveys.

- Analyse your data and decide, through consultation, what cohesion issues need to be addressed and act on them.

- Measure your progress against the community cohesion indicators at a regular basis.

Bradford Shadow Pathfinder: developing a set of local community cohesion indicators

The Bradford Shadow Pathfinder developed a set of community cohesion indicators. The council noted that community cohesion is a complex, multi-dimensional concept, which can be difficult to define. As such, they felt community cohesion does not lend itself to simple measurement. They defined a set of indicators which describe seven different dimensions of community cohesion as part of the council's community strategy. The indicators are measurable, outcome focused, relevant and concise. They describe the dimensions of community cohesion as they relate to Bradford – employment, education, areas of stress, perception, community participation, residential segregation and crime and disorder.

Rochdale, Bury, Oldham and East Lancashire Together: developing a common set of indicators

In the north-west, the pathfinders and shadow pathfinders from *Rochdale, Bury, Oldham and East Lancashire Together* set up a working group to join resources and develop a consistent approach to measuring cohesion on a regional basis. They are working to establish a common set of indicators which would draw on their common issues and problems within the region. These indicators would

allow each to measure their success against a baseline but also against each other and over time.

Contact **Andy Wiggans**, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
andy.wiggans@rochdale.gov.uk

Charnwood Pathfinder: using a local questionnaire

In Charnwood, the pathfinder has carried out a baseline survey of community cohesion using some standard indicators in *Building a Picture of Community Cohesion*. The indicators were supplemented by a local questionnaire which covered a wide range of quality of life issues but targeted at specific local factors. The results are a comprehensive 'snapshot' of how people feel about living in the Borough of Charnwood in 2003. The survey will be repeated in future years to see whether people feel their quality of life has improved.

Contact **Dave Puxley**, Charnwood Borough Council
dave.puxley@charnwood.gov.uk

5 working with the local strategic partnership

5.1 All local authorities relate to, and participate in, a range of partnerships. In the vast majority of areas, the most significant of these is the local strategic partnership (LSP) which generally brings together the key public sector bodies, usually alongside the community and voluntary and business sectors. The LSP is set up to tackle the issues that matter to local people, such as crime, jobs, education, health and housing and is usually tasked with developing the community strategy. As such it should be a key contributor to the development of community cohesion.

5.2 The make-up and role of an LSP will be different in each local area and the relationship to the local authority will vary accordingly. A majority of LSPs are chaired by local authority lead members or officers, though some draw their chairs from other parts of the community. The nature and level of resource which an authority puts into the running of an LSP will also vary and this may have implications for how individual officers or members relate to the work of the LSP. This chapter aims to provide guidance for those officers and members facilitating or working closely with the LSP, and also to those officers and members who do not relate to the LSP on a day-to-day basis.

5.3 There are some distinctions between LSPs in neighbourhood renewal areas and those that have been formed in other areas. For example, those LSPs that are receiving Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) will have developed local neighbourhood renewal strategies and must have Community Empowerment Network (CEN) representatives as members. In many respects, however, the LSPs in NRF and non-NRF areas will be operating to similar agendas (and increasingly to similar performance management frameworks) and so the way in which they contribute to promoting community cohesion should also be similar. Therefore, this guide generally does not distinguish between them.

5.4 One of the main ways in which an LSP can make a contribution is by being a focal point for other

partnerships. Rationalising partnerships – often by means of developing a community strategy which other partnerships can relate to – is often cited as a main activity by LSPs. As this guide demonstrates throughout, much of the work in community cohesion is partnership based. The LSP could have a valuable role, therefore, in making links between partnerships considering community cohesion and helping them to set a coherent local strategy. Those officers and members who facilitate and steer the LSP need to ask how its broad vision relates to local partnership approaches to community cohesion. Those who are working on a particular aspect of community cohesion but who are not close to the LSP, need to ask how the LSP can help them set a framework for their own activities. Ultimately, this may be underpinned by how the broad community strategy (developed by the LSP) relates to the community cohesion strategy (which may be led from elsewhere in the local authority) and how close their development processes have been.

5.5 One way in which the work of the LSP and the work of the authority and its partners at large can be brought together is by means of a multi-agency task group. This group can provide a focus for picking up cohesion issues as they emerge across a wide range of public services which can then be reported into the core team of the LSP. This will provide an opportunity for responding to these issues and informing the emerging community strategy. The task group may include representatives of the business and community and voluntary sectors, particularly if they are able to relate directly to representatives of those sectors sitting on the main board of the LSP.

5.6 LSPs themselves (both NRF and non-NRF) are encouraged to use guidance produced by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit to shape their community strategy. A key part of this guidance – the Performance Management Framework for LSPs – recognises the role the LSP can play in developing and implementing a community cohesion strategy or plan. The LSP should fully understand the principles of

community cohesion

diversity and actively seek to promote race equality with community cohesion underpinning its vision. The guidance suggests that everyone, not just particular leaders or champions in the area of inclusiveness, should own and be actively committed to the inclusiveness agenda. Performance on cohesion, as reflected in the community strategy, can be embedded into an LSP's performance management framework.

5.7 Some of the principles specified in *Accreditation Guidance for LSPs in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas* (available at *www.renewal.net*) are of particular relevance to the promotion of community cohesion and will be relevant to LSPs in non-neighbourhood renewal areas as well:

• the LSP should promote equality for all groups (even when not legislated for) in everything it does;

• the LSP and its members should also follow the principles of equality when dealing with other minority groups not specifically covered by legislation;

• LSPs should consider community cohesion in their area; and

• LSPs should work with the Community Empowerment Network (CEN) to ensure community and voluntary sector membership reflects the diversity of the local community.

5.8 Specifically, the LSP should promote community cohesion by:

• encouraging early, ongoing and varied involvement of local organisations (public, private, voluntary and community) and residents in developing local solutions to deprivation, and in designing and delivering programmes and services;

• making sure that decisions on resource allocation take account of local concerns as well as wider considerations. Decisions should be evidence based (this might include soft evidence such as surveys),

consider geographical areas, communities of interest, and have a cross-community focus where possible; and

• considering the impact of decisions and actions that could be perceived as favouring particular groups or communities to the detriment of others.

5.9 If the LSP is successful at following these principles, it should be well placed to provide a forum for cross-cultural strategic decision-making, in such a way that even difficult choices can be made in a framework of consensus and conflict resolution.

5.10 Where an LSP is not focussing successfully on these principles, those championing community cohesion elsewhere in the local authority (and its partners) can use the performance management framework to challenge the core LSP to encourage consistency with their own approaches to a community cohesion strategy.

Community strategies

5.11 *Preparing Community Strategies: government guidance to local authorities* published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) recommends that LSPs take a leading role in the process. Community strategies are key tools for showing a strategic commitment to community cohesion and demonstrating ownership of the subject. They can include targets for cohesion that can be reflected in the individual strategies of partners. In developing community strategies, the LSP should work with regional bodies, business, community and voluntary groups and develop the strategy across the whole community to gain the widest possible sense of ownership.

5.12 The guidance reminds local authorities, when preparing community strategies, to comply with the statutory duty on public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of

different racial groups. It also states that special efforts must be made to involve groups that might otherwise be hard to reach.

5.13 Consulting local people in producing these strategies can contribute to building cohesion through giving them an opportunity to get involved in their area, sign up to a local vision and bolster their sense of belonging and aspirations for the area.

5.14 LSPs should consider how the community strategy could take community cohesion into account in the following particular areas:

- developing a social, economic or cultural vision for the local area;

- setting key strategic objectives/principles/cross-cutting themes;

- setting strategic aims in the delivery of local services (housing and regeneration, community safety, education, health); and

- promoting celebration of diversity.

Bradford Vision: producing a community cohesion delivery plan

Bradford is taking an innovative, sustained and long-term approach to improving community cohesion throughout the district. A comprehensive action plan has been produced through collaboration and partnership with all the key agencies and organisations, working towards making Bradford a 'district whose people respect and celebrate differences in sex, race, culture and religion' (2020 Vision).

The work is being jointly led by Bradford Vision, as the local strategic partnership, and Bradford Council. The delivery plan focuses around four thematic work areas:

- Equity of access and outcomes – the fundamental underpinning principle to ensure improved outcomes for ethnic minority communities, women, young people, the elderly and the disabled in relation to education, employment, housing, crime and the environment.

- Civic pride, participation and citizenship – to increase levels of influence and involvement in the decision-making processes of the district. Encouraging young people into leadership and promoting active citizenship.

- Community relations – to strengthen community life and build greater contact and understanding between communities across the district.

- A safe district for individuals, communities and organisations – to create a level of community safety, which will support good community relations and minimise community tension.

A multi-agency and multi-sector community cohesion working group, chaired by Bradford Vision's community cohesion director, has been established to manage delivery of the plan.

Contact **Sally Collins**, Community Cohesion Director of Bradford Vision
Tel: 01274 431276
sally.collins@bradfordvision.com
www.bradfordvision.com

Blackburn with Darwen LSP: holding a strategic planning awayday

The strategic planning awayday for Blackburn with Darwen's local strategic partnership (LSP) enabled partners to work together to identify and discuss a community cohesion strategy for Blackburn with Darwen. The event, attended by 50 partners from a range of organisations and groups in the area, led to proposals for LSP joint working and a draft

community cohesion strategy incorporating five key objectives across the community strategy priorities.

As a follow up to this piece of work and to inform future policy-making, a series of 12 'blind spot' consultations were conducted for Blackburn's LSP with different groups of the Blackburn with Darwen community. This involved scrutiny members sponsoring the workshops and attending as observers. The process allowed local people to test the draft community cohesion strategy and to identify further issues.

The Belonging to Blackburn with Darwen Charter was launched on 23 January 2004 by the Rt Hon Jack Straw, the Blackburn with Darwen Partnership and the IDeA. It used local community members as community champions for cohesion.

Contact **Peter Morgan**, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, and Chair of Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion Sub Committee
peter.morgan@blackburn.gov.uk

Tameside Community Cohesion Partnership: embedding community cohesion in the community strategy

Building Stronger Communities event for Tameside Community Cohesion Partnership was attended by more than 100 members of the public. The IDeA worked with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council and the Tameside Community Cohesion Partnership to design and delivery this multi-sector event that included exhibitions, competitions and a range of involvement techniques including infra-red voting technology. The day allowed key stakeholders and participants to:

• define what the words 'community cohesion' actually mean in reality for them;

• articulate what they like and dislike about Tameside, the trigger points for conflict and tension in the future;

• express their hopes and concerns for the future of communities in Tameside;

• work together with others to build a vision for stronger, supportive communities and community cohesion;

• identify key issues and actions for organisations and individuals; and

• highlight examples of community cohesion role models, that participants would like to 'Invite to Tea' with whom they could discuss cohesion issues.

The event engaged many key stakeholders such as faith communities, community activists and vulnerable groups such as young people in care, older adults and traditionally excluded groups such as black women. The emerging priorities were woven into the community strategy for Tameside, and now feature strongly as key corporate priorities for the council. Cohesion champions identified were often local people doing extraordinary things, eg local youth or health workers, who provide everyday role models on real issues that play a significant role in strengthening cohesion. The key message from the Tameside local people was 'don't be afraid to challenge bigotry and stand up for what you believe in'.

Contact **Tracy Austen**
tracy.austen@tameside.gov.uk

Sandwell Partnership: annual stakeholders conference

Sandwell Partnership took a lead role in stimulating a wide debate on community cohesion in the borough. Their work included organising a range of seminars, leading on the successful community cohesion pathfinder bid and programme, and developing a programme of action involving the local Council of Voluntary Services, Community Empowerment

Network, local authority, primary care trusts and police.

One of the centrepieces of this work was a major stakeholder conference in October 2003 which was devoted to the theme of community cohesion. Keynote speaker Lord Ouseley spoke against the national 'blame culture', and two local councillors urged all the people to play their part in promoting positive messages and celebration of Sandwell's diverse heritage as well as tackling negative forces that seek to undermine peace and tolerance.

The event also examined community cohesion in practice through 15 workshops and used PUBLIC, a strong national community arts organisation based in Sandwell to present a celebration of local skills and talents that demonstrated the strength of diverse communities together.

Contact **Gary Bowman**, Sandwell Partnership Director
Tel: 0121 500 1467

More information

5.15 Extensive guidance for LSPs in neighbourhood renewal areas is available from the ODPM's Neighbourhood Renewal Unit website *(www.neighbourhood.gov.uk)*. Much of this guidance will also be useful for LSPs in other areas. This includes:

- *Accreditation Guidance for LSPs in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas;* and

- a toolkit for LSPs delivering Neighbourhood Renewal.

6 conflict resolution

6.1 In communities where there is a lack of cohesion, tensions can arise which may lead to conflict. While the majority of your work should be preventative and focussed on building community cohesion, you will also need to make sure that you are monitoring and responding to any rises in tension. Early intervention can make a real difference in preventing potential incidents of public disturbance and disorder. Conflict resolution does not just prevent problems, it also helps develop stronger relationships between those involved and so contributes to the positive development of community cohesion.

Monitoring

6.2 You will need to be aware of any incidents between communities as soon as they occur. This will include large scale incidents eg disputes between communities, but also small scale incidents with the potential for a significant community impact – eg between communities which have been involved in disturbances in the past.

6.3 It can be helpful to bring organisations together to monitor tension through your crime and disorder reduction partnership and your local strategic partnership so that all relevant agencies can give a perspective on arising issues. The local police will be key partners, but you should also ensure you are joining up with other organisations which work closely with communities on the ground. They may be able to give you a more informal feel for how communities are likely to react or where tensions are on the rise.

6.4 More information on joint working with the police service can be found in chapter 12. Other organisations which may be helpful include race equality councils, voluntary and community sector organisations, critical incident panels, youth services, Citizens' Advice Bureaux, and other organisations representing specific groups such as refugee councils and Gypsy and Traveller organisations.

6.5 You may like to consider establishing a tension monitoring steering group, bringing together key partners and community representatives on a regular basis to discuss incidents which have occurred. Also to identify proactive and strategic work needed to address any emerging community tensions.

Making good community links

6.6 In addition to working through other organisations, consider setting up your own links with hard to reach communities – particularly newcomer communities. Consider how you could build the capacity of small-scale community groups to represent their communities. Set up a network of contacts that you call as soon as you hear of a potential incident, and encourage them to be proactive about contacting you if they have any concerns.

6.7 You can use these contacts to spread positive messages back out to the community, such as on the importance of good community relations and using dialogue to resolve tensions.

Community mediation

6.8 Community mediation is one of a range of conflict resolution interventions that seeks to settle disputes and conflicts at the neighbourhood level. Other practical conflict resolution intervention tools include peer mediation in schools and town wide dialogues at the strategic level. In the UK, community mediation has mainly been practiced in the context of housing related disputes. A small number of mediation services also work on multi-party group conflicts at the neighbourhood level. The Neighbourhood Renewal website *(www.renewal.net)* includes guidance on community mediation. Local agencies could involve community mediators in their area on a full-time or a part-time or freelance basis.

6.9 Mediation involves a third party coming in to enable communication and negotiation to take place between two or more disputing parties. The role

helps parties identify and agree their own resolution. You can use community mediation in situations involving serious hate crimes, broader community conflicts and inter-cultural conflicts. Mediators often visit individual parties to the dispute to find out about the problem, convene a meeting on neutral ground to enable the disputing parties to explore solutions and encourage the parties to sign an agreement to the solutions.

6.10 The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) focuses on mainstreaming conflict resolution across the programmes it runs in Neighbourhood Renewal Fund areas through community empowerment networks, new deal for communities partnerships, neighbourhood management pathfinders, community cohesion pathfinders and local strategic partnerships. They use specialist thematic 'trouble-shooters' known as neighbourhood renewal advisors (NRAs). The NRU has developed a dedicated pool of 20 conflict resolution NRAs, all with strong mediation skills and proven track records in resolving conflicts and disputes. They are deployed as and when conflicts arise in the NRU areas and across its programmes in consultation with local partners.

6.11 The NRU's Community Facilitation Programme was set up in July 2001 as a response to serious disturbances in northern towns that summer. The NRU has now published *Research Report 13: Evaluation of the Community Facilitation Programme*. The aims of the evaluation were to provide an assessment of how well the programme met its objectives and to highlight examples of good practice.

Oldham: building good relations

In October 2002, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in ODPM asked Mediation Northern Ireland (MNI) to start community conflict work in Oldham. Following discussions with the Community Empowerment Network and Oldham's Community Cohesion Panel, MNI were invited to undertake an assessment of the situation in Oldham. The aims of the project were to improve understanding about promoting community relations in Oldham and inform the community cohesion partnership – a sub-group of the LSP – regarding its contribution to community relations.

During the scoping phase, the project confronted four issues:

- segregation and integration;

- policing;

- social and economic issues; and

- civic leadership.

The first phase consisted of four extended workshops for 40-45 leaders and opinion formers in Oldham, using mediation methods. Each workshop dealt with issues arising from the scoping assessment and sought to deepen understanding and build trust. The workshops provided a safe space in which people could explore the issues that lay at the heart of conflict in the town. Mediation services were used to provide an impartial 'outsider' in situations of conflict and assisting people to resolve or manage differences in positive ways.

A second phase, funded by the community cohesion partnership will explore strategies to confront the issues raised.

Contact **Craig Russell**, Unit Head for Cohesion and Diversity, Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Tel: 0161 911 4199
craig.russell@oldham.gov.uk
www.renewal.net

Burnley: training community facilitators

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit commissioned two conflict resolution neighbourhood renewal advisers

(NRAs) to undertake a scoping exercise and develop a proposal to build local capacity for conflict resolution and mediation at a community level in Burnley. The Burnley Community Facilitation Project emerged from this process. Its aims were to develop and train mediation and conflict resolution specialists, to develop the community mediation services, to develop local facilitation networks and provide training to local facilitators.

The community facilitation training programme took place in summer 2003. It consisted of two three-day modules, delivered to 14 people. It sought to link theory with the participants' own experience to develop an understanding of facilitation, to supplement that with core skills and methods and put the whole package in a way that was of most value to participants in their work environments.

The first module ended with participants presenting their own conflict analysis of the situation in Burnley, using mapping and analysis tools. The second module contained feedback sessions and one-to-one coaching on dealing impartially and non-judgementally with people and planning the longer-term development of their future work as community facilitators. The newly trained facilitators set up a co-ordination group to provide on-going support, training and space for reflection for trainees.

In addition, the Town Meetings Project brought together members of citizen's panels in five areas of the town. Events were planned and facilitated by trained facilitators with support from their trainers. The events create a safe, facilitated space for residents to discuss some of the difficult racial and cohesion issues that confront the town.

Contact **Terry Hephrun**
terry.hephrun@bprcvs.co.uk
Tel 01282 433 742
www.renewal.net

Tower Hamlets: RESOLVE

RESOLVE was a project run jointly by Tower Hamlets Mediation Service and the Rapid Response Team (RRT) of the Tower Hamlets Youth Support Service. The aim was to recruit and train local young people in mediation and facilitation with a view to becoming youth advocates within the youth service. The plan was that they would reach out to other young people, especially those who were harder-to-reach, through an 'on-street' presence and by themselves being role models.

The method was to provide a group of young people with information and training in facilitation, awareness and more general social skills, and then to employ these people to help reach 'harder-to-reach' young people.

Twenty people were given a six-day basic training course which covered conflict management and mediation skills, involved detailed discussions and role play and included direct input on specific topics. Participants were paid to attend the course as a number would not have been able to get involved on a voluntary basis. Twelve people were then chosen to continue training as youth advocates. They followed an intensive package of three evenings a week training over six months. This involved working on the street, in teams and with a youth worker. This was supported by ongoing training and debriefing work.

The project ran a conference designed and run by the young people, which attracted wide participation debating *Gang Conflict – what's it worth?*

More information is available at www.renewal.net

Southampton City Council: community outreach team

Following rising tensions between communities in the area, Southampton Council established a community

outreach team. The team acts as point of contact between community representatives, local council departments and outside agencies. In the long term, they aim to enable the integration of newcomer communities primarily through capacity-building local community organisations. They look to identify people with the ability to lead their communities and help them establish an organisation through identifying their aims, objectives, constitution and committees.

On a short-term basis, the community outreach team reacts rapidly to conflict. The council maintains a database of key contacts who they call on a regular basis to discuss any problems or incidents and general attitudes and to give them key messages on the importance of good community relations and solving problems through dialogue. They believe that the key to managing community conflicts is fast communication both ways via co-ordinated groups. They speak to the parties of the conflict and build dialogue and understanding to reach a long-term solution.

Contact **Don John**, Southampton City Council
Tel 023 80832274
don.john@southampton.gov.uk

Slough: Aik Saath

Aik Saath is dedicated to the promotion of peace and racial harmony through teaching conflict resolution skills in the local community of Slough and its surrounding areas. They aim to raise the self-esteem of young people through empowering and training them to become peer trainers and to work with other young people in developing conflict resolution skills and in turn contribute to their personal development.

Aik Saath's peer training team is made up of young people aged between 14 and 20, trained in conflict resolution, peer education and presentation skills. They conduct much of the training in local schools and run workshops themselves. The training raises awareness of conflict, how conflict may manifest

itself, the effects of conflict and methods aimed towards resolving and dealing with conflict.

As well as working with local schools, Aik Saath works with local agencies, youth centres and take part in conferences. They have also produced three films as a resource for those who want to explore conflict and learn more about conflict resolution skills. They have also set up a network of conflict resolution organisations.

Contact
info@aiksaath.com
www.aiksaath.com
www.conflictresolutionnetwork.org.uk

7 working with black and minority ethnic (BME) communities

7.1 Successful community cohesion policies and programmes must ensure that they address the changing dynamics of race relations within their local communities. This will involve building positive relationships between white and BME communities and also between different BME communities.

