

COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 FEBRUARY
2012

COMMUNITY COHESION POLICY REVIEW 2011/12: EVIDENCE GATHERING

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SP3: SAFE CITY

CORPORATE PRIORITIES: C101: Delivering Customer Focussed Services, C102: Being 'One Council', C103: Efficient and Effective Council, C104: Improving partnership working to deliver 'One City'

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To receive further evidence in relation to the Committee policy review into the development of Community Cohesion in Sunderland, including:-
 - a) a report on the operation of School Linking programme;
 - b) an update on the current position with regard to the Government's proposed Integration Strategy.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 7 June 2011, the Committee agreed to undertake a policy review into the actions and interventions being taken by the Council and its partners in relation community cohesion and how national policy will impact on the city.
- 2.2 Members chose this area in view of the importance attached by local people to the related issues of improving employment opportunities, tackling poverty, improving educational attainment, securing better housing and improving sport and cultural activities.
- 2.3 It was agreed that the policy review should include consideration of the following themes:-
 - the background and policy context for the development of community cohesion at a national and local level;
 - the priorities for a future refresh of the Sunderland Partnership Community Cohesion Strategy;
 - the range of community cohesion interventions in the city across a number of themes including young people, sport and cultural activities, education, housing and planning, community safety and policing and ethnic and minority groups;

- the policies and programmes of the Council, its partners and the community and voluntary sector which can help bring people together across the city and build bridges between communities;
- the range of interventions being taken to tackle tensions for example between older and younger generations within neighbourhoods and communities.

3 Current Position

School Linking Programme

- 3.1 As part of the evidence gathering process, Sarah Woodhouse will provide a short presentation on the operation of the School Linking programme.

Integration Strategy

- 3.2 As mentioned at the last meeting, it is anticipated the Government will be launching an Integration Strategy imminently, integration from the government's perspective is likely to mean 'creating the conditions for everyone to play a full part in national and local life.' It is believed the government will now refer to 'integration' rather than 'cohesion'. In the draft strategy there are 5 key factors which the government believes contribute to integration, these being:

- Common ground - shared aspirations and values;
- Responsibility - personal and social responsibility;
- Social mobility - people realising their potential to get on in life
- Participation and empowerment - opportunities to be heard and take decisions;
- Intolerance and extremism - a robust response to threats - whether discrimination, extremism or disorder - that deepen the division and increase tensions.

- 3.3 Any further update on the current position with regard to the Strategy will be reported to at the Committee.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are recommended to consider the report which will be included as part of its policy review into community cohesion.

5. Background Papers

Sunderland Partnership – Community Cohesion Strategy 2008-2015

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