



Local Government Association

# guidance on community cohesion



Office of the Deputy  
Prime Minister

Home Office

BUILDING A SAFE, JUST  
AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

COMMISSION FOR  
RACIAL EQUALITY



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([www.lg-employers.gov.uk](http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk))
- National Youth Agency ([www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk))

## Note – future intentions

This guidance is designed to assist all local authorities (from the largest counties to the smallest districts) and their partners in strengthening and building community cohesion. Further joint guidance is being developed to assist authorities and local strategic partnerships to assess (and measure) cohesion. In addition, examples of existing and emerging good practice in policy development and service provision will be posted on the LGA and community cohesion websites: [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk) and [www.communitycohesion.gov.uk](http://www.communitycohesion.gov.uk)

As part of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's skills and knowledge programme, which aims to promote better skills and access to best practice for all involved in delivering neighbourhood renewal, there is also [www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net), an all-in-one place website providing access to what works. This includes practical advice and case studies on community cohesion.

This document is initial guidance, following the consultation draft issued in May 2002. Further advice will be provided in early 2003 on ways to measure community cohesion. This guidance will be updated in 12-18 months time to account for new learning from initiatives such as the Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme and the work of the Community Cohesion Practitioner Groups. The learning derived from these and other initiatives will significantly contribute towards future guidance.

Linked to these future intentions and the broad cross-cutting nature of community cohesion, we see this as an area in which practice (both that which works well and that which does not) together with new ideas, should be shared and disseminated to as wide an audience as possible. We encourage people to email the LGA direct or to post examples onto the community cohesion website.

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# foreword

The United Kingdom is a changing society. Socio-economic changes are reflected in our growing ethnic and cultural diversity. These changes bring many gains but sometimes there are tensions and divisions that may lead to fracturing within and across local areas and local communities. Against this background, the enormous importance of working for social cohesion becomes evident.

The nature of these tensions and divisions may differ from one area to another – in some along racial lines, in others faith; there may be tensions and mistrust between urban and rural dwellers or between incomers and longer term residents, in others the key conflicts may be inter-generational. Whatever the nature of community divisions, however, the basis of the solutions is often the same; raising awareness and understanding to break down barriers, developing shared values and mutual respect and trust.

None of us can be complacent about community cohesion. Community cohesion, and the factors that can help build or undermine it, is an issue that we believe all authorities need to address. Cohesive communities are stronger and safer communities and they are better able to address issues affecting the social and economic well-being of all their residents.

We need strong local leadership from all sections of the community. We see local authorities as key drivers of change, promoting and facilitating the development of harmonious communities but working hand in hand with their partners at local level. This guidance sets out some practical steps that authorities and their partner organisations can take to build the promotion of community cohesion into their policies and delivery of services.

We are under no illusion that there are any quick fixes or simple answers but we do have to start the process in earnest now.

## **Sir Jeremy Beecham**

Chairman, Local Government Association

## **The Rt Hon Beverley Hughes MP**

Minister of State for Immigration, Citizenship and Community Cohesion, Home Office

## **The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP**

Minister of State for Local Government, the Regions and Fire, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

## **Beverley Bernard**

Acting Chair, Commission for Racial Equality

## **Rt. Rev Dr Tom Butler**

## **Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE**

Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

# introduction

Building cohesion is not an approach that government – central or local – can impose. Like most aspects of community life, cohesion is something which people themselves generate but which government and its partners can facilitate. Indeed, many authorities have been working to avoid fractured communities or to respond to specific incidents but have not necessarily described this work in community cohesion terms. Local authorities do, along with other local agencies, continually adapt to the rapid changes within their economy, environment and social mix, these all impact on communities and community cohesion. It is the combined, joined up and sustained efforts that build a cohesive society.

The challenge facing us all, since the publication of the Cantle and other reports, has been to translate our understanding of the issues raised into practical action to improve the situation on the ground. This action needs to tackle the causes that can lead to conflict and to guard against circumstances that could lead to the fracturing of communities. Local authorities have a key role to play in driving this agenda forward for their area – working closely with other local players through local strategic partnerships, community safety and crime and disorder reduction partnerships. However, each area's economic and social make-up is unique and the circumstances and events, which result in cohesion in one area, may not always do so everywhere.

The publication of this guidance provides advice on ways to review existing policies and practices so that they help to build more cohesive communities. It suggests actions that local authorities and their partners can take which are highlighted in the text boxes at the end of each chapter.

