

**COMMUNITY COHESION POLICY REVIEW
2010/11: 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 The purpose of this report is to receive evidence in relation to the Committee's policy review into community cohesion.

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 to 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 At its meeting on 19 July 2011, the Committee received a report outlining the process to be adopted for the review, together with background information on the development and evolution of the concept of community cohesion during the past decade.
- 2.4 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, press and media 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

3.1 As part of the evidence process for the review, the meeting of the Committee will receive evidence across three key areas:-

(a) Michelle Meldrum Deputy Director (gentoo Sunderland) has been invited to the meeting to outline and discuss the approach of gentoo to the development of community cohesion across the city;

(b) The Institute of Community Cohesion report on Cohesion in Sunderland in 2008 suggested that there is a large correlation between cohesion and deprivation. In order to discuss the background and implications of changes to housing benefit, Fiona Brown, Head of Transactional Services, Commercial and Corporate Services has also been invited to the meeting;

(c) At its last meeting, it was suggested that the Committee could examine the kinds of actions and interventions being taken in the city. As part of this process, the Committee will therefore receive a presentation on the range of initiatives and approaches being undertaken in the East Sunderland Area.

3.2 Based on the information provided to the meeting, the Committee may wish to consider looking in more detail at some of the projects and activities operating in the area and the operation of the East Sunderland Area Cohesion Group (remit attached as an appendix).

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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