

**At a meeting of the COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 21<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY, 2012 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor T. Martin in the Chair

Councillors Curran, Emerson, Forbes, Scaplehorn, Thompson, D. Trueman and Wiper

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Anderson, Copeland and Essl.

**Also Present**

Councillor Tate – Chairman of Management Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2012**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Change in the Order of Business**

The Chairman advised that the Show Racism the Red Card item would be considered at this time to enable the presenting officers to leave after the consideration of the item.

**Community Cohesion Policy Review 2011/12: Show Racism the Red Card**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which allowed Members to receive a presentation from Show Racism the Red Card as part of the Committee's policy review into Community Cohesion.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman introduced Craig Bankhead and Laura Pidcock from Show Racism the Red Card who would be presenting information on the work of Show Racism the Red Card.

Mr Bankhead informed the Committee that Show Racism the Red Card had been set up 15 years ago to tackle racism. It was targeted at racism within football as well as using football and footballers as a positive role model. The organisation did work within schools and other establishments and in the North East worked with 12,000 young people every year. Funding for the organisation came from local authorities and Sunderland was the first authority to provide funding to them.

There had been a lot of work done with people in Sunderland and Mr Bankhead circulated a report which detailed how many people had been involved and where the sessions had been held. Since July 2010 there had been 2,333 people who had received the anti-racism education.

There were a lot of incidents which were not reported and there was a need to tackle not only incidents but also racist attitudes. Racism in football was still a problem; there were still racist attitudes within stadiums however the advent of seat numbers and CCTV has meant that incidents have reduced.

There had been a session with a group of year 8 pupils at a school in Gateshead where the pupils had been asked to write down their thoughts. The comments were circulated to Members so that they could see the views of the young people. Some of the things they young people had written had been truly horrendous and there was a real need to tackle these racist attitudes at an early age. Children as young as 9 were making statements about people coming into the country and taking jobs.

There was a desire to work with the Council to provide localised working. It was hoped that there would be work with the local cohesion groups to help tackle the cohesion and inclusion issues within communities.

The Chairman stated that he had attended an event at the Raich Carter Sports Centre which had been a huge success and had attended the events last year at the Stadium of Light and Thornhill School which had also been a success. Councillor Copeland had asked him to ask whether there had been an increase in racism in football.

Mr Bankhead stated that there had been two footballers accused recently; this was out of around 500 players in the premier league alone. It was a rarity for there to be racist incidents.

Ms Pidcock stated that whenever there was a high profile incident there were always questions about whether things had changed. Through working in classrooms it had been identified that there had not been an increase in racist perceptions. There was a problem with television and films helping to compound the stereotypes such as thieving gypsies or black street gangs and this then lead to young people making comments which reflected these negative stereotypes. There were changes to the

groups who were targeted by racist stereotypes; years ago there had been Irish labelled as terrorists, it was now Muslims who were tarred with this label.

Councillor Curran stated that the football terraces in the 60s and 70s had been a terrible environment; there had been significant changes and it was much better than it used to be. He also commented that it was frightening to read the comments made by such young children.

Ms Pidcock stated that the young people were given the opportunity to write down whatever they felt in a safe and non-judgemental environment as this would help to tackle prejudices from a young age; there was work done with young people in prison, some of them were guilty of hate crimes and it was a shame that nothing had been done to address the prejudices of these young people before they ended up being burdened by these prejudices. Mr Bankhead added that the work was intended to reduce prejudices by addressing their fears and answering any questions the young people have. Young people had asked why they were no longer allowed to sing 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' this was due to the media and teachers being scared of being branded as racist. Teachers were often not educated properly on how to tackle racism or how to report incidents.

Councillor Forbes queried whether there were just former footballers involved or whether current footballers had become involved in the programme. Mr Bankhead advised that there were current footballers involved with the work. There were educational videos produced which had current players talking about their experiences. There were approximately 60 events a year held across the country.