7.2 An essential part of this will be to address the exclusion that many BME communities experience within their local communities. Exclusions can occur for a variety of reasons including poverty, racism, language barriers, lack of participation and, in the case of refugees, trauma. Community cohesion requires local agencies to put in place appropriate packages of support and an engagement strategy to provide these communities with the skills, confidence and motivation to access programmes.

7.3 People from BME communities still feature disproportionately in most social indicators, meaning that they can face double disadvantage in terms of poverty and race. The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) report *Minority Issues in Social Exclusion and Neighbourhood Renewal* (June 2000) found 'Ethnic minority disadvantage cuts across all aspects of deprivation. Taken as a whole, ethnic minority groups are more likely than the rest of the population to be unemployed, have low incomes, live in poor housing, have poor health and be the victims of crime'. Policies tackling social exclusion should consider the impact on ethnic minorities and appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that multiple disadvantage experienced by ethnic minorities is effectively tackled.

7.4 Social inequalities directly undermine community cohesion. The underlying issues of poverty deprivation and feelings of powerlessness have, in some cases, contributed to racial tensions, resentment and support for extremist political parties.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

7.5 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 provides a strong vehicle for encouraging mainstream services to address these inequalities and to help the most disadvantaged people and areas. It provides a legal framework to ensure that race equality is mainstreamed and at the heart of all relevant functions and policies of listed public authorities. All government departments and listed public authorities are subject to a general statutory race duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and to promote good race relations.

7.6 In addition, government departments and key public bodies (local authorities, police forces and police authorities, NHS trusts and primary care trusts) are subject to specific duties. This means they have to produce a race equality scheme which considers what an authority does (or has powers to do) and how these functions affect (or could affect) discrimination, equal opportunities or race relations. The scheme must list all relevant functions and policies and must state how the authority intends to:

- assess and consult on the likely impact on race equality of proposed policies;

- monitor policies for any adverse impact on race equality;

- publish the outcomes of assessments, consultation and monitoring;

- ensure public access to information and services; and

- train its staff in connection with its race equality duties.

7.7 The statutory duty to 'promote good relations between people of different racial ethnic groups' will be a vital component of your wider community cohesion work. Although legislative framework currently only exists for race, there is no reason why the principles of the duty cannot be transferable to all groups experiencing social exclusion.

7.8 Promoting good race relations depends on building equality and respect between ethnic groups and addressing racism. In particular it requires you to

take into account those communities that can remain at the fringes of society such as the gypsy and traveller communities and asylum seekers and refugees. Policies need to ensure that where these communities exist, a 'mainstream plus' approach is taken. This means building the needs of these communities into the mainstream but also accepting that an extra dimension may be needed to account for particular cultural/language/religious differences and to bridge the major gap in outcomes that these communities experience across the full range of public services.

Ethnic monitoring

7.9 Listed public authorities also have a duty to monitor the impact of their policies on race equality and arrangements for this should be set out clearly in race equality schemes. Local authorities should be collecting and analysing data on the ethnicity of their communities to enable them to gauge proportionality in the take up of services, for example. These statistics can be use to identify gaps in service provision.

7.10 As part of the employment duty, public authorities also have a duty to ethnically monitor staff in post and applicants for jobs, promotion and training, to monitor and analyse grievances, disciplinary action, performance appraisal, training and dismissals and other reasons for leaving. These results must be published annually and will enable stakeholders such as BME communities to understand and trust organisations and perhaps become more active participants.

7.11 The following indicators may help you to monitor the inclusiveness of projects and partnerships:

- number of BME organisations involved;

- number of BME people using local facilities;

- number of BME people taking part in public meetings; and

- number of inquiries made by BME communities regarding the partnership/project.

Engaging with BME communities

7.12 Engaging effectively with BME communities requires you to establish a supported environment to encourage BME communities to take full advantage of programmes that are being offered to them. This environment should:

- provide high quality training and access to opportunity;

- provide any additional language support needed;

- accommodate the cultural and religious sensitivities of BME communities; and

- have decision-making arrangements that reflect the make-up of local communities.

7.13 In the past, local schemes such as regeneration schemes, have sometimes caused alienation and disaffection within communities. Existing institutional structures have not always engaged the enthusiasm and energy of local people, particularly from BME communities. A lack of BME involvement can lead to partnerships giving low priority to the concerns of these communities, whereas an approach driven by local people, valuing local knowledge and participation in all stages of capacity building will lead to successful consultation/engagement.

7.14 Involving BME communities may require you to build the capacity of local organisations, including BME, voluntary and faith organisations. This may need to be coupled with an easier process for local organisations to get funding by rationalising funding sources.

7.15 However, you should take care to avoid a 'one size fits all' policy when targeting BME communities – for example, the needs of the Jamaican communities

will be different to the needs of the newly arrived Kurdish communities.

Practical steps

- Involve BME communities from the outset of local projects.

- Conduct a mapping exercise of existing provision for BME communities through consulting race equality councils.

- Determine current levels of BME involvement in local initiatives and service delivery.

- Assess the current level of BME interest in becoming involved in partnership roles.

- Identify local barriers to BME participation and ways to overcome them.

- Identify local expertise and funding in catering for BME needs.

- Facilitate BME consultation in decision-making processes.

Stockport Council: BME housing research project

According to the 2001 Census, Stockport has a black and minority ethnic (BME) population of 4.3 per cent. Unlike the more concentrated communities elsewhere in Greater Manchester, Stockport is characterised by a large number of dispersed communities across the borough, speaking over 40 languages. Little was known about the housing and support needs of these communities, and the council considered it likely that some were not currently accessing housing services. As a result, Stockport Council and the five partner housing associations agreed to work together on a project to explore the housing and support needs of BME residents in the borough, with the help of a grant from the Housing Corporation.

The project is looking to develop the ways in which the various communities are included in this and future projects by offering training in presentation skills and running discussion groups. Working within their communities, these trained community 'consultants' are looking at the ways in which people prefer to get involved with the council and their landlords.

The aims of the project are to:

- gather comprehensive information about BME communities in Stockport, their housing and related support needs and their personal, professional and community networks;

- engage with BME individuals and communities to gather their views and experiences of housing and support needs;

- train BME residents and community groups; and

- increase the participation of BME communities in housing associations and in Stockport Council's strategies in whatever way is best for them.

The project has also engaged with parents and children at a local primary school to run a series of highly successful art workshops around the theme of 'valuing diversity'.

Contact **Tanya King**, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Tel 0161 474 4562
tanya.king@stockport.gov.uk

REWIND, Sandwell

REWIND had already been operating as a small project within schools backed by the primary care trust. Expanded to a team of four in Summer 2003, it has now delivered its unique programme of anti-racism awareness training to many primary and secondary schools in Sandwell. Similar training has

been positively received by police officers, housing managers, teachers, youth workers and hospital staff.

The programme explores with participants the roots of racism as a 'social construct' and through introducing knowledge of history and science, breaks down the myths that are the building blocks underpinning racism across the world. Groups of peer educators are now being trained on how to deliver REWIND sessions. The programme is frequently cited as excellent and an innovative practice, at the cutting edge of thinking.

Contact **Dave Allport**, REWIND
Tel 0121 543 3946

More information

7.16 The Compact on Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Organisations Code of Practice is a vehicle for promoting good relations between BME communities and local public sector bodies, and may be helpful in consulting on race equality scheme for local authorities. More information is available at: *www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/bmecompindex.html*

7.17 The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) is a publicly funded, non-governmental body set up under the Race Relations Act 1976 to tackle racial discrimination and promote race equality. Their website contains a variety of guidance and information to help you meet your duties under race equality legislation and beyond at *www.cre.gov.uk*

7.18 The CRE are currently in the process of developing policy related to an integrated society. This agenda will contribute to the forthcoming strategic guidance from the LGA.

7.19 The Audit Commission published *Journey to Race Equality* in January 2004 which considers where local authorities are at the moment and the steps they need to take to achieve success. The report is available on their website at *www.audit-commission.gov.uk*

7.20 The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has published *Ethnicity Monitoring: Benefit and Ethnicity Monitoring: Involvement* which discuss how to monitor the involvement of black and minority ethnic communities in neighbourhood renewal. They are both available at *www.renewal.net*

8 working with faith communities

8.1 In the 2001 census, 76.8 per cent of people in the UK identified themselves as having a religion. Faith can be a powerful factor in personal and community identity and the significant role of faith communities in public life at both national and local level has been increasingly understood and acknowledged in recent years.

8.2 Faith is a key area for community cohesion for a number of reasons:

- the traditions of all the major faiths contain teachings commending the fundamental values of equality and respect which are so important to community cohesion;

- the presence of communities of different faiths and cultures enriches an area;

- members of particular faith groups may have particular service needs;

- discrimination and prejudice on the basis of faith corrodes community cohesion and must be addressed;

- faith communities have much to offer their area as providers of services and as contributors to community cohesion projects; and

- harmonious co-existence of people of different faiths and beliefs is vital to community cohesion.

8.3 Community cohesion work with faith communities needs to reflect these different dimensions. For example, projects which highlight the contribution that different faiths make to an area and which convey their key beliefs and share their histories, will be an important part of community cohesion work (see also the sections on Education and Sport and Culture). Celebrations can sometimes incorporate contributions from different local faith communities as a way to publicly demonstrate their shared values. This can be a practical source of community pride and cohesion.

8.4 Tailoring service delivery to particular faith needs is also very important. This might be, for example, ensuring provision of food in schools which meets particular dietary requirements and training of local authority staff and staff of partner bodies in cultural and religious sensitivity. It will be important when working with faith communities, however, to remember that each faith community is not a homogeneous group. There will be cultural, ethnic and also religious differences between people of the same faith.

8.5 Equality statements should routinely deal with the need to tackle discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. Negative stereotypes based on religion can be stubborn and dangerous, as in the case of anti-semitism and Islamophobia. Such attitudes must be addressed through education programmes and the media to ensure that people of all faiths feel an equal sense of belonging and enjoy equal security in society.

8.6 Faith communities are a key part of the voluntary and community sector and can be important contributors to community cohesion. This can be through participation in particular projects or through the wide range of services that they offer from their centres or places of worship not only to their own communities but in some cases also to others. This can be a particularly important method of delivering mainstream services in a culturally sensitive way. Informally, faith communities can represent a valuable form of community self-help through work with the young, older people, lunch clubs or drop-in and advice centres. Providing resources and support can increase their involvement. Faith communities can be good points of access into harder-to-reach communities.

8.7 Relations between faiths are especially relevant in the context of community cohesion and local authorities should actively encourage projects which increase inter faith understanding and co-operation. There are currently around 180 local inter faith groups, councils and forums in the UK involving all or

most of the faiths in their areas, as well as a further nearly 80 bilateral and trilateral local bodies like branches of the Council of Christians and Jews and Three Faiths Forum groups.[9] Where local inter faith initiatives work well, they make a significant difference to their area. They bring people of different faiths together to learn more about one another's faith and provide a helpful framework for promoting mutual understanding and co-operation between them. Many also provide a channel for consultation by the local authority and other public bodies and an opportunity to co-operate to ensure that local strategic initiatives reflect the variety of faiths in local areas. Local authorities can provide valuable support for initiatives of this kind.

8.8 Community cohesion work with faith communities sometimes overlooks the young. Engaging with young people of different faiths is also very important, including involving them in inter faith projects.

Practical steps

- Be aware of the faith demographics of your area – use the 2001 area Census statistics on faith identity and also consider 'mapping' local faith community centres and places of worship.

- Recognise faith communities in public life as a distinctive part of the voluntary and community sector and involve their representatives in partnerships.

- Support faith communities by promoting their role in relation to the local voluntary and community sector infrastructure.

- Establish and sustain a strong local inter faith structure for inter faith co-operation and a mechanism for consultation with faith communities or support an existing faith forum.

- Seek opportunities to support the public celebration of festivals.

- Challenge religious stereotypes particularly in media reporting and encourage faith communities to do the same.

- Use available resources to establish and disseminate good practice in working with faith communities.

- Promote use of local places of worship by schools and youth organisations as a resource in teaching the value of diversity.

- Promote opportunities for inter faith dialogue and in particular learning among children and young people about different faiths and about the scope for co-operation between different faiths.

Southwark Pathfinder

The Southwark Pathfinder worked with the Southwark Multi Faith Forum to engage with faith communities, and develop opportunities for people of different faiths to come together. The public launch of the forum was attended by about 200 people representing different faith organisations in the borough. Community cohesion was on the agenda both in speeches and questions from the floor.

The forum also planned a programme of cross-faith events, both for young people and adults to build greater understanding across all beliefs. These included sports and activity days, a Peace Breakfast, and a multi-faith walk.

Southwark Multi Faith Forum in partnership with the council and voluntary organisations also produced a booklet, *A Mark of Faith*, which aims to give people of faith and of no faith a practical understanding of

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9 *Inter faith organisations in the UK: A Directory*, Inter Faith Network, 2004

how faith impacts on people's daily lives, eg at birth, in worship, at weddings, and at funerals.

Contact **Jenny Wingate**, Southwark Borough Council
jenny.wingate@southwark.gov.uk
Tel 020 7525 7425
www.smff.org.uk

Leicester Council of Faiths

In 1986, members of different faith communities in Leicester met at the town hall at the initiative of the Lord Mayor and went on to form themselves into a council of faiths. Leicester Council of Faiths' members represent, on a faith community basis, the eight principal faiths in the City: Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs.

The Leicester Council of Faiths (LCF) has retained a strong link with Leicester City Council. It is consulted by the council on a range of issues from education to neighbourhood renewal and community strategy. The council provides funding, via the education department, towards the rent of LCF's Welcome Centre, some running costs, and the salary of a part-time co-ordinator.

This funding helps LCF to carry out a wide programme of work to promote good inter faith relations in Leicester, including events, publications (such as the directory of places of worship in Leicester), diversity training, and assistance to a wide range of bodies such as the police, schools, universities, hospitals and the fire and rescue service.

Taken from *Partnership for the Common Good: Inter Faith Structures and Local Government*

Contact **Tony Stokes**, Co-ordinator,
Leicester Council of Faiths
Tel 0116 254 6868
info@leicestercounciloffaiths.org.uk

Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum

Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum (LFCLF) serves as a forum for faith communities to enter into dialogue with each other and with relevant organs of government, including the city council, Yorkshire Forward and the Regional Chamber for Yorkshire and Humberside.

It has a strong focus on issues such as regeneration and faith based social action and it presently has council members serving on the Leeds Economy Strategy Group and on the neighbourhood strategy group (of the local strategic partnership). It has a special concern for activity and policy development that addresses social exclusion and religious discrimination. In November 2002 it was a sponsor, with Leeds Initiative, of the launch of community cohesion work in Leeds.

LFCLF developed out of a process which began in 1998 with a series of open forum style meetings. Its emphases complement those of Leeds' longer established inter faith body, Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship (which in general has more of a focus on spiritual dialogue), with which it has worked in partnership on various projects.

LFCLF is steered by a council which was launched in March 2001 and includes Baha'is, Buddhists (from the Leeds Buddhist Council), Christians (Anglican, Catholic, Free Church, and the Black-led Churches), Hindus (from the main temple), Jews (from the Leeds Jewish Representative Council), Muslims (through the Leeds Muslim Forum), and Sikhs (through the Council of Sikh Gurdwaras (Leeds)). Leeds City Council is represented by a councillor.

Taken from *Local Inter faith Activity in the UK: A Survey*

Contact **Revd David Randolph-Horn**,
Secretary, Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum
davidrhorn@leedschurchinstitute.org

**London Borough of Camden:
engagement with faith communities**

In 1999, chief officers acknowledged that there was little council engagement with faith communities, so work began to address this situation. The council commissioned the Office for Public Management (OPM) to open dialogue with faith communities about relations with them, their main areas of concern and how to overcome any barriers. The OPM produced a report in summer 2001: *Building Bridges Through Faith Communities.* This report identified two key tasks for the council to address:

- to acknowledge that for faith communities religion is integral to their culture and ways of working; and

- to be more explicit about religion as an issue of equality and diversity.

In response, the council created a new post working with faith organisations and the communities they represent to develop links with groups and individuals in the borough, and co-ordinate this approach with initiatives being undertaken across the council's departments. They have undertaken a number of actions to date including:

- establishing Camden Faith Communities' Partnership (CFCP), run by a steering group;

- setting up a directory of faiths in Camden – *Neighbours*. As well as listing places of worship and other religious groups by neighbourhood, the directory includes information about nine of the world's major religions, and a calendar of religious festivals;

- drawing up an action plan to raise understanding between social services and the black majority church leaders and ultimately increasing the number of foster carers and potential adopters of African and African Caribbean origins;

- a multi-faith tour of the treasures of the British Library. Sacred texts from many of the world's major faiths were viewed by 160 members of Camden's faith communities. The mayor and leader hosted the event at the British Library;

- during One World Week, the council organised a tour of Camden, visiting different places of worship in a minibus with a multi-faith group.

Contact **Nina Rahel**, Camden
Faith Communities Partnership
Tel 020 7974 2230
nina.rahel@camden.gov.uk

Further information

8.9 In 2003 the Home Office set up the Faith Communities Unit to enhance the government's ability to deal with and deliver on faith issues by being a source of expert advice and guidance on faith communities. While building awareness and capacity in key government departments to better engage with faith communities. The Faith Communities Unit consults with faith communities to identify their key priority areas.

8.10 The Home Office launched *Working Together – Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities* in March 2004. It is the result of a wide-ranging cross-government review and is aimed at government departments and faith communities. It makes recommendations about what each can do to engage more effectively in joint working. The report is available on the Home Office website.

8.11 The Faith Communities Unit can be contacted at:

Faith Communities Unit
4th Floor Allington Towers
19 Allington Street
London SW1E 5EB

Tel 0870 000 1585
public.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/faith/index.html

8.12 The Inner Cities Religious Council (ICRC) is a forum for members of faith communities to work with the government on issues of regeneration, neighbourhood renewal, social inclusion, and other relevant cross-departmental policies and processes. The ICRC was established in 1992 and is chaired by a government minister. It includes members from the five largest faith communities in urban areas in England: Christians; Hindus; Jews; Muslims and Sikhs.

8.13 The ICRC can be contacted at:

Inner Cities Religious Council (ICRC)
Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
6/J2 Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Tel 020 7944 3704
icrc@odpm.gsi.gov.uk
www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/faith_communities.asp?
pageid=169

8.14 The Inter Faith Network for the UK was established in 1987 to build good relations between the communities of all the major faiths in Britain. It links over 100 member bodies including representative bodies from the major faith communities; national inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; academic institutions and bodies concerned with multi-faith education.

8.15 The Inter Faith Network can be contacted at:

Inter Faith Network for the UK
8A Lower Grosvenor Place
London SW1W 0EN

Tel 020 7931 7766
www.interfaith.org.uk
Ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

8.16 On working with faith communities, see *Faith and community: a good practice guide for local authorities* published by the Local Government Association in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Active Community Unit of the Home Office, and the Inter Faith Network, 2002. *www.lga.gov.uk/Documents/Publication/Faith.pdf*

8.17 Advice on setting up and developing a local inter faith or multi-faith forum can be found in *Partnership for the Common Good: Inter Faith Structures and Local Government* (downloadable at *www.interfaith.co.uk*) published by the Inter Faith Network for the UK in association with the Local Government Association, the Home Office and the ODPM, 2003. Further information about how local inter faith bodies around the UK are working, including analysis of local authority engagement with local inter faith work, can be found in the partner report, *Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey*, Inter Faith Network, 2003. *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory*, published by the Inter Faith Network in 2004 includes listings for national, regional and local inter faith structures around the UK, including brief details of their work and how to contact them.

8.18 On inter faith work with young people see *Connect: Different Faith Shared Values* published in 2004 by the Inter Faith Network in partnership with TimeBank and the National Youth Agency. It is an action guide for 16-25 year-olds on making connections and building bridges of friendship and understanding between people of the different and distinct religions in the UK today. The publication is available at *www.interfaith.co.uk/connect/index.htm*

9 working with the voluntary and community sector

9.1 The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) covers a wide spectrum of organisations, many of which can be key partners in building community cohesion. Organisations range in size and capacity, from highly professionalised national bodies with the capacity to act at a strategic level, to small informal associations at neighbourhood level.

9.2 How voluntary and community bodies are able to contribute will depend to a large extent on their role and experience but, in general, working with the voluntary and community sector can be an important way to help you build community cohesion from the bottom up, and can also help with the effective delivery of services. This can ensure that your policies are based on the real life experiences of the people in your local area.

9.3 One of the great strengths of these organisations can be sensitivity to local issues and culture. Through their work, they will often have accumulated extensive expertise and knowledge of their specific areas and they may be well placed to foster cross-cultural links. You should assess the capacity of the VCS in your area, especially those organisations that you don't usually work with, to make sure that you are aware of emerging and hard-to-reach groups.

9.4 It can sometimes be difficult for the voluntary and community sector to achieve its potential or engage on an equal footing with public sector agencies without appropriate infrastructure and support. Some bodies in this sector may have a precarious existence due to scarcity of funding. You should work with other public sector agencies and with the voluntary and community sector to strategically assess and develop capacity building and infrastructure support that is sustainable, of a high quality and accessible to a wide range of organisations. The Home Office is working through government offices to help strengthen infrastructure throughout England and recognises that local government has a crucial role to play in bringing about change.

9.5 As with all partners, it will be essential to base your work with this sector on a common vision and encourage strong leadership to develop from within the partnership. This will help combine the efforts of those working in similar areas to complement each other.

