

Meeting of the Cabinet - 30th June, 2010

Report of the Chief Executive

Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the draft refreshed Community Cohesion Strategy for 2009/11 including the associated action plan. A full copy of the Strategy is available in the Members' room and electronically on the Council's committee management information system (CMIS).

Background

2. The original Community Cohesion Strategy was presented to Cabinet in 2007. Since that time there have been national and local developments which have had considerable impact on the borough. These include:
 - Introduction of new multi-agency tension monitoring
 - Establishment of a Contingency and Emergency plan
 - Development of a draft Hate Crime Strategy
 - Establishment of the Dudley Faith Leader's Network
 - Schools now have a duty to promote community cohesion.
3. The Community Cohesion Strategy links into the overarching Dudley Community Strategy which has provided a vision of strong communities reinforcing the theme of 'my borough- our borough'
4. Cohesion is not just about race and religion but also includes intergenerational and socio-economic issues
5. Improving cohesion is about addressing multiple issues simultaneously i.e.:
 - Material considerations (employment, income, health education, housing)
 - Tackling prejudice, misunderstanding, intolerance and mistrust
 - Building good relations between and within groups
6. In Dudley NI 1 'Percentage of people from different backgrounds who believe they get on well together in their local area' is the chosen indicator within the New Generation Local Area Agreement.
7. Good community relations cannot be taken for granted or left to chance. Therefore identifying tensions at an early stage in order to prevent escalation reduce conflict and avoid undermining community cohesion. This strategy outlines governance and process for Tension monitoring.
8. The Building Resilience Programme contributes to cohesion by creating an environment for people in which they can live safely by covering a wide variety of activities to stop people becoming or supporting violent extremists.

9. A copy of the draft refreshed Community Cohesion Strategy for 2009/11 and associated action plan has been placed in the Members' Room and a copy is available from Democratic Services

Finance

10. The implementation of the Strategy will be contained entirely within existing budgets

Law

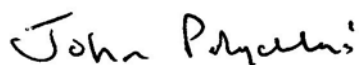
11. The Equality Act 2006 requires public agencies such as Councils, hospitals and Police to work together towards positive community cohesion for :-
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination
 - Promoting equality of opportunity
 - Promoting good relations between people of different groups
- Schools in England are also under a duty to promote community cohesion

Equality Impact

12. The Strategy is a 'refreshed' Community Cohesion Strategy and as such does not represent a new policy or substantial policy change.
13. It aims to provide a safe and peaceful environment for **all** residents of Dudley. In particular it addresses issues of safeguarding vulnerable young people and promoting good relationships within neighbourhoods.

Recommendation

14. That the Community Cohesion Strategy 2009/11 and associated action plan be approved.



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JOHN POLYCHRONAKIS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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List of Background Papers

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