In response to a further query from Councillor Forbes, Ms Pidcock stated that young people would never be denied the opportunity to express their feelings. It had been found that a lot of racist attitudes were as a result of young people being angry at their own situations and wanting a way to express these frustrations. Young people often had the feeling that racism against white people was not taken seriously however this was not true and if reported the authorities should take it seriously. The young people felt that nothing would be done however the incidents were not occurring and if they did were not being reported. 92 percent of the population was white and this meant that people from minority groups were 16 times more likely to be victims of racism.

Councillor Scaplehorn congratulated Show Racism the Red Card for their excellent work. He stated that young people may be making racist comments because they hear their parents making the same comments.

The Chairman asked whether the economic downturn had caused problems for funding. Mr Bankhead advised that they were a charity and had been hit by the downturn; last year there had been a £6,000 deficit. However over the last 15 years they had been prudent which had allowed them to build up a reserve which would allow them to continue doing their work. There was a Summit with the Prime Minister soon and it was hoped that funding would be secured to enable work to be done to tackle the problems caused by far right organisations such as the English Defence League.

In response to Councillor Forbes Mr Bankhead advised that the 'kick it out' campaign was working on getting racism out of football; the fines which were given to players by the Football Association for racist incidents was a pittance when compared with how much they earned.

Councillor Curran commented that two weeks wages for a footballer would fund a charity such as Show Racism the Red Card for a long time; he felt that their contracts should include clauses stating that they would be fined should they be found to be involved in any racist incidents.

2. RESOLVED that the report be given consideration as part of the policy review into Community Cohesion.

### **Community Cohesion Policy Review 2011/12: Evidence Gathering**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which allowed Members to receive further evidence in relation to the Committee's Policy Review for 2011/12 into the development of Community Cohesion in Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Sarah Woodhouse, Senior Partnership Officer, presented the report and delivered a powerpoint presentation on the School Linking Network. She advised that the network was a national charity which had been set up in 2010 to support schools and organisations to explore identity, diversity, equality and community. There were 9 secondary schools across Sunderland involved in the scheme. A conference had taken place at the Stadium of Light in July 2011 with ambassadors from the different schools which had allowed young people to share their findings and consider common aspirations. There had been other organisations including Sunderland Youth Parliament, Interact, Young Asian Voices and the Children's University involved in the event. The work had helped to raise awareness of the increasing multicultural nature of the city; the similarities between the schools and how much work needed to be done to raise cultural awareness.

Councillor Curran stated that he liked the idea of the schools working together as it was a good way to bring together young people from across the city to discuss the different cultures which were present in the city. He felt that it would be beneficial for more work to be carried out within schools.

Ms Woodhouse advised that there was training for teachers to help them build confidence in dealing with cohesion related issues. The network had resources which could be used to help teachers and parents.

Councillor Emerson asked whether the work would be taking place in any out of school environments in addition to the work done within schools. Ms Woodhouse advised that the initial funding had been provided to enable work to take place in schools. There was partnership working through the young people's equality forum. It was intended that where possible other groups would become involved.

In response to a query from Councillor Thompson, Ms Woodhouse stated that most of the groups worked with children from as young as 8 and also worked with parents and carers.

The Chairman referred to the event at the Stadium of Light; at this event the young people had worked in groups with pupils from other schools; the XL Youth Villages also brought young people into contact with people from other schools. It was good to see that the barriers were being broken down. Ms Woodhouse added that it was assumed that there was territorial behaviour between the different schools however there were a lot of similar issues at the different schools and this work allowed the young people to see that; they had expressed an interest in working together again in the future.

3. RESOLVED that the report be given consideration as part of the policy review into Community Cohesion.

### **Work Programme 2011-12**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided, for Members information, the current work programme for the Committee's work for the 2011-12 Council year.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, advised that the report on the Integration Strategy would be presented to a future meeting.

4. RESOLVED that the work programme be received and noted.

### **Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the period 1 February 2012 – 31 May 2012**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1 February 2012 – 31 May 2012 which relate to the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman advised that there were no items on the current forward plan which fell under the remit of the Committee.

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(Signed) T. MARTIN,  
Chairman.