9.6 Working with and through voluntary and community sector organisations can provide excellent opportunities for understanding the views of local people and sometimes for involving people from groups who are otherwise difficult to reach. Many parts of the voluntary and community sector have experience of involving users and others in decision-making and services for the community and it can be helpful to establish links with the Council of Voluntary Services' officers, voluntary organisation managers or individual community leaders. When working with voluntary and community organisations, however, it is important to bear in mind that they cannot be expected to speak on behalf of the entire communities they serve given the multiplicity and complexity of local viewpoints. Establish early on how far an individual's or a specific group's remit goes in relation to the community as a whole, and seek to establish additional contacts where groups remain unrepresented. Consulting with existing networks and encouraging the formation of new networks, will enable you to recognise the capacity needs of the local VCS and also the profile of the community you serve. It will be important to recognise and help strengthen representation and advocacy when reviewing and developing support services and infrastructure for the sector.

9.7 The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) is one of the sector's main umbrella organisations. Its activities include co-ordination of the sector's views in formal consultations and dissemination of information, advice and good practice. Many other organisations have both a national and local infrastructure, such as the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service and its network of local councils. In some areas local race equality councils can act as representative bodies for

the local community organisations. Other organisations with national and local networks include Community Matters, Citizens' Advice Bureaux, refugee community organisations, Age Concern, Help the Aged and the National Neighbourhood Watch Association. Local statutory agencies will often already have a working relationship with such umbrella organisations which need strategic development to meet their potential for contributing to community cohesion.

9.8 The regional voluntary sector networks and related regional black and minority ethnic networks can provide additional infrastructure. These networks are a valuable route to engagement with the sector and part of their purpose is to build the capacity of the sector for more effective involvement in society.

The Compact

9.9 Local authorities and local strategic partnerships can build their relationship with voluntary and community organisations through Local Compact development based on the Compact on Relations between the government and the voluntary and community sector. This national Compact sets out what government and the voluntary and community sector can expect from each other and is supported by Five Codes of Practice on funding, consultation and policy appraisal, black and minority ethnic community organisations, volunteering and community groups. Local Compacts build on this agreement locally and provide a sound basis for partnership working on community cohesion.

9.10 Ninety per cent of local authority areas now have or are working towards a Local Compact. Local Compact Guidelines were published in 2000 and are being updated to take account of changes in the operating environment. For example to reflect that most areas now have or are well on the way to having an agreed Compact and need to focus on implementation and to take full account of the role of local strategic partnerships.

Practical steps

- Adopt a 'Compact' between the LSP/local authority/other public sector bodies and the voluntary and community sector and adapt the new framework to suit your relationship with the sector.

- Be vigilant about the possibility of potential tension between engaging with sections of the community not involved in mainstream politics and the need to reflect the position of elected politicians and established leaders.

- Use the networks of statutory, voluntary and community agencies to develop cross-cultural contact at all levels.

- Consider how your funding of voluntary and community organisations can provide incentives to promote community cohesion.

- Involve organisations that mirror your community and provide culturally and religiously sensitive services in the delivery of mainstream services. This can add value to service provision.

- Develop joint training between the local authority and those involved in the sector. Consider what adaptations will be needed to the training package to enable those representing hard-to-reach groups to take part.

- Reappraise your policy-making processes. Ensure they are flexible enough to allow for the dynamic contribution the sector can bring – dispel myths of 'red-tape' barriers.

- Allow enough time for meaningful consultation (see Compact and Code of Good Practice on Consultation and Policy Appraisal).

- Gather best practice examples and evaluate your own experiences, feeding back learning.

Charnwood Pathfinder: reaching out to VCS groups

The Charnwood Pathfinder specifically wanted to reach out to groups that were not necessarily engaged with or did not feel represented by their local political or community leaders. They put out an open call for prospective proposals to be funded under the programme. The result was effective in uncovering agencies and groups that were not known to local politicians or engaged with mainstream structures.

This meant that the Charnwood Community Cohesion Partnership started with a buy-in from local groups that might not otherwise have been aware of their programme. They recognise that it will be important that the expectations created by this initiative are managed and ensure that this involvement leads to a sustainable legacy of co-operation and partnership.

Contact **Dave Puxley**,
Charnwood Borough Council
Tel 01509 634 727
dave.puxley@charnwood.gov.uk

West London Alliance: researching through the VCS

The West London Alliance undertook a major piece of research: *What works at community level to support community cohesiveness*. Part of the research involved a conference through which over 3000 voluntary sector groups across west London were contacted. 250 attendees provided a detailed response to questionnaires on 'what works on the ground'. These responses were used to illustrate the research report with examples of good practice from voluntary sector practitioners. The research programme and conference have been used to explain the community cohesion programme and reap examples of good

practice from the people who will be engaged in delivering it.

Contact **Claire Codling**, West London Alliance
codlingc@ealing.gov.uk

Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations

Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) ran a programme from 2003-4 within the Sandwell Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme to support locally organised events that brought local communities together. The enthusiastic response of communities to this opportunity was overwhelming and to date some 75 local initiatives have been supported. They enable contact between communities that may otherwise not meet, despite sharing the same streets and local neighbourhoods.

Examples of successful community initiatives include fun days, cultural activities, music and drama workshops and community festivals. A celebration held in Victoria Park, Tipton was organised by young people and brought together a whole range of organisations and entertainment that drew in many from the different communities in Tipton with activities enjoyed by all age ranges.

Contact **Michael Anderson**, Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations
Tel 0121 558 7434

More information

9.11 The Home Office published *ChangeUp, a Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector*, in June 2004. It makes a series of recommendations that aim to strengthen the support and assistance available to voluntary and community organisations. It is available on the Home Office website at *www.homeoffice.gov. uk/comrace/active/developing/index.html*

9.12 More information on The Compact can be found:

• on the website *www.thecompact.org.uk;*

• on the LGA website at *www.lga.gov.uk/OurWork.asp? lsection=59&ccat=258;* and

• on the Home Office website at *www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/active/index.html*

10 working with the media

10.1 Positive media relations can help in building community cohesion. The media can frame the perceptions of local people both positively and negatively. Good liaison between the media and community representatives is essential in helping to dispel rumours and to project clear messages to the whole community. If tensions arise in the locality and you are concerned about how they are represented or indeed how certain groups or individuals are portrayed, you can help by ensuring that information provided to the media is accurate, fair, and responsible. This will be integral to a coherent communications strategy.

10.2 Engaging with the media in debates on the nature of the community and explaining the commercial benefits of representing all sections of the community is a challenging task. It will help to build a relationship with the local media so that they communicate with all sections of the community and understand the changing profile of their customers.

10.3 Through working pro-actively with the media, you can:

- dispel rumours, stereotypes and myths;

- ensure that extremist views do not dominate reporting;

- promote a positive view of diversity;

- promote the ethical and business argument for meeting the needs of all communities; and

- harness alternative media such as the BME press, or community media to address community cohesion.

10.4 It is important to have a communications strategy to provide a comprehensive basis for working with the press and other media. Working with the media will involve encouraging press and broadcasters to put across the importance of respect and tolerance for diversity and to educate people about the lives of others. It will also involve working with them to encourage balanced reporting when there are problems in the community.

10.5 Establish good working relationships with local journalists. This will enable you not only to encourage them to publish good news stories but will make it easier to work with them on 'crisis management' when there is a breakdown in cohesion. You should also consider using your own media such as newsletters to promote community cohesion – advertise cross-cultural activities and successes.

10.6 Consider encouraging the press and media to produce a protocol between themselves and other agencies to ensure that extremist views do not predominate and views are not reported in ways that fuel fears and prejudice.

10.7 By offering positions to media representatives on regeneration partnerships, the LSPs or community planning forums can help to build positive relations between communities and the media.

Practical steps

The IDeA toolkit on *Building a relationship with the media* sets out Ten Top Tips for working with the media on community cohesion:

1 Develop a good working relationship with journalists and media editors based on openness, honesty and trust. This will allow for a detailed discussion of issues and will be useful if things go wrong, as they may be open to discussion giving you the opportunity to make the authority's views known.

2 Agree your key messages and stick to them.

3 Make it your mission to educate and inform residents – myths and prejudice thrive on ignorance. Often this may mean having a long-term strategy for covering news stories over a lengthy period of time.

4 Review your target media with the help of your Census statistics. You could consider media such as the mainstream press, TV and radio, the BME media, media for disabled people and community TV channels etc.

5 Speak to the editor or news editor of your local newspaper, local radio stations or community TV channels, to see if they would be willing to run a joint campaign to improve community relations, for example, on themes such as civic pride and cleaning up the local environment.

6 Think like a journalist – would this story really interest the audience? If it is complicated, try and give the story a human-interest angle.

7 Seek out community champions – members of voluntary or faith groups or elected members who are well respected and an authority in their area. If it is difficult to get your message across, they may be willing to work with you to do so.

8 Do not assume that the journalist knows the subject as well as you do – offer fact sheets and updates to keep them informed.

9 Don't expect journalists to ignore a story they feel is newsworthy even though it may well be potentially damaging. It is their job to report news. Instead try to make sure the authority's viewpoint is given.

10 Build up database of newsletters created by partner organisations and community groups – they can be used to send messages to the community.

Newcastle upon Tyne: producing a supplement for the local paper

In Newcastle, a community volunteer collaborated with the local paper – The Journal – and with prominent local organisations (including those from the public and private sector, universities, criminal

justice agencies, inter faith bodies and community leaders) to create a regular supplement called *Living Together*. The supplement has included messages from community leaders and stories on:

- the positive contribution all communities, including asylum seekers, are making in the local area;

- local festivals drawing together faith traditions; and

- progress made on issues around race equality.

This has resulted in local people becoming more aware of the positive work being done in the community to build a strong multicultural and tolerant community.

Contact **Hari Shukla OBE**, Community Volunteer
Tel 0191 243 3620
nitinbharti@blueyonder.co.uk

Oldham Shadow Pathfinder

The Oldham Shadow Partnership has worked hard to develop a good relationship with the *Oldham Chronicle* and to persuade the editor that a more constructive approach to reporting local issues would benefit the wider community and the *Oldham Chronicle* itself. The *Oldham Chronicle* is now getting involved in working groups on racial equality and recently hosted an inter faith group on behalf of the pathfinder.

Contact **Craig Russell**, Head of Diversity and Cohesion
Tel 0161 911 4199
craig.russell@oldham.gov.uk.

East Lancashire Together Pathfinder

The East Lancashire Together (ELT) Pathfinder has been working closely with the ethnic minority press to distribute messages to their local community. ELT has

found that it is easier to place stories if there is a 'visual connection', particularly where the ethnic minority press is concerned. They are working to facilitate a higher level of integration between the ethnic minority and the mainstream press and address 'segregated reporting' of community issues. They found that it is important to route positive messages about communities through all types of publication. They are planning joint seminars that bring together the ethnic minority and mainstream press in dialogue from interested parties working within the media.

Contact **Ian McHugh**, Director of East Lancs Together
ian@elp.org.uk

West London Alliance

The West London Alliance Community Cohesion Pathfinder has a dedicated information and communication theme. The theme group includes a mix of representatives from all sectors engaged in a process of research, skills development, project work, and the application of lessons learned in working with the media, as well as day-to-day operation and communication within and across sectors and communities.

Activities that have been taken forward include:

- the development and implementation of a sub-regional approach to press and media, and bringing together the communications of media officers of all partners to promote the community cohesion agenda and positive examples of activities and projects;

- a series of related pieces of 'community and the media' research which also provided a community media directory as a resource for all partners to use to improve communications;

- a media seminar, bringing refugee forums, race equality representatives and Trinity Mirror Group editorial staff together, was held at Ealing Studios;

- the introduction of higher level media and communications skills training for BME and refugee groups, development of a media skills pack and a 'Bringing Communities Closer' workshop involving key bodies such as the BBC and SKY; and

- training and recruitment initiatives with the Trinity Mirror Group such as providing scholarships in local newspapers for young people in the local community. Partners such as Connexions and the Learning and Skills Council are also involved in these initiatives.

Contact **Claire Codling**, WLA
codlingc@ealing.gov.uk

Further information

10.8 The IDeA published a toolkit for local authorities – *Building a relationship with the media.* This is available on their website at www.idea.gov.uk. The guidance builds on *The Media and Public Relations Toolkit*, which was produced by the Community Cohesion Unit, in consultation with the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. The latter is still available at *www.communitycohesion.gov.uk*

10.9 The Media Trust and Society of Editors are producing guidance for editors and journalists which is due to be published shortly. Harnessing this and the IDeA guidance at a local level will enable partnerships to be built around communication and media strategies.

10.10 The Commission for Racial Equality has also produced guidance for journalists which is available at *www.cre.gov.uk/media/guidetj.html*

11 embedding community cohesion in delivering services

11.1 As a far-reaching agenda, community cohesion should be mainstreamed within the delivery of all local services – this means that you should consider the community cohesion consequences of all your key decisions and encourage your partners to do the same. Make sure that where other organisations, including those in the private sector, are responsible for delivery, you encourage them to adopt cohesion principles. This will include services such as education, health, employment, environment and policing.

11.2 At a basic level, community cohesion requires services that are culturally sensitive and accessible to everyone who wants to use them. Discrimination can happen indirectly, for example, when a facility is placed far from a particular community which might want to use it or is culturally inappropriate for their use.

11.3 To contribute fully to community cohesion, relevant services should not just avoid discrimination; they should actively encourage cross-cultural interaction and provide opportunities for local people to meet people from communities other than their own. Services also provide an interface for you to reach out to hard-to-reach communities. For example, public libraries can display literature about community cohesion and may also be able to organise or host cross cultural events.

11.4 When planning service delivery you should consider the following questions:

- Is the public service meeting its duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to assess and consult on the likely impact of proposed policies on race equality and have arrangements in place to monitor provision for adverse impact on different racial groups?

- Is the workforce representative of the communities it serves?

- Are services culturally appropriate to users?

- Are any groups indirectly discriminated against?

- Does the service encourage cross-cultural contact?

- Are the services being used to reach out to hard-to-reach groups and to communicate your vision for community cohesion?

11.5 In addition to these general principles, there are a number of services which have particular roles to play in community cohesion – for example the education sector has a role in teaching people about the benefits of equality, diversity and mutual respect and understanding between people. Other sections of this guidance focuses on some key areas and makes suggestions about how you can use service provision to best effect.

Hampshire County Council: community cohesion and service delivery

Hampshire County Council (HCC) articulates its commitment to good community relations and quality of life through equality of opportunity by focusing on its activities as a service provider and an employer. Whilst accepting its responsibilities before the law, the council recognises that passive policies will not reverse discrimination and disadvantage, nor will they tackle some of the misperceptions and myths that exist amongst individuals and communities.

It has policies and strategies in place that actively seek to redress unfair discrimination against disadvantaged people within its delivery of services. This is supported by high profile leadership from the top – for example, the chief executive champions the internal 'Quality through Equality' strategy, and is responsible for the overall monitoring and implementation of this across council services. Chief officers are responsible for making sure that ideals are put into practice in their departments, and report to the chief executive on equalities progress, alongside other performance feedback.

Outside of the council, in terms of promoting access to services and good community relations and networks, the authority has worked with local disability organisations to qualify and sign up for Two-Ticks Scheme (Positive about Disabled People). It has worked with the local REC to devise a Race Equality Directory, and sponsors the Hampshire directory of community information (COUSIN). This promotes the community and voluntary sector networks that currently exist to support communities and groups on a number of issues such related to women's services, community care, adult education and services for travellers.

Kirklees Pathfinder: training staff to deliver community cohesion

The Kirklees Pathfinder provided training to frontline workers, managers, community activists and elected members to increase their skills, understanding and confidence and assist in the process of embedding and sustaining the community cohesion programme.

They also linked the programme directly to the Local Council Area Committee process, so that as lessons are learnt and action plans developed they are incorporated directly into local planning processes. Kirklees Metropolitan Council are rolling out the training programmes across the borough and embedding and mainstreaming such expertise of local training providers by developing and delivering a 'Train the Trainers' programme.

Contact **Shahed Molvi**, Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Tel 01924 482181
shahed.molvi@kirklees.gov.uk

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12 working with the police and the fire service

12.1 Good, effective policing makes a vital contribution to community cohesion and police forces will be key partners in the delivery of cohesion locally. Community cohesion should be central to the work of the police, and policing strategies and operations should be consistent with local community cohesion objectives. It will be important for local authorities to know how they can work with their policing partners to best effect and to support their work in this area.

12.2 Police are often called upon to act as peacemakers or as mediators to bring people together in order to resolve problems. Police forces also have a key role in systematically identifying 'priority areas' where community tension is high or rising, recognising the causes and policing accordingly to sustain long-term change. By responding in a strategic way to short-term rises in community tension identified by the police, local authorities can shape their community cohesion policies to respond to the reality of their communities. In return, through supporting neighbourhood renewal and other initiatives in partnership with local agencies, police forces can strengthen their crime reduction work in the local area.

The role of local authorities

12.3 Section 6 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act places a statutory obligation on local authorities and the police to co-operate in the development and implementation of a strategy for tackling crime and disorder. The strategy must be formed following a review of the levels and patterns of crime and disorder in the area. Local authorities must prepare and publish an analysis of that review and obtain the views of people and bodies in the area on the report by holding public meetings or otherwise. Community cohesion should be a key theme throughout crime reduction strategies and for the crime and disorder reduction partnerships that oversee them.

12.4 These requirements reflect the seriousness of the impact of crime and disorder on individuals and provide opportunities for working in partnership to consider and address the impact of crime on

community cohesion. Working in partnership on issues such as removing provocative graffiti and raising awareness across communities contributes to community cohesion by maintaining civic pride, increasing local ownership and securing collective responsibility for neighbourhoods.

The role of police authorities

12.5 A police authority is an independent body made up of local people. Police authorities have a duty to consult local people on policing issues and to make sure that there is an efficient and effective local police force which gives best value to local people. The police authority sets the strategic direction for the force and holds the chief constable to account on behalf of local communities for the policing service delivered. In this strategic role, one of its main functions is to align community safety plans and crime reduction strategies coming from local people and partner organisations (such as local authorities and crime and disorder reduction partnerships), with wider policing plans for the force area, and then monitor the police force on their delivery against the targets set. Police authorities can therefore take a key role in ensuring that policing strategy reflects local community cohesion objectives and ensuring local communities are directly involved in improving local policing.

The role of police forces

12.6 Effective policing strategy requires meaningful community links. This not only helps with the provision of community information but is also vital in dealing with community tension and reassurance. Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidance to forces states that should tension occur amongst local communities, it is important those Basic Command Units (BCUs) commanders:

- identify affected and vulnerable communities;

- establish links or develop existing links where necessary. It is important that community members

have an avenue through which they can communicate with the police and parts of government;

- gain information from all sources and build the picture of tension within communities, the level of crime reporting and the effectiveness of the police response;

- reassure communities by disseminating information;

- distinguish between extremist and moderate opinion;

- involve staff associations and advisory groups;

- assign family liaison officers to affected families;

- form new or involve existing community forums to create links between communities;

- brief members of the affected communities; and

- involve elected representatives eg MPs, police authority members and councillors.

12.7 Police intelligence units should consider the context locally, nationally and internationally so that communities are prioritised for contact. Forces are also encouraged to develop contacts with other forces that have similar communities to their own. In that way an incident happening in one community would allow early warning to be given to other forces.

12.8 Partnership with other statutory and voluntary agencies, business and community groups and lay involvement will be essential. Every area and community has its own particular group of stakeholders and key community contacts, who form opinion, lead and influence. They can also, when properly engaged with, help police and the wider community to reach a mutually acceptable understanding of each other. These stakeholders may include:

- local authorities – town/parish councils

- independent members of police authorities

- local businesses

- licensees and associations

- schools and colleges

- neighbourhood managers

- community and voluntary organisations

- cultural/religious leaders

- racial equality councils.

12.9 Independent advisory groups (IAGs) are used at a strategic level by many police forces. They should be regularly used to inform decision-making on general policing matters. They offer a different perspective on policing and help to build lasting links with communities. It is important to ensure that members of IAGs are truly representative in terms of age, gender, faith etc and can speak on behalf of local communities and groups.

12.10 In considering the various sources of information and advice the role of minority staff support associations (for example, the Black Police Association) will be very important. Many members of these associations live or carry out voluntary work in the communities the police wish to consult with. Those members may be an excellent source of information about relevant communities and may have detailed knowledge about cultural, religious and other issues and may have a good knowledge of the communities and their cultural issues.

12.11 Achieving a police service that reflects the communities it serves is essential to achieving community confidence. Forces need to ensure that they have the right people who can provide an appropriate service and communicate effectively with

minority communities as well as the majority community. Recruitment from local communities and the involvement of local community members in the selection of police offices will continue to be encouraged.

Monitoring tension

12.12 Police will also have a key role in monitoring and responding to community tensions. Forces have well-established criminal intelligence systems upon which to base their operations and direct strategy and tactics aimed at crime and disorder reduction. Integral to these intelligence systems are often warning or tension indicators, which provide information on community tension with varying degrees of effectiveness.

12.13 Basic command units should have in place the following systems:

- reliable community profiles which are routinely updated;

- reliable lists of community contacts and their skills and responsibility for maintenance of these lists invested in a BCU management team member;

- routine intelligence analysis of relevant crimes and incidents of disorder;

- a skills audit of their own staff;

- access to training for police, support and other agency staff (for example in negotiation/mediation);

- a community tension risk assessment, included as an agenda item on the weekly BCU management team meeting;

- management information in respect of policing activity which could affect communities, eg stop and search activity; and

- weekly tasking meetings to allocate tactical options.

Ongoing work at police service, force and basic command unit level

12.14 There is a range of work underway embedding and mainstreaming community cohesion within the Police Reform programme:

- National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) are currently running a pilot of work around the police response to community cohesion which will be an important part of developing knowledge and expertise in community cohesion, and disseminating good practice.

- Central government, together with Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and practitioners, is currently developing good practice so that forces are able to systematically identify priority areas where community tension is high or rising and why, and to commit resources necessary to achieve long-term change. These include: National Crime and Operations Faculty Guidance on Policing Community Disorder, ACPO Operational Guidance on the Management of Inter ethnic Conflict, ACPO Guidance on Identifying and Combating Hate Crime and further ACPO work on effective community involvement, and the development of tactical policing options to support community cohesion.

- Gaining the trust and confidence of all sections of the community through the elimination of discriminatory practices and the development of appropriate policing methods remains crucial to the delivery of effective policing and community cohesion. Ongoing systematic analysis of the recording and response to hate crime and stop and search data has an important role in managing community tensions and cohesion. In 2004, the Lawrence Steering Group, with the support of government ministers, held a series of community consultation events under the banner of 'The Lawrence Steering Group Community Involvement Strategy'. The final report of the Community Involvement Strategy events will be published later this year.

The fire service

12.15 Other emergency services, particularly the fire service, can also play an important role in promoting community cohesion. This is partly because they are not involved in law enforcement but have a strong presence within local communities. The Fire white paper *Our Fire and Rescue Service* published June 2003 recognised that firefighters are widely seen as contributing much to a positive community ethos and can be seen as role models for young people. Firefighters have taken the lead in local working with young people, either in young firefighter associations, Prince's Trust or similar schemes. They have also engaged in outreach programmes, taking fire safety lessons to schools and community groups. Community fire stations that provide facilities for community use and partner organisations are already established in many areas. Retained fire stations, which provide most of the cover in rural areas but are often under-used buildings, could also be used in this way.

Practical steps

- Ensure crime and disorder reduction partnerships have effective stakeholder representation and that community cohesion is a standing item on the agenda of meetings.

- Establish community cohesion targets and actions with the crime and disorder strategy, ensuring that these are reviewed and measured.

- Ensure wide consultation on the crime and disorder reduction partnerships and strategy involving all sections of the community.

- Ensure that there are good relations between police authorities, police forces and the local authority with regular meetings to ensure close working.

- Police authorities, police forces, local authorities and other partners should work together to develop

strong links with all sections of the community, with clear and rapid communication channels, especially with local young people, and the ability to respond to and manage rumours.

- Police authorities, police forces and local authorities should review the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour at the local and neighbourhood community level and work together to ensure that resources are appropriately targeted and used in a non-discriminatory way.

- Assess the local authority contribution to crime reduction and to safer, more cohesive communities across the full range of strategic and service delivery responsibilities.

- Police authorities, police forces and local authorities should ensure consistent high standards of diversity/community and race relations training in public agencies.

- Local authorities should encourage effective multi-agency arrangements for addressing racist incidents and where possible set in place third party reporting arrangements.

- Develop a contingency plan for any future disturbances and to identify and respond to triggers that may increase community tensions or potential social disorder.

- Ensure that the links needed to implement contingency plans exist before they are needed. This needs regular, testing and detailed community profiles.

Peterborough Pathfinder: Evening Economy Project

Peterborough found that anti-social behaviour has many forms; it can be noisy neighbours, graffiti, litter, and abandoned cars on the street, or drunken

disorder. Anti-social behaviour can hold back the regeneration of disadvantaged areas and damages quality of life. It also has a negative impact on community cohesion. Anti-social behaviour can make people afraid to go out or visit certain parts of a city; the resentment and unhappiness it causes can be one of the reasons why some communities make scapegoats of others; and alcohol-fuelled disputes between different groups can lead to raised community tensions.

Peterborough city centre suffers from a high level of anti-social behaviour during the evening periods and the city council saw the idea of an evening strategy developed in partnership with the police and local businesses as an effective way of tackling the problem.

Sponsored by the Community Cohesion Pathfinder programme, the Evening Economy project is led by Peterborough Community Safety Partnership. Its aim is to bring together the key stakeholders, agencies and organisations to minimise the level of anti-social behaviour and maximise joint partnership working. This approach concentrates on ways to reduce current tensions and problems and looks at targeting work with 14-17 year-olds who are the next generation of visitors to the city centre.

The first action of the project was to host a conference in May 2004 at Peterborough Unity Football Club. The conference featured an update on the new licensing laws, a presentation on the Nightsafe project in Blackpool and group workshops on how to develop and progress the strategy. The conference generated a lot of interest with good representation from the business sector, and its findings will incorporated into the next stage of the development of the strategy.

Contact **Joanne Oldfield**, Community Safety Unit Team Leader, Cambridgeshire Constabulary Northern Division
Tel 01733 424466

Leicestershire Constabulary

In 2002, following a report into community relations in the city and widespread consultation, Leicester City Council developed a community cohesion strategy. Crime and disorder and community tension were key elements, giving Leicestershire Constabulary a central role. However the council recognised that fostering community cohesion in this area was not the sole preserve of the police. The strategy therefore set the stage for close partnership working at a strategic level.

Alongside this, Leicestershire Constabulary has been working with the National Centre for Policing Excellence to pilot the integration of community cohesion policing strategies into mainstream policing within Leicester Central BCU. The project is still being developed but there are three key strands looking at:

• how local police officers relate to the communities they serve, how they deliver their services and resolve vulnerability and criminality;

• close partnership working with statutory and voluntary bodies at a neighbourhood level and through the Leicester City Crime and Disorder Partnership; and

• strategic level issues including deployment, officer alignment, micro-beats, community intelligence, strategic assessment tasking and communications strategies.

The project focussed on three areas. One of these, South Highfield, is a large multi-cultural community where approximately 32 languages are spoken and a large number of faiths are practised. The project here is doing a number of things including:

• developing an in-house policing course, involving local people, to raise police awareness of different religions and cultures. This includes short regular

sessions where basic languages are taught to the police by members of the local community;

- supporting community events and meetings to ensure existing community relations are improved;

- police officers are encouraged to visit places of worship and talk to community leaders;

- communities are encouraged to have contact with the Local Policing Unit on a formal and informal basis;

- police are working with the community to develop a shared understanding of key concerns and issues to be tackled;

- two community support officers have been deployed to work in the heart of the local communities; and

- the BCU is developing micro-beats to get down to street level understanding of communities and tackling criminality.

Contact **Sarah Turner**, Project Manager
sarah.turner@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk

Contact **Chief Superintendent Ian Stripp**,
Project Director
emma.platts@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk

Cheshire Fire Service – total community protection

Cheshire Fire Authority has clearly set out its strategy, which aims to 'Secure a Safe and Cohesive Community', based on a vision of 'total community protection'. The scale of the objectives set out in the vision and strategy reflect the nature of the issues and how they target resources. For example, 'at risk communities' and 'at risk people' are normally characterised by other factors such as age, inequality, high crime, poor health and poor socio-economic conditions. By directing resources to these areas, a

big impact has been made on fire related issues and, as a consequence, contributed to improving the quality of life and the cohesion in our communities.

Much of their community work has been carried out by firefighters who actively engage the communities they serve. The organisational policy has also established direct links and membership to each of the district, unitary and county authorities, local strategic partnerships and crime and disorder groups.

This approach has resulted in range of success factors, including:

- Cheshire was the first fire service in the UK to establish a franchise with the Prince's Trust Volunteers. Over 1000 of Cheshire's young people have been through the scheme returning 80 per cent to full-time work or education, which has resulted in national recognition;

- over 140 young people aged 13-18 in Cheshire are now fire cadets many of whom have received recognised NVQ achievements; and

- over 8,000 home fire safety checks carried out. In partnerships with social services and health workers they have been successful in identifying those most vulnerable, resulting in a national award for their work with health workers.

Cheshire Fire Authority's dissemination programme will focus on the following key messages:

- the benefits of working with young people;

- the fire service's role in effective partnership working;

- how the fire service can improve community cohesion;

- more than just a fire service 'a template for success'; and

- communicating success.

A CD-ROM, featuring the cast of Hollyoaks, has been produced highlighting the fire services work in relation to cohesion.

Contact **Adrian Luty**
aluty@cheshirefire.co.uk
www.cheshirefire.co.uk

Further information

12.16 Guidance for police forces includes:

- *NCOF Community Disorder – a Tactical Police Guide* (April – July 2002);

- *ACPO Operational Guide for the Management of Inter-Ethnic Conflict* (Dec 2003);

- *ACPO Hate Crime Manual* (March 2003) is available on the ACPO website at *www.acpo.police.uk*; and

- practical advice on community cohesion is currently being piloted through the National Centre for Policing Excellence – contact CENTREX on *01256 602100* or at *www.centrex.police.uk/home.html*

13 housing

13.1 Overcoming segregation in housing is central to building community cohesion. In certain areas, housing estates have become mono-cultural and different communities exist in parallel. Separation between groups living in different localities is not necessarily problematic in itself, but compounded by deprivation and a lack of interaction, segregation may lead to fear and mistrust. This can be passed on through generations where residential segregation leads to segregated schooling and leisure facilities. In addition, Britain's black and minority ethnic (BME) community continues to be disproportionately concentrated in the poorest, usually urban locations, and in the most deprived housing.[10]

13.2 Neighbourhoods may become unsustainable where housing cannot be accessed equally by all communities. This, combined with a lack of support networks, can give rise to tensions between individuals and groups, and between generations. These considerations apply to rural areas or scattered communities as well as in areas of higher density, where groups may be isolated.

13.3 Local authorities and housing associations should address the conditions, practices and attitudes affecting public and private sector housing to ensure access to homes is equally available for all communities. This could be achieved through cross-tenure housing strategies – for example assessing and understanding housing needs and preferences, particularly those of communities who currently find it hard to access social housing, and monitoring and influencing the activities of private landlords and estate agencies.

13.4 The experience in some areas has been that black and minority ethnic applicants may consider a move to a non-traditional area if they know they can rely on a package of support such as time-limited assistance from community development officers, police, resident organisations and other voluntary and community organisations. These support agencies can ensure from the outset that individuals are welcomed and have access to key services, including emergency services. In turn social landlords' policies need to reflect this multi-agency approach.

13.5 A strategic approach to tackling community cohesion will ensure that housing operates alongside other services, within a neighbourhood context to address community development and community safety issues and involve partners such as the police, schools and local tenants groups. Services must be flexible and culturally sensitive to the changing needs and aspirations of all groups to ensure sustainability.

13.6 Partnership working on housing and regeneration between local authorities and housing associations make a vital contribution to the community cohesion and social exclusion agendas. Local authorities' interaction with the private sector is subject to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. This means that the promotion of racial equality should always be a factor in any relevant planning processes. There is a statutory requirement for public bodies to produce a Race Equality Impact Assessment for all new and existing policies. The results must be published and will ensure that the race equality schemes have impact.

13.7 The key elements that may require consideration when addressing community cohesion within a housing context are:

- **addressing segregation** by harnessing lettings policies combined with wider community development and housing management approaches to open up access to housing for all communities;

- **meeting the needs of housing asylum seekers and refugees** by providing information in the full range of languages on housing options,

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10 *Housing and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities: Review of Evidence Base,* 2003, ODPM Housing Research Summary

including where possible, offering opportunities to remain in the area or in the existing temporary accommodation once leave to remain has been awarded. Ensuring housing management approaches to harassment are prompt and efficient, and that support services can be accessed as needed;

- **establishing resident led approaches** to ownership of housing policies in a locality by enabling resident groups to identify and address conflict in groups. There is a need for tenant groups to be inclusive, representative and to recognise diversity in delivering their priorities for action; and

- **ensuring housing management services acknowledge and responding to tensions in communities** by recording and tackling underlying tensions between groups and individuals. Cases of individual harassment, and anti-social behaviour or inter-group conflict need to be monitored on a locality basis to ensure inter-agency responses are maximised and support agencies alerted. Where causes are multi-faceted the social landlords' responses will need to operate across functions such as lettings, development, and resident involvement to ensure a co-ordinated and streamlined approach.

Lettings

13.8 Lettings policies determine access to social housing and are, therefore, critically important to those households who are often from the poorest section of our communities. However, most households do not live in social housing and many households prefer to be owner-occupiers. In England, only 20 per cent of households rent from a local authority or a housing association[11]. While this figure is significantly higher in the metropolitan areas, where most black and minority ethnic communities live, in almost all areas social housing makes up a minority of the total housing stock. This means that community cohesion cannot be addressed simply by changing how households access the social housing sector. Social lettings policies on their own are unlikely to break down entrenched patterns of segregation, but lettings schemes can be part of a wider process of support that could begin to create more mixed and integrated communities.

13.9 There are several ways in which local authorities and housing associations can ensure that their lettings policies contribute to the building of community cohesion in their localities. Strategies, policies and procedures in relation to lettings need to have cohesion principles at their core, as do other related housing services such as tenant and resident involvement, housing management, and planning.

13.10 Local authorities should explore the potential for joint initiatives with the private sector to break down barriers to housing choice and if necessary address poor management and conditions within the private rented sector. This can play a role in housing market failure. Private sector responses require similar confidence building measures which will require links to community safety strategies and may involve offering private sector opportunities, supported by the confidence building work of social housing providers in mixed tenure developments.

13.11 Lettings schemes need to be accessible and easy to understand. Transparent lettings schemes help to lessen the likelihood of community rivalries caused by suspicions that others are being prioritised unfairly and getting housing that their community 'deserves'. Provision of information about lettings schemes and available properties can address restricted access to the social sector generally, or to particular neighbourhoods, by black and minority ethnic communities.

13.12 Lettings schemes can break down existing patterns of segregation. With commitment and appropriate support, it may be possible to create

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11 *UK Housing Review 2002/03*, Wilcox (Ed), CIH/CML/JRF

'bridging' or 'gateway' communities where existing communities welcome new arrivals on a phased approach. Here landlords establish BME communities on mono-cultural estates through 'block' or 'cluster' lettings of groups of properties. This model can be successful in new housing developments, or in existing settlements, but will need to be underpinned by dialogue with existing communities and new residents. Residents' associations can be particularly helpful in holding welcome days or offering networks of support and advice in addition to quelling rumour and tension that might otherwise arise.

Choice-based lettings (CBL)

13.13 Following the 2000 Housing green paper, a central plank of the government's policy on lettings has been to encourage social landlords to offer applicants more choice over their housing while continuing to meet housing need. This policy has been put into effect through legislation in the Homelessness Act 2002 and statutory guidance, a 'choice based lettings' (CBL) pilot scheme, and a target that all authorities should operate choice-based schemes by 2010.

13.14 A recent evaluation of CBL pilots by ODPM found that it was welcomed by applicants and by the pilot authorities. CBL systems increased applicants' perceptions of choice, control and transparency. They also led to increased participation by members of black and minority ethnic communities in many of the pilot areas. Many of the pilots put a great deal of effort into reaching minority communities: consulting with them before launch of the scheme, producing information about the scheme in minority languages, and enabling non-English speakers to access the CBL website or to bid over the telephone.

13.15 Social landlords must ensure that choice is equal and that applicants do not favour areas because of fear of the unfamiliar. It may be that certain areas do not cater for all applicants and that there is a lack of suitable shops or appropriate schools. These issues need to be addressed within

wider community cohesion strategies and within regeneration partnerships. ODPM is undertaking a Race Impact Assessment of the Allocation Legislation including choice based lettings, and this will be completed and published by the end of 2004.

Resident involvement

13.16 Resident involvement delivers wide community benefits, but landlords working towards improving overall community cohesion need to ensure that individual communities are not strengthened at the expense of the wider community. It will be important to remain watchful for the potential for power to become (or to remain) unequally distributed among tenants, which could lead to tension between groups and the undermining of community cohesion.

13.17 There is considerable opportunity for residents associations to promote cross-cultural involvement within and between communities in identifying their priorities for action, the scope of their resident involvement objectives, and in their wider community publicity. Residents are often the key driver for community events that can bring people together in a locality.

Housing asylum seekers and refugees

13.18 Asylum seekers are frequently and unfairly stigmatised within communities and negative portrayals can impact upon community cohesion in an area. Local authorities need to set clear objectives in framing policies and delivering flexible and culturally appropriate services for asylum seekers and refugees. The skills required to provide services need to be identified, monitored and reviewed. This will include awareness of the language and support needs of asylum seekers and refugees but also a willingness to be flexible in responding to their individual circumstances. Wherever possible local authorities and housing associations need to consider how they may use the language and other skills of asylum seekers themselves in order to ensure new arrivals access support and information promptly.

13.19 It is recognised by the Home Office National Asylum Support Service (NASS) and by their accommodation partners that all those involved should avoid dispersal arrangements that exacerbate integration problems – for example, placing asylum seekers in very deprived areas. Local authorities must have a clear strategy for the use of accommodation and the wider locality, eg ensuring that areas receiving asylum seekers gain some wider community advantage, such as new facilities, to avoid the impression that only asylum seekers are being helped.

13.20 Local authorities and their partners need to:

• know where asylum seekers are placed and their support needs;

• work with partners to track movement to plan and manage service delivery;

• ensure that mainstream services accessed by asylum seekers and refugees are culturally appropriate and responsive;

• provide appropriate housing, health and education services needed to support children undergoing a number of moves/school placements;

• communicate with partners offering 'wrap around services';

• provide adequate, clear translated information to asylum seekers about the process, accommodation arrangements and their local area; and

• work with the 'host community' involving them from the start and inviting them to help with the 'settlement' of the newcomers.

Tackling anti-social behaviour

13.21 Of particular relevance to the community cohesion agenda is the tackling of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the context of housing management. The government has acted to increase the powers available to local authorities, the police and other agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour no matter where people live. For example, Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), are available regardless of the perpetrator or victim's housing status. There are also a number of powers available specifically to social landlords to protect both their tenants and the wider community and these were broadened and strengthened in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004.

13.22 The Housing Bill, currently before parliament, provides new powers to help local authorities tackle anti-social behaviour in the private-rented sector. By utilising these powers alongside prevention and support measures, landlords and local agencies can effectively work together to tackle the ASB that can undermine community sustainability and reduce the housing choices available to certain groups. Expert practical advice and assistance in tackling ASB, is available through the Home Office's TOGETHER ActionLine (0870 220 2000) and website (www.together.gov.uk).

Government policy

13.23 It is also important that all initiatives with a role in creating sustainable communities, such as Sure Start and the Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, reflect community cohesion objectives to complement the activities of housing agencies. The nine housing market renewal pathfinders in the North and West Midlands all have a direct relevance to housing and community cohesion because they are aiming to restructure housing markets, tackle the poor housing conditions and will involve the moving of settled communities to new or different areas.

13.24 Housing issues and problems often transcend local authority boundaries and require broader housing market analysis and more joined up responses from local authorities at a sub-regional level. Effective understanding,

management and balancing of local housing markets forms a key part of the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment of a local authority's housing role and will contribute to community cohesion. Local authorities will have to demonstrate what measures they have in place to help balance local housing markets and their progress and success in achieving this goal. This comes within the context of an increased emphasis on the importance of race equality and cohesion work as reflected in the 2005 CPA. Community cohesion will be included in the updated housing strategy guidance planned for later in 2004 encouraging housing authorities to incorporate community cohesion.

Rochdale: bridging communities

The Canalside project in Rochdale demonstrated how Asian families have been assisted to move into non-traditional areas in Rochdale. It consists of a new build scheme of 49 houses and flats managed by the Bangladeshi-led Surma Housing Co-operative and developed with the support of Asian-led housing association Ashiana, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council and the Housing Corporation. The development is sited adjacent to a predominantly 'white' area of older terraced housing and was outside the traditional areas of settlement of the Asian community in the town. The scale of the development has produced a sustainable and safe environment for the residents and relationships with the established white community are good.

The involvement of a BME led housing association together with the active support of the council gave credibility to the project in the eyes of the Asian community. The development includes very large seven bedroom houses that are suitable for extended families, but are constructed such that they can be converted into separate flats, if necessary in the future. There is also a block of purpose built flats

some of which are occupied by younger professional people.

Contact **Andy Wiggans**, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
andy.wiggans@rochdale.gov.uk

Oldham and Rochdale: working with the private sector

The Community Induction Project, funded by 'quick wins' money from the Oldham/Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, supports families from black and minority ethnic communities who are living in poor and overcrowded houses to move into non-traditional areas. This project has been available to both social housing tenants and homeowners.

The Dale Mill development will incorporate top quality design to deliver a mixed tenure development, indistinguishable externally between tenures. It will incorporate shared ownership, social rented housing and full market value housing in the one development by ensuring that all agencies and partners co-ordinate their efforts to achieve our shared objectives and providing support for people willing to move to neighbourhoods where they otherwise might feel unsafe or unwelcome.

This could be a useful approach in other areas, particularly if the project is made sustainable by being backed by a wider corporate community cohesion strategy and mainstreamed into local authority and other agencies' service delivery.

Contact **Craig Russell**, Community Cohesion Manager
craig.russell@oldham.gov.uk

or contact **Andy Wiggans**, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
andy.wiggans@rochdale.gov.uk

**Thurrock Shadow Pathfinder:
working with residents**

Less than five years ago the Broadway estate in
Tilbury was described as a depressing and 'lawless'
neighbourhood where nobody wanted to live. Now,
thanks to a gradual process of improvements initiated
by resident's desire to secure a safer environment, the
Broadway estate is a thriving and diverse community.

Residents worked closely with statutory services as
well as a number of voluntary and community groups
to tackle various community needs, especially caring
for the horses of the former Traveller community. Over
time improvements such as the concierge system and
CCTV cameras on the estate have contributed to
ensuring a safer environment for the community.

It was the last improvement – an innovative
landscaping project completed in April 2004 –
converting the central open space from a racetrack
for joy-riders that has brought together people from
different backgrounds.

One successful example is the horse arena designed
for the horses of the resident Traveller community. A
school project was undertaken to work with local
school children to develop a better understanding of
the Traveller culture. The Traveller community is now
more understood and respected and recognised by
residents in Tilbury as an ethnic minority. The
Broadway estate projects have proven that through
full involvement and participation from the outset by
the resident community sustainable solutions can be
found. As the Thurrock example shows through the
commitment of local residents and support of local
services, anti-social behaviour and crime can be
reduced and managed.

Contact **Vera Markos**, Thurrock Council
Tel 01375 652271
vmarkos@thurrock.gov.uk

**Leicester City Council: working
with residents on the Monkton
and Northfield Estate**

Residents of this 473 home estate transformed an
area renowned for abandonment, crime and drugs in
the late 1990s into an area that is now open to a
diverse range of families and individuals and has a
strong level of community engagement.

A survey was established at the outset to identify
those interventions residents felt would be effective.
The majority of the suggestions that emerged were
both highly practical and relatively inexpensive
(locks, lighting, information etc). A three-way
partnership was formed between the council's
housing department, the police and the residents
themselves and with increased police involvement
residents felt safe to report via the residents'
association incidents of crime or suspicious activity.

In parallel the council sought to open the empty
homes to house asylum seekers and refugees. The
residents were pivotal to welcoming new residents,
explaining to the existing community the role of the
housing association involved in providing help and
ensured misinformation was minimised. An advice
centre was established and take up of advice and
courses offered were as a result of word of mouth
and community backing.

The result is that those living there now have a sense
of belonging, work together to meet the needs of
everyone living in the area and have moved forward
from addressing crime and drugs to celebrating
diversity through social events.

The residents feel the key to their success was in
ensuring residents views were central to the solutions
(harnessing other services as and when needed), the
partnership arrangement was focused and pro-active
and the momentum was and continues to be
maintained due to the high level of community
engagement.

Contact **Diane Cank**, Advice Centre Development Worker, Morton and Northfields Tenants Association
Tel 0116 246 1135
d.cank@btinternet.com

Further information

A joint action plan aimed at mainstreaming community cohesion into government policy on housing was published in March 2004. It represents a commitment by both departments to work together to prioritise those aspects of government housing policy that can contribute to cohesive communities. It is available at *www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/ cohesion/keydocs.html*

The ODPM *Housing Market Assessment Manual* (Feb 2004) is a useful framework for local authorities, providing a better understanding of housing demand and supply issues and how different housing markets operate at a sub-regional level. It is available on the ODPM website at *www.odpm.gov.uk*

Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)

Providing a Safe Haven – housing asylum seekers and refugees was produced by the Chartered Institute of Housing in association with the Community Cohesion Unit. It looks at maintaining and developing community cohesion when accommodating asylum seekers and refugees.

 The CIH has also published *How Housing Management Can Contribute to Community Cohesion: Research Report*

Both are available on their website at *www.cih.org*

Other guidance

Community Cohesion and Housing: A Good Practice Guide, Bob Blackaby, April 2004. A publication illustrating how housing agencies can contribute to community cohesion.

Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategies, Bon Blackaby and Kusminder Chahal, 2000.

Breaking Down the Barriers – Improving Asian Access to Social Rented Housing, FBHO and Bradford Council, 2001.

Research from Lemos&Crane

Community Conflict, a report by Lemos&Crane is based on research supported by the Housing Corporation, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Community Cohesion Unit and Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. It is the largest study of its type, ever undertaken in mainland Britain in which social landlords and other practitioners with local experience of community conflict took part in action research sessions facilitated by Lemos&Crane to identify its causes and action to prevent, manage and tackle the problem.

The report is available at *www.raceactionnet.co.uk*

14 regeneration

14.1 Advice on building community cohesion into regeneration and renewal was set out in the Home Office and ODPM publications *Community Cohesion Advice for those designing, developing and delivering Area Based Initiatives (ABIs)*[12] and *Building Community Cohesion into Area Based Initiatives*. The following is based on the advice contained in those publications.

14.2 Area based initiatives (ABIs) can be described as central government initiatives, pilot programmes or those delivered through regional/local partners which are targeted towards specific geographical areas ahead of, or instead of, a national rollout. They can be highly effective in transforming areas of high deprivation and improving the life chances of communities not able to access sufficient mainstream funding and services. But there are risks that the concentration of resources on particular areas may result in resentment and frustration among some communities because of perceptions of favoured treatment. It is therefore essential that every step of the process takes account of community cohesion.

Defining local need

14.3 The first step will be defining the local need. Recognising that a community's needs differ from that of its neighbours can provide a valuable opportunity to build community cohesion by 'designing in' approaches that get communities working and living together whilst respecting each other's difference and diversity.

14.4 Schemes should be examined from the outset to ensure that, in meeting the need of a community in an area, they do not serve to stigmatise that community or reinforce its separateness and give the impression that the needs of other disadvantaged communities are not recognised.

Flexibility and area focus

14.5 The key barrier to cohesion within ABIs is that schemes can be in danger of drawing rigid boundaries in a target area which may coincide with a single or minority ethnic community. The boundaries of areas should be selected in such a way as to avoid drawing them tightly around particular communities, and should ensure that there is flexibility to respond to further needs within a wider area. The target area should be as wide as possible to embrace different communities and their needs. This may involve setting different boundaries for different programmes, running thematic programmes which cross a number of deprived communities or working with other ABIs in the area.

Relationships between communities

14.6 Rigid area boundaries may limit the possibility of bridge-building work between disadvantaged communities in different parts of the same town or city. Whilst initiatives must recognise the needs of particular groups and be culturally sensitive, care must be taken when considering exclusive single community schemes. Programmes should therefore be designed to provide an opportunity for cross-cultural contact, from the outset, at all levels. You should consider 'twinning' regeneration areas as a means of bringing different communities together to work on common problems, sharing experiences and build trust and understanding.

Consultation and communication

14.7 Many people who live in poor neighbourhoods do not feel they can play a part in the process of improving the quality of their lives or the way they are governed. This can manifest itself in a sense of resentment amongst local residents who may believe funding is not being used for services that are needed or wanted locally. Community capacity building is

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12 Available on the Home Office website at *www.communitycohesion.gov.uk*

widely acknowledged to be the key to strengthening and building skills and confidence within communities. This will enable you to carry out effective, inclusive consultation from the outset and throughout the process, adopting diverse, culturally appropriate methods for different communities.

14.8 Good communications are vital both to enable an initiative to achieve its objectives, and to ensure that in doing so it promotes community cohesion. Some regeneration projects have been hampered by a lack of awareness amongst residents and practitioners of the schemes in their area, and the reasoning behind the allocation of area-based funding. This has led to a perception that areas receive funding unfairly and on a basis other than real need. A lack of awareness as to the benefits of the various schemes means that communities are not benefiting from services designed to help improve their life opportunities. Your communications strategy should set out your reasons for allocating funding to the area and the objectives. It should identify your critical audiences, key spokespeople, key messages and include an action plan for implementation.

Leadership and accountability

14.9 It is essential that those responsible for an ABI at local level work with all involved to develop a sense of ownership and pride in the local community. Whilst it is useful to have key spokespersons or 'champions' in this area, it is also important that understanding is shared by people in a position to drive strategic approaches. They will be able to lead on developing partnerships with other bodies to help implementation and to explore the potential for sharing resources and mainstreaming cohesion within existing services. They will also be able to forward plan for the ABI in relation to community cohesion.

Mainstreaming community cohesion

14.10 The promotion of community cohesion needs to be mainstreamed within ABIs. Initial funding from ABIs can help start that process. The existing budgets may need to be reconsidered or even reassembled to reflect the real needs in localities and also monitored to ensure that longer-term investment is addressed. Addressing community cohesion can be integral to this process.

Practical steps

- Involve neighbouring communities in the development of ABIs to ensure that tensions arising between disadvantaged areas receiving different funding are addressed.

- Use a communications strategy to explain the objectives and rationale of funding decisions to positively influence local perceptions.

- Conduct meaningful consultation and communication with recipient communities in a way which will lead to local ownership of renewal activity.

- Be flexible in the application of scheme boundaries and consider carefully the best means of providing benefits to both direct and indirect participants.

- Avoid funding rules and mechanisms becoming a barrier to interaction between communities. Geographic boundaries tied to the funding rules can play a part in creating barriers to cohesion.

- Twinning areas for advice, support and learning on cohesion offers an opportunity to share good practice at a local, regional and national level in addition to formalising the process of community capacity building.

- Develop an approach to governance that enables boards, senior officials and elected members at a local level to take a lead on the importance of community cohesion and communicate the benefits to all.

Leicester City Council: consensus through better information

Leicester City Council began this initiative in 1998 for three main reasons. First, voluntary sector activity was unevenly distributed, with highly organised groups in some areas and little or no voluntary sector infrastructure in others, so there was sometimes difficulties in getting funding initiatives off the ground. Secondly, data at that time only existed at ward level and the information from the 1991 Census was out of date. Thirdly, there was concern that data collected on an electoral ward basis encouraged fragmented interests and had become enmeshed in political wrangling at ward level, rather than being used to consider what would ultimately benefit the city as a whole. A perception had developed that decisions were being taken on political grounds and not on the basis of need. Leicester City Council therefore wanted to make it clear that it was using an objective needs-based process for managing competition for area based initiative resources between different areas.

The city council mapped age distribution across the city, assigning different colours to different age groups. It repeated this process with other data — housing benefit take-up, crime rates, etc, using postcodes to identify small areas. The mapping areas cross electoral boundaries and thus attention was focused on issues such as poverty and crime experienced by all communities, and away from ward boundaries, the political process and race and ethnicity. The results of the mapping were published in the Leicester Mercury and public meetings were held in 1998 and 2000 to discuss which areas of the city should be included in future SRB bidding rounds, based on which areas were more in need and how they compared to each other. The initiative was also publicised on BBC Radio Leicester and through local libraries and community venues.

Contact **Andy Thomas**, Leicester City Council
Tel 0116 252 6516
thoma001@leicester.gov.uk

Kirklees: Thornhill Lees Community Centre

The ward of Thornhill comprises three areas: Saville Town, Thornhill Lees and Thornhill.

The residents of Saville Town mainly have Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origins, Thornhill is a predominantly white area and Thornhill Lees has a population that is approximately 60 per cent white and 40 per cent Asian. Kirklees Council owns most of the housing in this area. These three areas have a history of competition around regeneration funding and, while there are many examples of work to promote good relations between different groups, there is also a lot of mistrust and resentment. The Thornhill Lees Community Centre is a very successful grass roots initiative to establish a venue to bring together the residents of Savile Town, Thornhill Lees and Thornhill. The centre and its activities came about through the extreme dedication and resourcefulness by residents of this deprived area, who put together their own bids to access regeneration funding. The centre, now three-years-old, has benefited from ERDF, SRB and NRF funding. It offers a wide range of activities: courses run in partnership with Dewsbury College, several clubs, mothers and toddlers groups and a youth club.

The facilities of the centre are also available to local residents and it is often hired for weddings, meetings and parties. The centre is also able to offer in-house catering, generating additional revenue. The centre employs a caretaker and a co-ordinator, but the rest of the work is undertaken on a voluntary basis. Two of the trustees, who are now retired, spend on average 40 hours per week at the centre. The centre is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It is run like a business, which the trustees note is an important element to consider. While community enterprises like this can be hugely successful, they need the appropriate mixture of skills and dedication to keep going.

Contact **Marlene Chambers** or **Peter Marsden**
Tel 01924 468 053

More information

14.13 Central government departments are asked to consider potential community cohesion issues in the development of proposed area-based initiatives. This is one of the key design principles of the *ABI Guidance to Departments*, supporting the ABI Gateway which is managed by the Regional Co-ordination Unit in ODPM. The ABI Gateway which assesses ABI proposals from Whitehall with input from regional government offices. A copy of the guidance is available on the RCU website at *www.rcu.gov.uk/abi/*

14.14 The Home Office and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have produced two publications that provide advice and guidance on how best to address cohesion with both new and existing area based initiatives (ABIs) and how to ensure that relations between recipient communities and their neighbours are not damaged by misperceptions of funding decisions or of the benefits to communities. *Community Cohesion Advice for those designing, developing and delivering Area based Initiatives (ABIs): Building cohesion into regeneration and renewal* – this is intended for those responsible for designing, developing and delivering ABIs or other regeneration projects and for those involved in implementing and monitoring them. *Building Community Cohesion into Area based Initiatives: A guide for residents and practitioners* – this is a practical guide with extensive case studies intended for those living and working in area based initiatives and other regeneration areas. These are both available on the Home Office website at *www.communitycohesion.gov.uk*

community cohesion

15 arts, sports and other cultural services

15.1 Arts, sport and other cultural (or leisure) services can be a powerful tool to engage all sections of the community and break down barriers between them. People take part in leisure and cultural activities through choice. Marginalised groups are often more willing to engage with such activities than other government-funded activities. Physical activity and sport can be used as a means of bringing people together from different communities to share positive experiences and gain greater understanding of each other's ways of life. Arts and sport can also be the main attractions for tourists, and so present opportunities to promote the activities of local communities to the wider world.

15.2 Sport and cultural activities also provide an opportunity for 'joined up working' with other public and voluntary agencies to address community cohesion. The sector can be a means of tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and can also be an avenue to lead people into formal training, education and employment. Arts, sports, libraries, museums, parks and tourism can all impact on social issues.

15.3 You can maximise the potential of sport and cultural activities to address community cohesion by producing a clear strategy reflecting the needs of all sections of the local community. This strategy should be reflected within the community strategy and Compacts with the voluntary and community sector.

Practical steps

- If using the word 'culture' or phrase 'cultural services' be clear in communicating what it includes (eg is sport incorporated in this term?). Be sensitive to terminology which might discourage parts of the community from participating or could be misinterpreted.

- Undertake user surveys to gauge the range of services accessed and identify gaps in provision.

- Ensure incentives for cross community sport and cultural activities eg by use of an appropriate funding and inspection regime.

- Establish what barriers there are to access facilities and activities for particular groups. These could be geographical, cost, based on perception or the times that facilities are open/activities take place. Then identify actions which can be taken.

- Involve all sections of the community in planning, delivering and evaluating. Consider how this can be done in innovative ways eg video or theatre.

- Organise inter-school sports and cultural events.

- Organise cultural events to promote inter-cultural and inter faith understanding and respect.

- Consider thematic approaches to issues such as drug use, literacy and communication skills using leisure and cultural activities to engage people from across communities/ethnic groups.

- Ensure an effective information/communications plan is in place so that all sections of the community know what is available.

Liverpool City Council: inspiring creative communities

One of the great strengths of Liverpool's successful bid to be Capital of Culture 2008 was its dimension of community inclusivity.

The local authority is leading on a programme of activity that matters to the residents of the city. The bid was supported by thousands of people who were engaged practically in cultural activity. The local authority is committed to engaging every resident in the Capital of Culture process, so people are participants, not simply spectators. This programme is focused on the delivery of harder issues through creativity. This year the council worked with over 9,000 residents producing art house films which will showcase as part of the Liverpool Biennial. They will also inform consultation around housing and environment within communities.

The Faith in One City programme is another example which is about engaging unheard voices, sowing the seeds for 2008 and supporting organisations in cultural growth. Over 74 groups have been supported by the Faith in One City community fund – an audience of 1,690,000, engaging over 640 local groups in 2,300 events.

Contact **Claire McColgan**, Liverpool City Council
Tel 0151 233 1840
claire.mccolgan@liverpool.gov.uk

Clayton-le-Moors, Lancashire: Lark in the Park

The Friends of Mercer Park is a group of local activists in Clayton-le-Moors, Lancashire. Their aim is to encourage local people to make more use of the park and to enhance its facilities. Every year they hold an annual arts festival, 'Lark in the Park'.

It uses both visual and performing arts to bring together a culturally diverse community. People of all ages are given the opportunity to use art to address issues of exclusion and challenge stereotypical attitudes and values.

A 'Holiday Arts' and sports activity programme runs for four weeks before the 'Lark in the Park' festival starts. This raises the event's profile and gets the local community involved. Arts activities are led by professional artists, leading to shared learning and high quality work. 'Holiday Arts' and 'Lark in the Park' continues to transform Mercer Park into a place which celebrates achievement, challenges prejudice and works inclusively.

Celebration has made a big difference to the development of the Friends of Mercer Park. It has also given the wider community a sense of pride, place and belonging. Groups of people and individuals of different ages and cultural roots work together and explore common ideas. Existing skills within the community are identified, used and extended while new ones are developed and shared with others.

This case study is taken from *Bringing Communities Together Through Sport and Culture* a Department of Culture, Media and Sport publication.

Contact **Action Factory**
Tel 01254 679335
allstaff@actionfactory.org

Burnley Sports Alliance

The Burnley Sports Alliance is made up of diverse clubs, organisations and individuals who are interested in developing sport in Burnley.

In the past, the different groups delivered projects in isolation, but coming together to form the alliance has meant that the participants can share ideas, findings and good practice. They can identify areas where there is little provision and tackle these problems together. What's more as a formally constituted group, they can access resources that in the past were out of reach. The benefit of working with these groups is that they are aware of local problems and needs and have experience of dealing with them. The Burnley Sports Alliance has found that the activity – rather than having meetings – is the best way to move forward.

Dialogue between the diverse groups has led to the realisation that working together means more variety, more impact and more outcomes. By coming together, the different organisations don't only deliver sporting or cultural events, but also deal with more serious issues such as community cohesion, anti-social behaviour, poor health and lack of facilities.

This case study is taken from *Bringing Communities Together Through Sport and Culture* a Department of Culture, Media and Sport publication.

Contact **Ibby Khan**, Sports Development Manager, Burnley Borough Council
Tel 01282 477303 or 01282 477190 ext 2381
ekhan@burnley.gov.uk

**Gateshead Shadow Pathfinder:
uniting communities through music**

The Gateshead Shadow Pathfinder supported an innovative project that brought together two organisations – Positive Images and Gem Arts – who shared a vision of uniting communities through the power of music. The idea was to produce a CD with a compilation of tracks from the diverse community of musicians living in the Gateshead/Newcastle area. The project grew from around six individuals and groups to generate sufficient interest for a two-disk set to be made. One disk celebrates cultural diversity with contributing artists ranging from a group of East European Roma to refugees from Angola; the other brings together the music of seven different faith groups and includes a verbal introduction about each faith featured. Aside from the positive benefits of bringing together the artists themselves and providing support for them to play at bigger venues and record their music, the CD has proved to be an invaluable educational tool. It has been used to good effect in schools, youth groups and adult learning groups. An annual faith festival has been another outcome of this project.

Contact **Andrew Tinkler**, Positive Images
Tel 0191 420 3540
andrew@positiveimages.co.uk

or contact **Vikas Kumar**, The Sage Gateshead
Tel 0191 433 4605
vikas.kumar@musicnorth.org
www.musicnorth.org

**Thurrock Shadow Pathfinder:
using theatre to engage partners**

Building support for a multi-agency action plan to drive forward the community cohesion agenda was a key aim of a conference organised in Thurrock in April 2004. Delegates were drawn from the local authority and their external partners but many were relatively new to the concept of community cohesion. To help focus their minds the services of a specialist theatre company 'theatre *active*' were enlisted.

All attendees participated in a specially prepared interactive theatre workshop that aimed to challenge thinking on relevant issues and view these from different perspectives. Four actors previously briefed on the main issues around community cohesion in Thurrock took on different characters. Meanwhile, the audience was divided into four groups and took on the mind of one of the characters. At a certain point the prepared act stopped and groups instructed their character on how they should react and what they should say to move the action forward. Each group negotiated and agreed on the direction of their character – participants had different ideas about what they felt their character *ought* to say, but that was often different from what that character would *actually* say in particular situations. Participants found that the character they had taken on may not have been particularly likeable but could not change this because the important thing was to make that person realistic and their reactions true to life.

Feedback demonstrated this unusual approach challenged attitudes and provided an insight into the prejudices and perceptions of ordinary people facing everyday problems. It provoked a lively debate amongst delegates and helped to inform the discussion about the forward strategy later in the day. The technique had all the advantages of role-play without any of its accompanying anxieties, as the actors took all of the risks involved, leaving the

audience free to stand in the shoes of the characters and think collectively about attitudes and behaviour.

Contact **Vera Markos**, Thurrock Council
Tel 01375 652271
vmarkos@thurrock.gov.uk

or contact **Pete Marchant**, Director, theatre *active*
Tel 01279 422781
enquiries@theatreactive.com
www.theatreactive.com

Kirklees Pathfinder: Stories in a Suitcase

The 'Stories in a Suitcase' brought together people from Ravensthorpe, a suburb of Dewsbury, to share their experiences, learn about their collective past, discuss the present and to think about the future and how their community might be improved.

A small group of people wanting to celebrate the vibrant and unique multicultural history of Ravensthorpe approached Kirklees Community History Service in 2002. Working in partnership they sought to create an exhibition depicting the stories of the different people who have settled in Ravensthorpe over the years. A bilingual team from within the community interviewed over 40 families and quickly found that most, at some time in their history, were 'comers-in'. Employment in the mills of West Yorkshire drew people from Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Lancashire and other parts of Yorkshire during the 19th century. Italians, Polish, Russians and Ukrainians arrived after the Second World War, followed by Indian and Pakistani families in the 1950s and 60s. More recently, Bosnian and Kurdish refugees have made their home in the town.

Though reasons for arriving in Ravensthorpe were many and varied, most people brought with them hopes, dreams and good intentions as well as distinctive languages, cultures and beliefs. This all contributed to an inspirational exhibition, such was its

success a book followed in 2004. The stories demonstrated that people are not so very different after all, and 40 visions for the future, expressed by diverse contributors, have so much in common: a safe, clean, peaceful and friendly environment for their children.

Contact **Kim Strickson**, Community Education Officer
Tel 01484 223804
kim.strickson@kirklees.gov.uk
www.kirkleesmc.gov.uk (this includes details of how to obtain a copy of *Stories in a Suitcase – the book*)

More information

15.5 In September 2004, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport published *Engaging Communities through Sport and Culture*. It is available on their website at *www.dcms.gov.uk*

15.6 In June 2004, the ODPM published guidance on sport and neighbourhood renewal which underlined the fact that sport and physical activity can benefit renewal areas by creating positive opportunities for young people and engaging those who might otherwise be excluded:

- *Research Report 9: Joint Working in Sport and Neighbourhood Renewal*
  www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/formatteddoc.asp?id=696

- *Teaming Up: How joint working between sport and neighbourhood renewal practitioners can help improve deprived areas*
  www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/formatteddoc.asp?id=695

- *Sport, Physical Activity and Renewal Toolkit*
  www.renewal.net/toolkits/SportsToolkit/

16 education

16.1 Educational institutions have a key role in building cohesion. They are an important part of the community and can play a critical role in promoting the values of equality, diversity and mutual respect and understanding between people. There are four key ways that you can help to build community cohesion through the education sector:

1 Using the curriculum to promote shared values of respect for diversity. By targeting young people at an early stage, schools can help communities develop a common sense of belonging through raising awareness of other cultures.

2 Ensuring that those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities. Young people should leave the education system with the skills they need to progress in life, not only for themselves, but also for their families and their communities. It is critical to develop policy and practice at a local level which allows and encourages young people from all backgrounds to reach their full potential and to do as well as they can in school, further and higher education.

3 Providing a base for wider community participation. Schools and other educational institutions can be an important resource at the centre of communities. They have the potential to play a central role in providing opportunities for people to mix.

4 Promoting cross-cultural contact, through mixed intakes, school twinning and community-wide extra-curricular activities. Tolerance and respect for diversity is often shaped by these positive experiences of different cultures and faiths.

Community cohesion standards for schools

16.2 In September 2004, the Home Office, in collaboration with the Department for Education and Skills and the Commission for Racial Equality, published *Community Cohesion Education Standards for Schools*. The local authority and local education authority will find this a useful guide to how they can work with schools to build community cohesion.

16.3 The framework provides advice on how best to promote and mainstream community cohesion within schools through tackling discrimination and promoting good race relations by breaking down barriers whilst also focusing on raising educational attainment levels.

16.4 The standards set out four strategic aims:

1 close the attainment and achievement gap;

2 develop common values of citizenship based on dialogue, mutual respect and acceptance of diversity;

3 contribute to building good community relations and challenge all types of discrimination and inequality; and

4 remove the barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement.

Levers to assist local authorities

16.5 There are a number of levers which local authorities and the education sector can use, in particular to narrow the achievement gap between pupils from different ethnic origins:

- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 placed duties on schools to promote race equality, to have in place a written race equality policy, to introduce measures to assess the impact of their policies and to monitor the impact on pupils, staff and parents.

- *Pupil Level Annual Schools Census* published in January 2003 contains greatly improved data on pupil ethnic background. This data can be matched against achievement and socio-economic data. This will enable the tracking of individuals' progress so that value added data can be obtained.

- The teaching of citizenship in all primary schools and as a statutory subject in secondary schools. Citizenship education within the National

Curriculum develops and encourages pupils' understanding and mutual respect of each other's differences.

- Working with admissions authorities to ensure that all schools are open and attractive to different communities and do not create, or reinforce, segregation in the local area.

- Practical measures such as school twinning, to break down the barriers between communities.

Beyond the curriculum

16.6 An 'extended school' is one that provides a range of services and activities often beyond the school day to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community. Again, care needs to be taken to ensure that the extended school does not reinforce community segregation and that they are attractive and open to all sections of the community. These can range from childcare and lifelong learning opportunities to on site healthcare and social services provision. Extended schools have the potential to deliver many benefits that will positively impact on the community cohesion agenda including:

- opening up a range of facilities that many members of the wider community might not otherwise have access to. The use of premises and facilities by a wide range of users, including community groups can help bring together different sections of the community;

- attracting parents into the school to access services and providing an environment that promotes interaction between community members from different backgrounds. Making premises available for teaching in other languages and about different cultures is one of a number of positive steps that schools can undertake to forge stronger links with and between different communities, while at the same time enhancing pupils' education; and

- developing a focal point for the whole community.

16.7 Federated schools are groups of schools which work closely together to raise standards – both in a direct sense, by concentrating on teaching and learning, and in a broader sense through looking at community cohesion, leadership, professional development, behaviour and widening curriculum provision. Through working together in a collaborative and structured way, federations of schools can have a more significant positive impact on local communities than schools working alone. They can:

- provide opportunities for children in mono-cultural schools to work and socialise with children of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds eg through joint curriculum activities, residential trips;

- increase cross-cultural networking of parents through joint adult education classes; and

- enable schools to benefit from working with other schools with unique and specialised resources. For example, mainstream schools working closely with special schools, utilising their expertise in behaviour management through mentoring and teaching across schools.

16.8 The use of inter-school activities, particularly in areas of segregated schooling, can also go a long way to help raise awareness of other people's cultures, break down barriers and promote shared values.

Practical steps

- Make sure that all schools, colleges and other educational providers take action to develop and promote understanding and respect for the diverse range of cultures and faiths within the local area and in the UK as a whole.

- Ensure they take effective measures to address racial harassment and bullying.

- Ensure that any formal education utilises a curriculum

that recognises the contribution of the diverse cultures and faiths to the development of the UK.

- Ensure that local syllabuses on religious education promote awareness of the importance of good inter faith relationships and, in this respect, contribute to citizenship education.

- Ensure that the criteria and terms of offering a place at school, or placement at a college or work based learning reflect the local catchment area or produce a mixed intake.

- Ensure schools promote cross-cultural and inter faith contact within their own parental network.

- Ensure that the disparities in educational attainment are being addressed (in terms of teaching and by use of role modelling and mentoring programmes).

- Obtain 'value added' data on the educational attainment levels of the various groups (not just broken down by by gender and ethnicity, but by socio-economic status also) in the community.

- Encourage all schools to develop school twinning and exchanges, to include teaching and learning projects, with schools with different intakes to promote cross cultural and inter faith contact, respect and understanding.

- Further encourage schools to develop curriculum and extra-curriculum cross cultural programmes and activities, eg for arts and sport, parental schemes.

- Actively involve parents from different communities in pre-school activities and out of school childcare. Existing programmes such as Sure Start have made a significant contribution to promoting community cohesion through a range of childcare and early education increasingly alongside family and health services.

- Assist the review of further education and higher education provision at a local level to ensure that it provides equal opportunities.

- Use Adult and Community Learning to encourage greater awareness, understanding and participation amongst 'mature' learners.

Stoke: Mitchell High School

Mitchell High School is an example of how a school can benefit from developing extended services and activities.

The school is located in the most deprived ward in Stoke. It serves a largely white, hard-to-reach community where unemployment is high. In 2001, six per cent of students attained 5+ A-C GCSEs, a fifth left without any qualifications. Over half the students received free school meals, staff recruitment was difficult, there was poor pupil attendance and parental aspirations of the school were low. The school was under threat of closure.

However, developing into an 'extended school' has resulted in dramatic improvements for both the students and the wider community. Under the leadership of the Headteacher, Mitchell developed a strategy to embed multi-agency working across a full service extended school, harness community energy and focus on the school agenda on inclusion, achievement, participation and aspirations. By 2003, student attainment of 5+ A-C GCSE grades had increased to 30 per cent. Student attendance has improved greatly, career opportunities within the school for local parents have been created and provision of specialist support for families is available.

Contact **Sue Wedgwood**,
Stoke Local Education Authority
Tel 01782 235245
sue.wedgwood@swann.stoke.gov.uk

or contact **Richard Page**, Extended Schools Team, Department for Education and Skills
Tel 020 7273 5622
richard.page@dfes.gov.uk

Plymouth Pathfinder:
6th Form Learning Conference

Plymouth's community cohesion pathfinder has targeted schools as a route to tackling the myths around new communities in the Plymouth area. Initially aiming at over 11 year-olds, the pathfinder is now targeting younger people in the hope that negative attitudes towards new communities can be mitigated before children reach the secondary school phase of their education.

The pathfinder has also focused on sixth formers, with the introduction of a programme of sixth form learning conferences. These are built as a result of a successful event held recently at Lipson Community College. The event allowed pupils to explore issues of community cohesion and identity with those issues in their own way, using mediums such as music, drama and video. This proved to be an excellent tool to engage with young people and to listen to what their needs are. It has raised awareness amongst young people, and they have identified ways in which they can provide peer to peer support on cohesion issues, and to new pupils in the area.

The programme is seen as a successful collaboration between local cross-sector partners.

Contact **Peter Aley**
peter.aley@phdu.nhs.uk

Leicester City Council:
young, gifted and equal

Leicester is the only council to have achieved Beacon status for three consecutive years. It achieved Beacon status for community cohesion, to match the recognition for its work in promoting racial equality. The council introduced the Young, Gifted and Equal (YGE) initiative in a few years ago, and has built on this since by twinning with Wigan (an excellent CPA rated authority) to improve educational standards.

YGE is a targeted and specifically designed racial equality auditing toolkit for schools. It has been developed by the council's education department in partnership with Leicester Racial Equality Council (LREC). The toolkit has been circulated to all schools across the city. It provides a common framework for the development of racial equality that can be used by all schools in the city, including those that have predominantly white students and those with special needs. It provides support to schools in developing good racial equality and diversity policies, procedures and practices, and ensures that awareness and practice of racial equality is an integral part of all school activities.

Contact *education.policy@leicester.gov.uk*

City of Sunderland Council:
'One City, Many Religions'

One City, Many Religions was a video documentary commissioned by the City of Sunderland Education Directorate, funded by Government Office North East, and produced by a Sunderland company, Media 19.

A steering group that included local representatives of the Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths, a representative of the City's SACRE (who is a Christian),and representatives of the funding organisations and the LEA, was responsible for the basic underlying brief for the project. This relied heavily on featuring local people with local accents in local settings, and using them to communicate the reality and some of the doctrine of their faiths and what it means in practice in north-east England in the 21st century.

The intention was to dispel some of the current misperceptions of these religions as exotic and alien; to spell out that they offer practical and relevant codes to be followed and celebrated by young people of approximately the same age as the film's target audience – pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3, aged between eight and 14. Copies of the video, with an accompanying pack of support material will be provided to all schools in the city.

Contact **Nancy Rios**
nancy.rios@sunderland.gov.uk

Further information

16.9 *Community Cohesion Standards for Schools* are available at *www.communitycohesion.gov.uk*

16.10 The DfES published guidance in October 2002 on setting up extended services for schools, LEAs and other partners. It is available online at *www.teachernet.gov.uk*/*extendedschools* An Extended Schools Support Service has also been set up to provide focused support and advice to LEAs, schools and others involved in providing extended services in schools. Further details are available from *extended.schools@continyou.org.uk*

17 children and young people

17.1 Engaging with children and young people is essential to building cohesive communities because they are the future of your community. By encouraging in them a sense of belonging, ownership and responsibility for their local area, you are making a sustainable investment in community cohesion. Young people can be powerful catalysts for change.

17.2 On the other hand, if young people are disenfranchised from mainstream society or if they are disaffected, this can reinforce division and fragmentation between different groups. This can be manifested in anti-social behaviour and in conflict between groups of young people from different backgrounds or between young people and older people.

17.3 Engaging with young people and giving them a chance to interact with others will require you to listen to them and respond to their needs and concerns. You should consider how you can give them a bigger say and a bigger stake in local decision-making and how you can make consultation interesting and relevant to them. The capacity of staff and institutions to connect with children and young people may need to be addressed in staff training. Young people are often at an early stage in understanding their own identity and how they relate to the different communities they belong to and working with them will require sensitivity.

Working in partnership

17.4 The youth service, Connexions and voluntary and community organisations can be invaluable in providing local facilities and organising activities. The quality and quantity of youth service provision is an important component in building community cohesion because it provides a way for young people to get involved in their local area. At the same time, it is important to remember that not all young people use youth services and you should ensure that community cohesion strategies make provision for including and reaching out to them as well.

17.5 Youth workers have a crucial role to play in helping to build trust and respect across communities. Youth provision must be accessible to people from different backgrounds and avoid underlining or supporting segregation. Tailor provision so that it helps people from different backgrounds to interact and monitor take-up by socio-economic and ethnic group. Local authorities may need to put in place specific development programmes to identify, train and mentor youth workers from groups that are under-represented.

17.6 Youth services should work in partnership with key local stakeholders. There is particular scope for coming up with innovative methods of involving private partners such as football clubs and cultural organisations. This should include effective engagement with Connexions, programmes funded under the Children's Fund and other initiatives which support young people. The government's Transforming Youth Work Agenda sets out a lead, which youth services can take in engaging young people across the community.

17.7 Connexions partnerships provide tailored support and advice to young people on learning and careers, as well as personal, health and relationship issues. This can be particularly important for young people who have become disaffected. Through linking with Connexions partnerships, local authorities can make sure that their work is fully responsive to community cohesion issues and to take the views of young people is crucial.

17.8 The Community Champions Fund is a Department of Education and Skills initiative which supports individuals who are involved in changing their communities for the better. The Pathfinder Young Community Champions Fund (PYCCF) focuses particularly on young people (16-25) and was developed as a specialist youth stream to ensure engagement with young individuals in the 14 selected Home Office Community Cohesion Pathfinder areas. The pilot provided small grants (up to £2000) to young volunteers aged 16-25 to enable young people to identify and undertake community activity relevant

to their area and interests. The pilot ended in Autumn 2004 and the DfES are exploring mainstreaming the lessons within the Community Champions Fund from April 2005.

Practical steps

- Use statutory and voluntary agencies to develop cross-cultural contact at all levels.

- Ensure there is a cross-cutting/joined-up approach to children and young people that recognises the benefits to other sectors. This should include but not be limited to the youth services, Connexions and education.

- Ensure that service design and delivery is responsive to the points raised by young people and meets their diverse needs.

- Engage with young people by tapping into what stimulates them – sport, drama, art, music and IT.

- Engage with disaffected young people using peers and positive role models.

- Raise the profile of young people. Use your press contacts to tell good news stories about their contribution to the local community.

- Young people are capable of assuming and discharging responsibilities given the opportunity: develop processes to ensure consultation with a diverse range of young people and involve them in strategic decisions that will affect their lives.

- Provide diversity awareness, race equality and community cohesion training and support for staff involved in youth provision.

- Ensure youth workers from a diverse range of backgrounds are employed in youth services.

- Provide opportunities for young people to engage and interact with other young people from different backgrounds.

- Encourage initiatives that develop the leadership potential of children and young people that also work to empower them. Provide routes for them into mainstream decision-making processes and structures.

- Promote values of tolerance and respect between communities.

- Consider the possibility for providing more services which are 'co-owned' by people from diverse backgrounds.

Southwark Pathfinder: working with the VCS

Southwark Pathfinder has used their project to strengthen networks and groups, which can promote principles of cohesion and youth participation. The development of these groups also served to ensure the mainstreaming and sustainability of the pathfinder work and have supported existing networks of youth providers.

Southwark also developed a partnership with statutory and voluntary sector agencies such as Save the Children to support the mainstreaming of direct youth involvement in policy and practice in sectors such as health, education and policing. A participation group now exists which brings together all those who seek to increase the participation of children and young people in service delivery and development planning in the borough. The vision of this group is:

- to see children and young people as active citizens who in partnership with adults contribute to the shape, structures and processes around them; and

- to create a culture of appropriate and supported children and young people's involvement in Southwark leading to their further empowerment.

The group works to set principles of good practice to achieve this vision and to lobby for change.

Southwark Pathfinder concluded that where youth is the focus of community cohesion, adults must learn to share power with young people. Their mainstreaming initiative is designed to bring young people directly into the planning process, simultaneously increasing the sustainability of committee cohesion initiatives with empowerment of young people.

Contact **Jenny Wingate**, Southwark Borough Council
Tel 020 7525 7425
jenny.wingate@southwark.gov.uk

Bury Pathfinder: 'Getting Them Young'

In Bury, working with young people and children has formed one of the central elements of the pathfinder project. 'Getting them young' is a predominant theme. They have funded a wide range of social, sport and leisure initiatives aimed at getting children and young people from different communities and abilities, to provide opportunities to get involved with each other. For example, tennis courts in local parks, including coaching, football coaching and tournaments, and a 'Party in the Park' event with music and food and a families and children to get together.

In addition, a number of projects have been developed to work in schools, with all children, in particular asylum seekers and refugees, to counteract racism, and the vilification of asylum seekers in the media and the misrepresentation of facts about asylum issues. Some examples are:

• Racial Harmony Packs – 'Kool Kidz' have been developed and distributed to every child in primary schools in Bury;

• quarterly newsletter on cohesion and diversity produced for all schools;

• Refugee and Asylum Seekers 'Citizenship' Resource Packs which includes video/DVD and information for all schools, with training given to teachers to support them to deliver lessons; and

• a resource pack for mainstream teachers to deliver such lessons has been produced.

Contact **Safina Rashid**, Principal Policy Officer, Bury MBC
Tel 0161 253 5192
s.rashid@bury.gov.uk

Plymouth Pathfinder: celebrating difference

Plymouth Pathfinder worked with many partner organisations and agencies to run a 'Celebrating Difference' event for black, minority ethnic and white young people aged 11 to 18 years. A number of creative workshops were organised to explore and celebrate the ethnic diversity of Plymouth and the wider community, to encourage young people to share aspects of their own culture and learn about other cultures, to learn new skills and to raise awareness of anti-racism and anti-discrimination work. The event was intended to be a celebration in its widest sense and to provide a safe fun environment for young people to showcase their talents.

Briefing packs were sent to schools, colleges and a wider range of organisations, showing the variety of activities, workshops and performances available. In the event the arts based workshops were found to be more popular than the issue based ones. Transport from the city centre was laid on and French, Portuguese and Kurdish translators were made available at the event. Around 3-400 young people attended and evaluations were very positive about the event.

Contact **Sue Stratton** or **Carola Salvadori**, Plymouth Race Equality Council
Tel 01752 312640

Peterborough Pathfinder: side by side

Two young people attending a local youth action group asked what they could do about negative perceptions of asylum seekers and refugees in Peterborough. Together with youth workers and other young people, they designed a programme of activities to be delivered to Year 6 primary school children to teach them the facts about asylum seekers and refugees.

The activities in school proved so popular it was decided to expand the programme. A full-time member of staff was employed to run the sessions assisted by a group of young people aged between 13 and 21. The sessions consist of a 2 ½ hour programme of activities linked to the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and youth work Curriculum. It discusses the issues around asylum seekers and refugees through three different workshops:

- Art – children draw a picture to welcome a new person to the country.

- Drama – children explore how it would feel to leave your home, family and belongings behind and make a journey to a place of safety.

- Video – children are given the opportunity to hear the stories of other young people who have left their country in search of safety.

During the session, the facilitator also explains the legal definitions of 'asylum seeker', 'refugee' and 'illegal immigrant' and look at reasons why people come to claim asylum.

The programme is run in partnership with Cambridgeshire Constabulary's Community Safety Unit. A police officer attends sessions in every school and discusses the law and racism.

The programme is now delivered to 95 per cent of Peterborough primary schools. It encourages children not to 'judge a person until they know them' and promotes a better level of understanding between young people, asylum seekers and the population of Peterborough.

Contact **Caroline Dolby**, Peterborough Youth Service
Tel 01733 746048 or 07973 370194
caroline.dolby@peterborough.gov.uk
www.positiveyouthaction.com

Liverpool Community Spirit

Liverpool Community Spirit is a partnership of 11 local representatives of faith and cultural communities in inner-city Liverpool. Their mission is to draw on the insights of Liverpool's faith communities to enhance a cohesive and inclusive community spirit across the city. Their activities include adult learner's courses (accredited by OCN) on 'Community Spirit', exploring diverse faith heritage, etiquette and common community values, school workshops (both primary and secondary) exploring the faith dimensions of community and citizenship, establishing and facilitating Liverpool's Faith Community Network and giving a voice to Liverpool's diverse faith communities in Neighbourhood Renewal and local service delivery.

They also run active citizenship projects which are led by the Liverpool Community Spirit Youth Council, young representatives of the different faith/cultural communities drawn from participating schools and recent school leavers:

"Liverpool Community Spirit (LCS) brings together young people from different faith and cultural groups in Liverpool 8. We do different projects like helping primary school children in a reading partnership scheme. We also take part in visits to different places to learn about our community. We have been to a mosque, a synagogue, a parish church, the gurdwara, the Caribbean Centre, the Liverpool 8 Law Centre and the Somali Centre.

Another project we did was called Altar8, where people were invited to express their spirituality by placing objects on a blank 'altar' space. Over 100 people took part. I got involved with the LCS because I wanted to learn about community spirit and make a positive contribution to it. Being part of the Youth Council has enabled me to learn about other faiths and cultures and use my skills in working with the community and working as part of a team." – Rabietoo, Christian

Contact **Matthew Thompson**,
Liverpool Community Spirit
Tel 0151 709 3171
info@communityspirit.go-plus.net

Case study taken from *Connect: different faiths shared values*

Further information

17.9 The Inter Faith Network published *Connect: Different Faith Shared Values* in 2004 in partnership with TimeBank and the National Youth Agency. It is an action guide for young people about making connections and building bridges of friendship and understanding between people of the different and distinct religions in the UK today. The publication is available at *www.interfaith.co.uk/connect/index.htm*

17.10 The Department for Education and Skills' Children and Young Peoples Unit has produced a video made by young people which can be used to support teachers, youth workers and young people. This can be viewed at *www.cypu.gov.uk/corporate/participation/communitycohesion.cfm*

17.11 The National Youth Agency has a range of publications available at *www.nya.org.uk* including: *Justice, Equality, Our World* which is aimed at supporting young people's active involvement in strengthening communities and *Hear by right – standards for the active involvement of children and young people* (with the LGA) which includes a template for mapping and planning organisational change.

18 older people and intergenerational cohesion

18.1 Older people have much to contribute to and much to gain from community cohesion. There are increasing numbers of fit and active older people in communities and they bring significant resources in terms of knowledge, skills and experience, to many projects and initiatives. As the Audit Commission/BGOP report *Older People – Independence and Well-being: The Challenge for Public Services*[13] points out, many older people want to take an active part in making choices about their own lives and about the communities they are part of. On the other hand, where communities are divided, older people can suffer from fear, isolation and feelings of disempowerment. Local authorities should consider how to involve and support them within community cohesion policies and programmes.

Tackling discrimination

18.2 Like many other groups, 'older people' are not a homogenous group and they will be members of many other different communities. However older people can face discrimination and exclusion from the mainstream and not just on the grounds of age: Help the Aged research found that one in four older people felt that they had faced age discrimination at some point. Older people who are also a member of a minority group can sometimes face 'multiple discrimination', for example through language barriers.

18.3 In reaching out to the communities in your local area, you must ensure that you are including a diverse range of older people. This may involve making special efforts to involve them in consultations or considering accessibility problems they may have in using public services and combating 'ageist' assumptions made in service delivery. When planning service delivery, you must look ahead at the way in which your local community may change over the coming years: one of the main demographic trends in the UK is the ageing of the population. In the future,

the older population will also be more ethnically diverse. There are some services which older people may use more than the rest of the population, such as health and social care services; you must ensure that these are accessible and culturally appropriate.

Promoting intergenerational projects

18.4 Stereotypes about both older and younger people can be prolific. Older people are sometimes fearful of younger people. Younger people may not always see what older people have to offer. Both have a lot to offer and building community cohesion should take into account the need and benefits of bringing these groups together. Intergenerational work can be crucial in addressing the myths that proliferate about different age groups and can help to foster mutual understanding and tolerance between groups in the community. In many places, schools have come to rely on the extra support which older people bring to the classroom, younger families may also appreciate the help of the parenting skills of older people. There have been successful projects that have allowed both groups, older and younger, to share their experiences and develop new skills and to diffuse potential tensions between age groups within minority ethnic and faith communities.

18.5 Age Concern have established an Intergenerational Network to provide an opportunity for local projects to share good practice examples and increase the visibility of intergenerational work.

Practical steps

- When setting your baseline for community cohesion, make sure that you are measuring the age demographic of your communities and mapping this information against other factors.

- Assess the appropriateness of current and future service provision, in terms of service planning,

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13 The report is available at *www.bgop.org.uk*

monitoring and evaluation. Look, in particular, at accessibility and affordability issues.

- Provide training and awareness raising for frontline staff and policy-makers.

- Address potential 'ageist' attitudes of those delivering services.

- Set up intergenerational projects bringing older and younger people together. You could involve local schools or youth services.

- Consider if you need to strengthen the capacity of VCS organisations which provide support to older people, especially to those from disadvantaged communities.

- Make sure that a diverse range of older people is specifically included in any consultation. This will help to ensure that there is a closer fit between demand/need and provision of services.

Southwark Pathfinder

Part of Southwark's community cohesion strategy has involved working with young and older people to explore inter-racial, inter-generational and inter-estate issues. 'George' is a play exploring identity across generations and races developed and performed by youngsters and elders from two theatre groups with memberships of distinct age groups. A diverse cast has successfully performed 'George' in different venues across Southwark with each performance attracting equally diverse audiences. All who attended were encouraged to remain after and talk to the actors about their experiences associated with the production. Members of both theatre groups, though apprehensive when their respective groups came together, are now extremely positive about the experience and feel they have developed a greater understanding and respect for another generation. The two groups are going to come together again for future productions.

Contact **Jenny Wingate**, Southwark Borough Council
Tel 020 7525 7425
jenny.wingate@southwark.gov.uk

Trans Age Action Lancashire

Trans Age Action Lancashire was launched in 2002, funded by Burnley's single regeneration budget. It uses the time, skills and experience of older people to support young people from two of the most deprived wards in the area, where there are high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour and a shortage of strong adult role models. Twenty-five volunteers work with under-13s in primary schools, playgroups and youth clubs. Many also volunteer during the school holidays to help with summer play and craft activities. These schemes help keep young people occupied during the long summer break and offer a relaxed environment for volunteers to get to know them.

community cohesion

The project is part of the Age Concern Intergenerational Network, which is based on the recognition of the potential for older people to benefit the young and for the need to rebuild bridges and contact between the generations. The network recruits and trains a very diverse group of older volunteers before placing them in school and other community-based programmes, acting as 'champions' and role models for young people, supporting them academically, socially and emotionally and challenging stereotypes of old age through their engagement.

Contact **Christine Bank**, Trans Age Action Co-ordinator, Age Concern Lancashire
christine@outreach.fsnet.co.uk

Age Concern Barrow-in-Furness: Building Bridges Project

The Building Bridges Project aimed to address a widening gap between the ages, resulting in the breakdown of positive relations between young and older people. Specifically it sought to address the fears of older people about youth crime and perceptions, which can stem from misunderstanding and a lack of positive contact between generations.

Working closely with junior and secondary schools and colleges on a wide variety of projects that support the National Curriculum, younger and older people are supported to share time, skills and experience with a view to improving mutual trust and respect. For example, the project recently completed an intergenerational teaching pack for use in the Citizenship Curriculum, which includes a video set around Halloween time. The pack aims to help younger people explore the potential impact of anti-social behaviour and envisage what it might be like for older people 'on the other side of the door'.

Schools have responded very positively and have shown an innovative approach in expanding the

project – for example running mixed-age philosophy sessions.

Contact **Paul Jenkins**, Special Projects Manager, Age Concern Barrow and District
specialprojects@dsl.pipex.com

Further information

Other resources: *Intergenerational Community Development Practice Guide* which is available from the Beth Johnson Foundation at *www.bjf.org.uk/Libraries/Local/66/Docs/Inter%20community%20development.pdf*

19 asylum seekers and refugees

19.1 Incoming communities, whether dispersed asylum seekers, refugees or other migrants, can result in rapid changes to the ethnic or cultural 'mix' of a geographic community. Unprepared, communities can feel threatened by new arrivals, which can give rise to tensions. When thinking about the impact of asylum seekers and refugees on community cohesion, you will need to think about the needs not only of the asylum seeker, refugee and migrant communities but also those of the settled community.

19.2 The benefits to actively managing this process are:

- a reduction of tension on the ground in dispersal areas;

- an increase in the contribution to the community from newcomers;

- a sense of well-being for newcomers in their new communities; and

- local communities feeling informed and involved in the settlement process.

19.3 This is underpinned by your duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote good race relations between people of different racial groups. This duty will apply to relations between asylum seekers and refugees, and the local community, including members of other ethnic minorities.

Raising awareness

19.4 You should have a joined-up strategy in place to prepare the ground for the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees. Where communities are educated about the cultures and backgrounds of newly arrived asylum seekers and genuinely consulted about their arrival, they tend to be more understanding and accepting of differences and better able to empathise with their new neighbours.

19.5 The process of raising awareness of incoming communities should involve local agencies including schools, youth services and community centres. Local press and media can also be an important means of communicating the experiences of new arrivals and explaining their circumstances. You should enlist the help of other supportive networks for asylum seekers and refugees in working with the local media.

19.6 You will also have an important role to play in 'myth busting' – explaining to the local community the facts about asylum seekers, what benefits they receive and what benefits they do not. Communities should be educated about what it means to be recognised as a refugee – that someone has demonstrated a well founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

Asylum seekers

19.7 Although integration, in the full sense of the word, can only begin when a refugee has received their decision, community cohesion must be taken into account from the beginning of the process. The Home Office's National Asylum Support Service (NASS) dispersal programme has brought new challenges for local areas and local authorities need to ensure that they are actively managing their part of the dispersal process, to reduce potential community tensions.

19.8 Incoming asylum seekers will have an impact on local service provision and local authorities will need to ensure that they are providing adequate information to the local health and education sectors, for example. Local authorities will need to ensure they are reaching out and supporting not only those asylum seekers who have been dispersed to local authority accommodation but also those in private sector accommodation.

19.9 In reaching out, supporting and providing services to asylum seekers, you should consider the capacity of the voluntary and community sector,

which can often provide valuable support in this area.

Partnership working

19.10 In many areas, managing the dispersal process will begin with your work with the Regional Consortia. This should be the starting point for mainstreaming community cohesion principles within any decisions you and your partners take with regard to asylum seekers and refugees.

19.11 Sharing information will be essential: you should consider setting up a local multi-agency forum to bring together all your key service delivery partners, along with the Home Office National Asylum Support Service (NASS), private asylum seeker accommodation providers and the voluntary and community sector. Meetings should look at the number of new arrivals and provide an opportunity for agencies to consider their impact on the area.

19.12 Multi-agency forums can also be a useful place to consider and address the impact of asylum seekers and refugees on community tensions. Asylum seekers can frequently be a target of racist attacks and other crime. You should consider setting up a multi-agency approach to tackling racial harassment in a joined up way and encouraging asylum seekers to report any incidents against them. You may also need to address the issues through your local crime and disorder partnership.

Refugee integration

19.13 Local authorities and their partners will have an important role in ensuring that refugees are empowered to achieve their full potential as members of British society, to contribute fully to the community and to become able fully to exercise the rights and responsibilities that they share with other residents. This may involve language training, helping refugees to gain appropriate employment, ensuring their personal safety and facilitating their access to services, including housing.

19.14 Facilitating integration will require you to introduce newly arrived communities to the way that systems work. This will include publicising community and leisure activities that can be accessed locally as well as other mainstream service provision. Many new arrivals may have particular skills that may be of benefit to the local community if put to use in voluntary work for example. The benefits of volunteering are large, it can help develop social skills and self esteem, to help asylum seekers and refugees feel at home in unfamiliar communities but also to demonstrate to the 'local' communities the benefits that new arrivals can bring.

19.15 Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are not homogeneous groups. It will be up to you to communicate with individuals in your area, to find out their needs and their concerns. Refugee community organisations and local faith groups can play a vital role here by building links between refugees and the wider community. They can provide refugees with support and advice about integrating within the local area and represent refugees in formal and informal consultations. Local authorities should consider the potential for capacity building such organisations in their area.

Practical steps

- Run refugee awareness courses for the local population, setting out facts about asylum seekers and refugees and migrants and their stories.

- Produce leaflets explaining the backgrounds and cultures of asylum seekers that can be placed in public areas. The leaflets could include a 'mythbusting' section.

- Make it clear to other local residents where they can get more information about the refugee and asylum process. Actively address any concerns they may raise.

- Involve the settled community in design and delivery of refugee orientation programmes and engage the local population in the induction process: such as

organising sports competitions that encourage integrated teams of asylum seekers and local residents or encouraging asylum seekers to explain their reasons for coming to the UK.

- Provide opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees to meet with members of the local community to encourage mutual understanding. This could include formal and informal meetings such as cultural or sporting events.

- Set up a local multi-agency forum to bring together key partners to address asylum and refugee issues in a way that takes account of community cohesion issues.

- Develop an effective and comprehensive orientation programme for new arrivals, which includes all the information relevant to their needs, as well as information which will help to ensure their safety and enable better integration.

- Provide new arrivals with information relating to the culture of the 'local' community, addressing local 'rubbing' points. Make sure that the information you provide is culturally and religiously appropriate and points newcomers to services sensitive to their needs.

- Consult refugee-run organisations about changes in policy or practice that will affect them. Establish mechanisms to aid consultation – encourage the establishment of refugee community organisation networks, for example.

- Work with local voluntary organisations and refugee self-help organisations to identify and meet the needs of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

- Work with the local media to encourage balanced and accurate portrayals of asylum seekers and refugees and the contribution they make to our communities.

- Introduce a programme of volunteering for asylum seekers matching their skills to those shortages in the local areas where possible. Explain the benefits of volunteering and the local organisations that can help them obtain a volunteering post. This may include offering support and advice to incoming communities.

- Ensure staff, housing officers for example, understand refugees' entitlements, and issue guidance to ensure a consistent approach is followed.

The City of Sunderland Council: The Hive Project – new beginnings

'New Beginnings' is a group of local people and agencies who work together to address the needs and issues of asylum seeker families. The group – co-ordinated by Barnado's – was developed as a co-ordinated community response to welcome and integrate new families. The good work has been recognised nationally as an excellent example of community development practice.

New Beginnings took a proactive approach from the outset in preparing for the integration of new families. Community and youth development work was carried out including myth busting, cultural awareness raising, the collection of clothing, toys, household furniture and essentials, and the development of a welcome pack for newcomers. Examples of further services which the group have organised include: drop in centres, ESOL classes, a be-friending scheme and lobbying on immigration issues via local councillors. The New Beginnings project has published a *Good Practice for working with Asylum Seekers and Refugees* document which will be invaluable for any agency working with new families. Underpinning the work of the group are the principles of empowerment of local citizens in making decisions about their community and the development of supportive relationships to tackle the root causes of deprivation.

Contact **Audrey Bewick**, Deputy Children's Services Manager, The Hive Project
Tel 0191 584 5729

Plymouth Pathfinder: addressing racism through drama

Lipson Community College and BME TR2 Drama Group came together for a drama performance called 'Dare to be Different' as part of Lipson Community College's anti-racist programme. It used mime, dance and video to portray the lives and journeys of asylum seekers coming to Britain, giving a vivid insight into the traumas of such experiences and dispelling many myths that surround asylum seeker, refugee and immigrant communities. Following inspiring and moving performances, the cast engaged in dialogue with the audience.

Contact **Olwyn Foot**, BME TR2 Drama Group
Tel 01752 230377

or contact **Shaaron Sanderson**,
Lipson Community College
Tel 01752 671318

Middlesbrough Pathfinder: Welcome Project

The Middlesbrough Pathfinder undertook an allotment project for asylum seekers and refugees which aimed to break down barriers and improve English and confidence. Participants in the project used skills from their home country on how to grow produce, to learn from each other and celebrate differences of culture, food and languages.

Contact **Jazz Singh** or **Joanne Simms**,
Welcome Project
Tel 01642 354145

Southampton City Council: refugee conference

Southampton City Council arranged a refugee conference to bring together key agencies and new communities in the city. It focused primarily on cultural orientation and meeting the needs of refugee communities through partnership working. Eighty-one people attended including approximately 27 refugee leaders and representatives from two of the three main refugee communities as well as smaller refugee community organisations.

The conference had a number of positive outcomes. It gave refugee communities a much-needed boost and a sense of recognition as well as a better understanding of the council and other statutory agencies. It gave the council a comprehensive picture of refugee communities and the issues, concerns and needs which they have.

The opportunity for dialogue fostered a sense of community cohesion. In addition a number of concrete actions and agreements which were decided upon, including a booklet 'Welcome to Britain'.

Contact **Don John**, Southampton City Council
Tel 023 8083 2274
don.john@southampton.gov.uk

Blackburn with Darwen: working through a multi-agency forum

Blackburn with Darwen co-ordinate service provision for asylum seekers and refugees through a multi-agency forum which brings together the agencies and individuals working with asylum seekers and refugees throughout the borough. The forum assists in co-ordinating services, responding to community cohesion issues as they arise and avoiding duplication.

Blackburn with Darwen have done a number of things to help support asylum seekers and refugees who come to live in the area. A welcome event is held on arrival and information is offered relating to local amenities. Attendees meet police officers, the primary care trust asylum seekers health team, the education department and the asylum support team.

A physical 'Tour of the Town' is also undertaken. A programme, known as the 'Story Teller' initiative, has been established to improve English, build confidence and enable asylum seekers to tell their stories about their life experiences here and in their home country, and is operated through a partnering arrangement with local libraries.

The local authority works with the regional National Asylum Support Service (NASS) office to run a 'surgery' system for asylum seekers every fortnight. The surgeries deal with issues arising over NASS support and managing the end of the asylum seeking process, such as move on from NASS accommodation and accessing mainstream support. The surgeries have also been used for reporting incidents of harassment or violence. This has enabled the local authority to develop a closer working relationship with NASS and to make sure that they deliver an equal service to all asylum seekers supported by NASS including those accommodated by private providers.

Contact **Jill Tulasiewicz**, Head of Support Services, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Tel 01254 585182
jill.tulasiewicz@blackburn.gov.uk

or contact **Peter Mulholland**, Asylum Support Team Leader, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Tel 01254 5857296
peter.mulholland@blackburn.gov.uk

More information

19.16 The Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate website contains useful information including facts on the asylum and immigration process at *www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk*

19.17 The Home Office recently completed a consultation on a draft national strategy for refugee integration: *Integration Matters*. A final strategy will be published shortly and will be available on the Home Office website.

20 Gypsies and Travellers

20.1 The terms 'Gypsy' and 'Traveller' describe many different and distinct groups including Roma Gypsies, Scottish Travellers, Irish Travellers, New Age Travellers and occupational travellers. Gypsies and Travellers can be nomadic or partly nomadic or settled – ethnically or culturally people may belong to Gypsy or Traveller communities even if they do not travel. Whether settled or nomadic, Gypsy and Traveller communities can often be isolated from other communities and from mainstream service provision and viewed with suspicion in areas where they live.

20.2 Local authorities can play a key role, in partnership with other agencies, to facilitate communication and interaction between settled and travelling communities and to ensure that travellers are appropriately advised and informed about involvement in local community life and the rest of the local community respect Gypsy and Travellers cultures and traditions. Your duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations between people of different racial groups specifically applies here – Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised BME groups under the terms of the Act.

20.3 In particular, local authorities should consider how they work with the local media to ensure that their reporting of Gypsy and Traveller issues is balanced and non-inflammatory. You should encourage the media to correct any false or negative stereotypes – Gypsies and Travellers are frequently victims of racism. Many in local communities will need to develop a greater understanding about the culture and history of Gypsy and Traveller populations. Schools, youth services and community centres might invite Traveller representatives to talk to pupils about their background, experiences and way of life.

Accommodation

20.4 The exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers is often linked, although not confined, to accommodation issues. Nomadic Gypsies and Travellers can find it difficult to maintain continuity in accessing service provision when moving from site to site and without a formal address it can be difficult to register with schools or health services.

20.5 Where Gypsies and Travellers lack suitable accommodation, this can underline their exclusion further. Research published by the ODPM in July 2003 identified a need for more authorised Gypsy/Traveller sites.

20.6 The Housing Bill currently before parliament introduces a requirement for Gypsy and Traveller issues to be included in local authority housing strategies. Gypsy and Traveller issues should also be considered in any planning and homelessness strategies as well as any race equality strategies. From a legal perspective, under section 175(2) of the Housing Act 1996, a person is homeless if they have accommodation but it consists of a moveable structure and there is no place where they are entitled or permitted to place it or live in. This means that Travellers on unauthorised sites, if they have no alternatives, are homeless.

20.7 The Housing Bill also introduces a requirement to include Gypsies and Travellers in the Local Housing Assessment process carried out by local authorities. Guidance on Local Housing Assessment is currently being revised and the new guidance will set out a number of core issues which should be taken into account when considering the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community. It will also recommend an appropriate methodology for carrying out such an assessment.

20.8 With regard to the establishment of private Gypsy and Traveller sites, the ODPM is currently undertaking a review of Planning Circular 1/94 (Gypsy Sites and Planning). It applies equally to local authorities' own sites and to applications for planning permission from Gypsies themselves or others wishing to develop land for use as a Gypsy caravan site. It is anticipated that a revised draft circular will be published in the autumn for comment, with a view to having a new circular in place by spring 2005.

Other issues

20.9 You should consider whether Gypsies and Travellers in your local area have similar life opportunities to members of other communities and full access to services that are culturally appropriate to them.

20.10 You should think, in particular, about access to education. This can be difficult when communities are travelling, leading to interrupted learning. Gypsy and Traveller children can face racism and bullying when they do attend school. They may need extra encouragement and support to help them with admission and maintaining a regular attendance. Only an estimated 20 per cent of Traveller children of secondary age are regularly in school. *Aiming High*, a DfES strategy, seeks to raise the achievement of BME pupils and specifically focuses on the needs of Gypsy and Traveller pupils. This is accompanied by a guide: *Aiming High: Raising the Attainment of Gypsy Traveller Pupils*. Traveller education services are funded in almost every area to provide special support for Gypsy and Traveller education opportunities and they and youth workers do a great deal of advocacy work on behalf of Traveller families.

20.11 The ODPM is currently conducting a thorough review of its Gypsy and Traveller policies, which will report to ministers late in 2004. The review is evaluating the need for further site provision and is looking at a range of measures to encourage more publicly provided and private sites.

Practical steps

- Ensure that your service provision is culturally acceptable and accessible to Gypsies and Travellers.

- Consult with your local Gypsy and Traveller communities. Consider imaginative ways to do so – some Gypsies and Travellers can have problems with literacy due to long term exclusion from mainstream education.

- Gypsies and Traveller communities may be suspicious about established authority, particularly if their only contact with agencies such as the police has been through evictions from unauthorised sites. Consider how you can overcome this, for example by reporting racist incidents.

- Make contact with voluntary organisations that represent Gypsies and Travellers. Encourage Gypsy and Traveller communities to organise themselves into a group to represent their concerns to local agencies. Advocacy and capacity building are probably two of the biggest current needs for Gypsies and Travellers in local areas – successful engagement will be gained by working with that approach.

- Ensure that Gypsies and Travellers have their dignity and traditions respected by others and have the same reasonable expectations placed upon them as any other citizen.

Tewkesbury: a beacon council

Tewkesbury was a Beacon Council for community cohesion in 2003/4. The largest ethnic minority in the Tewkesbury district, as in rural Britain generally, is Travellers. Tewkesbury houses three permanent travel sites as well as several private sites. The council managed sites by agreement with the county council, seeking to assist this very disadvantaged group. During recent floods in one site the council arranged for the amphibious vehicles from the local army depot to carry the residents to buy their food etc. The council also seeks to manage any difficulties that may be caused in relationships with local communities and employs a warden and assistant. They are now working to develop further the understanding of all agencies of Travellers' needs and to build the capacity and capability of the small group to make decisions themselves and represent their needs to all agencies.

Contact **James Kelly**, Director of Community Services
Tel 01684 272161
beaconcouncil@tewkesburybc.gov.uk

Suffolk County Council: A Gypsy's Wish project

'A Gypsy's Wish' was a video/drama project involving the Suffolk Romany Traveller community, Suffolk County Council, CSV Media, The Prosper Scheme and the Children's Fund. It aimed to build a more trusting and harmonious relationship between the Traveller and non-Traveller communities by developing a deeper knowledge and awareness of Traveller culture and to give people from the Travelling community a voice.

Around 50 young Romany Travellers, between the ages of 12 and 21 were involved in scoping the project, creating a play, acting in it and filming it. The project was particularly careful to respect the lives and wishes of all the young people involved. They produced a short film, which was launched to a capacity audience at the UGC cinema in Ipswich in January 2004. The film touches on many of the issues faced by young Travellers and has been used as part of a series of conferences throughout East Anglia. Wherever the film has been shown, two Romany Travellers have facilitated discussions following each screening.

Feedback from those involved was very positive with some participants describing life changing experiences in understanding the Traveller way of life and the racial prejudice Romany Travellers endure on an almost daily basis. The project demonstrated the unique power of drama in building trust between groups of people who have traditionally been very much excluded from each other.

Contact **Andy Yacoub**, Diversity Manager, Suffolk County Council
Tel 01473 264401
andy.yacoub@suffolkcc.gov.uk

Hailsham Community College, East Sussex

Hailsham Community College has worked hard to reach the Traveller community to respond to their needs. Previously, few from the Traveller community remained in school beyond Year 11; many left or were excluded before reaching this stage. Parents and families did not have any sense of affinity with the college as they felt that it did not value their lifestyle and culture.

Today Travellers feel respected and one parent serves as a governor. No child from the Travelling community has been permanently excluded for three years. Out of school hours and vocational learning opportunities have been provided to reflect the interests of Traveller children – fishing and boxing clubs established at the school attract the full support of the Traveller community. Through links with Plumpton Agricultural College, game-keeping and veterinary nursing courses have been made available encouraging young people to complete their school careers by providing academic opportunities more relevant to their needs. There is flexibility built into the school rules – Travellers are allowed to wear jewellery – and their cultural traditions are acknowledged and respected.

Contact **Jackie Whitford**, Traveller Education Unit Manager, East Sussex Local Education Authority
Tel 01273 482671
jackie.whitford@eastsussex.gov.uk

or contact **Lisa Williams**, Planning and Commissioning Manager, East Sussex Local Education Authority
Tel 01323 769433
lisa.williams@eastsussexcc.gov.uk

More information

20.12 The Commission for Racial Equality have published a strategy setting out their concerns about the exclusion and racism which Gypsies and Travellers can still suffer today. It sets out a series of outcomes and actions, which the CRE will take to ensure that Gypsy and Traveller communities receive equal opportunities and fair treatment. The strategy is available at *www.cre.gov.uk/media/nr_arch/2004/nr040402.html*

20.13 The ODPM is currently conducting a thorough review of its Gypsy and Traveller policies, which will report to ministers in late 2004. The review is evaluating the need for further site provision and is looking at a range of measures to encourage more publicly provided and private sites.

21 case studies on other aspects of community cohesion

21.1 The meaning of community cohesion in your area will depend on local circumstances since each local authority is unique in its demographic and social make up. Building community cohesion will not necessarily be confined to the topics set out in this guidance but will require innovation, creativity and knowledge of your local circumstances. This section provides additional case studies to give you an idea of other areas where the community cohesion agenda can be successful. It includes an example of one authority's statement about the wider compass of community cohesion and examples of community cohesion work in the workplace, in rural areas, around addressing homophobia, in the health sector, delivering cohesion through individuals, setting up an information sharing networks and linking community cohesion into other policy areas such as transport.

Thurrock Shadow Pathfinder: inclusive Thurrock

In Thurrock, community cohesion is considered in the context of a wider programme for creating an inclusive Thurrock. This is a key theme in their community strategy – 'Aspire' which says **"We will work to break down the barriers to exclusion and create an inclusive Thurrock where everyone who has a stake in our communities has the choice to take part in the activities that make life worth living"**.

The theme focuses on ensuring quality of life for local people and ensuring that the community is capable of making the most of the richness and variety that Thurrock can offer. The strategy divides 'inclusiveness' into three priority areas for progress by 2006, one of which is community cohesion:

- **reducing poverty** – ensuring that local people have sufficient income to make the most of the choices which Thurrock can offer.

- **community cohesion** – Thurrock will move away from segregated provision to make provision for everyone, no matter who they are, to work, learn and relax side by side. They will reduce prejudices by making practical changes and organise events so that young and older people, people from black and minority ethnic groups, people with disability or people from other excluded groups will feel that they are part of Thurrock's diverse community; and

- **raising aspirations** – Thurrock will raise the aspirations of local people through opening up options to broaden horizons for local people.

Each priority area sets out a number of practical commitments for achieving their vision. Through linking community cohesion with other priority areas, Thurrock is able to bolster the agenda and to demonstrate to others how community cohesion should be a key part of their work.

Contact **Vera Markos**, Corporate Development and Improvement Team, Thurrock Council
Tel 01375 652 271
vmarkos@thurrock.gov.uk
www.thurrock.gov.uk

Blackburn with Darwen: supporting community cohesion in the workplace

Blackburn with Darwen local authority has worked with Lancashire Learning and Skills Council, TUC Learning Services, trade unions and north-west employers to raise awareness of cultures and communities in the workplace.

The *Cohesion Toolkit* has been produced, following careful trialling and testing of the key elements, by the Blackburn with Darwen Workforce Development Service and is specifically directed at the development of cohesion in the workplace through training and staff development.

The toolkit consists of a series of packages of information and materials developed for use in a wide

range of workplaces. It is expected to be particularly useful in workplaces;

• which do not have systems and training in place to ensure equality of opportunity in all the areas where inequality can occur; and/or

• where cultural and faith differences and divisions will benefit from further input and support to help identify them, to address their effect, and to encourage mutual respect and understanding.

Adopting a structure of 'target' and 'evidence of achievement', the toolkit proposes an 'Investor in Cohesion' award for cohesion in the workplace. It uses the proposition to set out the key elements that would constitute such an award, together with the criteria for achieving success in each of them. It is intended that this proposal will be further developed.

The key elements of an 'Investor in Cohesion' award are set out as:

• understanding community and workplace

• establishing a cohesion baseline

• developing cohesion

• ensuring equality of opportunity

• recruitment

• cultural preferences and workplace practice

• business advantage

• reviewing and maintaining cohesion.

Achieving cohesion through training and staff development

To make workplace cohesion a possibility for any employer a block of specially written and carefully tested material for training and staff development is included in the toolkit. It is designed to encourage groups of staff, led by a trainer/facilitator, to explore and understand different aspects of culture, faith, race and other potential areas of diversity, including the key issues of gender and disability.

The object of this training is not to impose any one standard of culture or behaviour in the workplace, but to assist staff who may be from widely different backgrounds and experience to appreciate and value those differences, and to work better together because of their understanding. The packages in the training section of the toolkit include:

• thorough guidance for trainers on arranging and running the training;

• an explanation of how to use the central training activity, the Wheel, which involves all participants in considering a range of different cultural and social issues as they affect the staff in the workplace;

• a range of additional staff development activities, and the resources to support them; and

• factual resources for use in training and staff development, and for reference at any time.

The whole of this package has been designed to be understood and used by any employer in any workplace.

Contact **Hamid Patel**,
Workforce Development Manager
Tel 01254 841 057
hamid.patel@blackburn.gov.uk

Forest Heath District Council: strategic diversity in the district, cohesion in the countryside

Forest Heath District Council has worked hard to take a strategic approach to diversity. Recognising the opportunity posed by the Race Relations Amendment

Act and the duty to promote good community relations, the authority has stated its commitment to promoting diversity and to creating an environment in which all staff, residents and visitors are respected and empowered to maximize the quality of life within the district.

Apart from raising awareness of, and educating stakeholders to the benefits of, its diversity, the district council has taken a well-being approach to cohesion. One of the smallest districts in Suffolk, the authority admits that its demographic is 'very average' and 'unremarkable'. It has a population of 55,000, split equally by gender, though it has a slightly higher than national average age spread over 20-39 year-olds. The district is predominantly white (93.9 per cent), and mostly Christian in terms of faith orientation. The area houses a large US base with a staff team which is very diverse ethnically and culturally, members coming from all over America.

Working in partnership with the local strategic partnership, (Western Suffolk LSP) and key stakeholders (police, fire, heath, county and parish councils, local employers and the voluntary sector) the Forest Heath District council has a strategic policy framework for promoting and monitoring good community relations and diversity. This includes: anti-poverty, equalities, an action plan for eradicating rural racism, accessibility to services for all (especially focused on leisure and revenue benefits) and community safety. Monitoring is linked to Best Value Performance Indicators as well as training and development (for staff and elected members), and local performance indicators on service improvement and procurement. The work is carried out in collaboration with local organisations such as local Traveller liaison groups and the anti-racial harassment initiative.

Events have been held such as 'Mingle' conference, allowing residents a chance to meet up and have 'banal encounters', and historical photography exhibitions where people can share their insights and history of the district. The chief executive is the high

level champion for this work, and aims to secure buy-in and ownership from broader partners.

Contact **Mark Tuck**
info@forest-heath.gov.uk

Preston: OK Project

The OK Project was set up in Preston in January 2003. Its aim is to support change in Preston for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) youth. It is funded by the Single Regeneration Budget Men's Health Project, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Lloyds TSB.

In January 2004, along with two other LGB groups across the county (PYRO in Lancaster and POUT in Chorley) OK produced a short film around identity and homophobia. The process allowed group members to personally and collectively explore their experiences of homophobia at school through, poetry, original writing, improvisation and screenplay.

"I got a lot of issues of my chest. You know talking about how you've been treated and what it was like for you, it kind of makes you feel better... and now it's all on film, how it makes you feel. I would love the film to be seen by as many people as possible so that gay young people know that they are not on their own." – 18 year-old male

On completion of the film the group held a launch that brought together nearly 300 individuals and agencies – Lesbian gay bisexual and heterosexual people – to celebrate the group's achievements. This has led to a great demand for the video. It is hoped that the film can be used in schools to raise awareness of sexuality issues and stimulate debate and change.

"The great thing about the film is that it has given young lesbian gay and bisexual people the chance to tell their story. Everyone got loads out of the process. And then seeing what we had achieved

on the big screen was amazing. The project is now looking at innovative ways in which the video can be used to educate people and change attitudes."
– project development worker

Contact **Lenny St Jean**, Project Development Worker
Tel 01772 558863
okinpreston@hotmail.com

Common Ground North West: community cohesion in the health sector

Common Ground North West, a regional level NGO, recognised that community cohesion can contribute to improving health and reducing health inequalities. They are working with the regional health sector, voluntary sector and local authorities in the north-west to promote community cohesion through the development of community assets and understanding of the effects of conflict, racism and prejudice on the well-being of communities across the region.

Common Ground North West have set up an open regional network and annual conference to share good practice and are currently developing a national briefing for the health sector on community cohesion together with the Health Development Agency and the Home Office Community Cohesion Unit. The briefing will:

• review the evidence of the positive impact community cohesion can have on local communities and of the lack of community cohesion as a determinant of health inequalities;

• review data sources on community cohesion;

• identify where community cohesion may have an impact on the wide range of potential policy drivers and existing health related targets; and

• set out a short bullet point checklist of action which NHS trusts can take to contribute to local community

cohesion action along with their local strategic partners.

Contact **Pam Wright**, Health Development Agency, North West Regional Office
Tel 01524 593 417
p.wright@lancaster.ac.uk

South Gloucestershire Council: cohesion through respect for individuals and supporting social enterprise

South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) is a new unitary authority that is committed to cohesion and 'working towards equality'. In anticipation of a single human rights commission, the council states that it recognises and acknowledges that levels of discrimination and inequality can only be addressed through a broader commitment to civil liberties and human rights. It has clear statements to articulate how the council values its communities through welcoming and celebrating diversity, and accepting that a popularist majority view is not always equitable and inclusive.

The authority has raised funding, promoted learning exchanges and developed strategy for the social enterprise sector. In particular the council has been considering the mixed urban/rural context in its sub-region and the expertise that Bristol has developed in the urban setting. This is all being carried forward in a partnership approach that is embodied by the council's leadership of a sub-regional network called the West of England Social Enterprise Group. This involves the regional development agency, the Learning and Skills Council, Business West (Business Links) and the three other unitary authorities in the sub-region. It achieves linkage to, and learning from specialist support agencies such the Bristol Area Community Enterprise Network (BACEN) and Avon CDA.

Contact **Paula Howley**
paula.howley@southglos.gov.uk

South East Region: Community Cohesion Network

The Government Office South East (GOSE) established a community cohesion network in partnership with key agencies such as local authorities, the police and health services in the south-east region. The purpose of the network is to promote community cohesion, gather regional information on issues affecting community cohesion in the south-east and ensure that agencies learn about good practice from each other. GOSE is keen that consideration of community cohesion should address issues such as race equality, faith, gender, age and concerns such as economic disadvantage and rural issues.

The network holds bi-monthly meetings at which members can share knowledge in terms of good practice in achieving community and local knowledge of the barriers. The meetings are important events for networking and to share informal information regarding projects and local initiatives.

Recent meetings have focussed on the following areas:

- the role faith communities play in development of community cohesion, including a Home Office presentation about current government policy on faith and the work of the faith unit;

- the development of *A diagnostic tool for the analysis of community tension*. The tool has been developed and tested in specific areas; and

- the discussion of Traveller-related issues in relation to community cohesion.

Between meetings a virtual network exists where people can communicate, alert each other regarding disturbances and use the network as a 'critical friend'.

Contact **Sue Heywood**
sueheywood.gose@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Lewisham: improving transport to bring people together

Lewisham Council has Beacon status in the 'Better Access and Mobility' category for its work on developing an integrated transport system that is accessible to all, but which was specifically designed to place people with disabilities at its core. Lewisham won status in this area because it has a formal and practical commitment to:

- using transport as a means to address social inclusion;

- working in partnership with others to improve community well being and access to employment, health, education, leisure and life opportunities;

- supporting those who are unable to use mainstream public transport;

- consulting and involving users in the design of proposals to meet community needs; and

- ensuring that all access and mobility improvements are as eco-friendly as possible.

This commitment has driven Lewisham's design and delivery of its 'door2door transport system, which uses the down-time from council vehicles to deliver dial-a-ride transport for people with special needs and other disabilities, ensuring that they had access to essential services. Users across the capital voted this initiative as the winner of London's Best Service Provider Award.

Contact **Judy Carne**
Tel 020 8314 2190
judy.carne@lewisham.gov.uk

Pathfinders, Beacons and other local authority examples

In addition to the detailed case studies, the following list directs readers to the authorities selected to be Beacon councils or pathfinders on the theme of community cohesion and to other authorities undertaking work which may be of interest:

• **Broxtowe District Council**

Document detailing the Councils Community Cohesion Group which will identify and develop projects to promote cohesion.

Contact **Richard Lea**, Community Development Officer
Tel 0115 917 3395
richard.lea@broxtowe.gov.uk

• **Cheshire Fire Authority (Beacon)**

www.beacon.cheshirefire.co.uk
Further information is available from the IDeA's website at *www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk /idk/core/page.do?pageId=72015*

• **Coventry City Council**

The council has provided a written submission to an ODPM Select Committee Inquiry on Social Cohesion (Jan 04) which outlined how they are fostered social cohesion. Copies of all the written evidence to the Inquiry can be obtained at: *www.publications. parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmodpm/45/45 we01.htm*

• **Gloucestershire Partnership**

Resources developed include, precursory document to the Councils Community Cohesion Action Plan and Baseline research document for cohesion strategy. Details are available at *www.gloucester.gov.uk/ libraries/templates/page.asp?URN=2196*

Contact **Mary Carlin**, Strategy Development Officer, *Tel 01452 396976*

or contact **Sheila McDaid**, LSP Administration Officer *Tel 01452 396 976*

• **Lancashire County Council (working with East Lancashire Pathfinder 'East Lancashire Together')**

The council has been working with a number of partners across the county, as part of their multi-agency approach to addressing issues of cohesion. The councils' resources to date include the development of a training and development programme for elected members and staff, representation of cohesion events and the development of a media strategy.

Contact **Paul Hussey**
paul.hussey@css.lancscc.gov.uk

• **Leicester City Council (Pathfinder and Beacon Council)**

Website resources outlining the councils work on community cohesion – which include, Leicester Cohesion strategy, IDeA review document on how cohesion can be most effectively developed in Leicester, Document detailing consultation with residents, voluntary groups and young people and details of community cohesion events. The council website address is *www.leicester.gov.uk*

• **London Borough of Barnet (Beacon and Shadow Pathfinder)**

The council has developed an information pack, including a CD Rom and faith calendar and have also established a Multi-Faith Forum. Further details including a copy of the faith calendar are available at *www.barnet.gov.uk/beacon/*

Contact **Andrew Nathan**, Community Partnership Manager
andrew.nathan@barnet.gov.uk

- **London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Beacon)**

The council has developed website resources which include a report on the context of community cohesion in the borough and a report outlining the progress made on community cohesion made in the context of the national guidance framework. The council website address is *www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ data/your-council/data/beacon*

- **London Borough of Waltham Forest**

Waltham Forest are developing a range of resources which include a Community Cohesion Vision and Action Plan which is being taken forward by the local strategic partnership, a set of community cohesion indicators and they have also undertaken baseline research on cohesion within their area.

Contact **Shahid Mallam**
Tel 020 8496 4322

- **Luton Borough Council**

Luton are developing guidance on community cohesion for private sector employers and have also published a staff handbook in community cohesion and related issues. Copies of these, along with their cohesion strategy will be made available on the councils' website at *www.luton.gov.uk*

Contact **Mark Turner**
Tel 01582 546353
turnerm@luton.gov.uk

- **Middlesbrough (Pathfinder)**

A guidance document for teachers and parents on best practice to promote 'Listening Schools' project which is part of their community cohesion programme and a DVD 'Diversity in our Town' – made by young people to reflect Middlesbroughs diversity.

Contact **Rup Ray**
Tel 01642 201882
rup_ray@middlesbrough.gov.uk

or contact **Shahda Khan**
Tel 01642 729219
shahda_khan@middlesbrough.gov.uk

- **Portsmouth City Council**

The council has produced a variety of resources including a Community Cohesion Position Statement, available on the councils' cohesion plan, which is set out within the Community Involvement section of the councils' Community Strategy.

Contact **Mo Love**
mo.love@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

- **Rochdale MBC (Pathfinder and Beacon)**

Rochdale are developing a DVD multimedia package on cohesion which can be used to prompt debate and discussion on a wide range of cohesion issues. They also have a number of project plans such as developing community cohesion through sport available on their website at *www.rochdale.gov.uk*

Contact **Shah Newaz**, Policy Unit
Tel 01706 865641
shah.newaz@rochdale.gov.uk

- **Southwark Alliance (Pathfinder)**

Community Cohesion Plan and a *Sense of Belonging* booklet which was designed to promote cohesion and how to achieve a cohesive society. Also currently developing further resources which include a booklet on faith.

Contact **Jenny Wingate**, Renewal Manager
Tel 020 7525 7425
jenny.wingate@southwark.gov.uk

• **Tewkesbury Borough Council (Beacon)**

Tewkesbury has undertaken cohesion work that
includes Gypsies and Travellers. Project plans are
available on their website which is currently being
updated to include additional information. The
council is willing to facilitate visits from other
organisations which are interested in their community
cohesion work. Their website address is
www.tewkesburybc.gov.uk/beacon

Contact: **Kirsty Ryan**, National Rural Network
Development Officer
Tel 01684 295010
ryank@tewkesburybc.gov.uk

*The case studies in this guide are intended to
promote good practice – they primarily show
examples of action from local authorities, and in some
cases their partners. In a few examples, private
companies or commercial products are referred to.
While we hope that readers of this guide will find
such references helpful, their inclusion should not be
taken by either readers or providers that the LGA or
its partners formally endorse these companies or
products.*

community cohesion

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Creating sustainable communities

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RACIAL EQUALITY

I&DeA
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The
**Inter Faith
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for the
United Kingdom

For further information, please contact
the Local Government Association at:
Local Government House
Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

LGconnect, for all your
LGA queries 020 7664 3131
Fax 020 7664 3030
Email info@lga.gov.uk
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