There is a wealth of existing guidance that complements this, particularly in respect of community strategies, community leadership and local strategic partnerships and race equality schemes. Such guidance is not repeated here but is given key references and should be revisited where appropriate.

# what is community cohesion?

Community cohesion incorporates and goes beyond the concept of race equality and social inclusion.

The broad working definition is that 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 are 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 in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

## Strategies and plans

Community cohesion lies at the heart of what makes a safe and strong community and is, therefore, a key outcome for both local and central government to work towards. Indeed, it is one of the key priorities drawn up in the statement of shared priorities between the Local Government Association (LGA) and central government. Work across central government is brought together through the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group chaired by Home Office Minister, Beverley Hughes.

A key first step for any local authority will be to conduct a baseline assessment of how effectively current policies and programmes promote community cohesion for communities and neighbourhoods throughout their area. Some will conclude that their existing arrangements are satisfactory. They will have been developed through the community planning systems that are already in place – notably the community strategy, the race equality scheme, crime and community

safety strategy and local neighbourhood renewal strategies – and may address all the issues relevant to community cohesion within and across their communities.

Many other authorities will conclude that they need to amend some policies to better build community cohesion. A small number of areas may need to go further by developing a specifically focussed action plan, which complements the community strategy.

Regardless of whether an individual local authority decides to develop a specific action plan or not, community cohesion is an issue all local authorities need to consider and ensure that their specific policy actions promote. This guidance gives a steer about how to identify and address this issue.

## The duty to promote race equality

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) guidance, *Preparing Community Strategies: Government Guidance to Local Authorities (December 2000)*, addresses how community strategies should fit with other plans and strategies, specifically Best Value performance plans, local public service agreements (PSAs) and development plans. Since this guidance was produced, however, local authorities have a further responsibility that should be a crucial element of any authority's work on community cohesion.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 introduced a new positive duty to promote race equality. This requires authorities to have 'due regard to the need', in everything they do, to:

- tackle racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity; and
- promote good relations between people from different racial groups.

The third of these prongs will be central to the work that local authorities do on community cohesion. In particular, local authorities can work in different ways to promote good race relations.

This can be achieved by:

- creating opportunities for people from different communities to connect, meet openly and honestly to discuss issues and concerns that affect them all. It could be that different groups have different priorities and concerns; and
- consulting with all groups, including ethnic minority communities, to involve them in service planning and policy development as part of the requirement to involve people in shaping local services, particularly through partnership working and community development.

It is important for local authorities to view the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RR[A]A) as a positive management tool. The specific duties within the RR[A]A, at the most basic level, require public authorities to consult, listen, review and monitor functions, policies and employment practices as well as assess their impact. Local authorities already do this under other processes such as Best Value. What the Act makes clear is the need to ensure race equality is at the heart of all planning and delivery of services.

See Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) *Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality* and accompanying guidance for public authorities, for schools and on ethnic monitoring.

# what is the role for central government?

While building community cohesion is primarily about proactive action at the local level, it is clear that central government has a role to play. An inter-ministerial group, chaired by Home Office Minister, Beverley Hughes, meets regularly to oversee and co-ordinate the government's role. This group is supported by a cross-government unit, the Community Cohesion Unit (CCU), based in the Home Office. This unit works with departments across Whitehall, and government offices for the regions in developing and implementing the government's strategy.

There are two strands to the government's approach, based on a commitment to making community cohesion a goal of all government policy. Firstly, working with government departments, to review national policy in ensuring that it promotes community cohesion at the local level.

This review of government policy is being assisted by the Community Cohesion Panel and its practitioner groups, comprising people independent of government, whose practical knowledge of specific policy areas and local issues is used to analyse policy and make proposals that are considered by the ministerial group.

Of specific importance is the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's plan to publish its *Communities Plan* in 2003. This will aim to create thriving and sustainable communities in all regions, providing local people with opportunities to make local decisions about local needs. This will play an important part in helping to improve community cohesion, in providing high-quality affordable housing, a faster and fairer planning system, regenerating declining communities, tackling social exclusion and homelessness, designing and maintaining attractive, clean and safe towns, cities and public spaces and improved community leadership.

## Community facilitation and conflict resolution work stream

As part of its response to the independent report on community cohesion, the government outlined a community facilitation programme led by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. This involves government, operating primarily through the regional government offices, working in close partnership with a number of local authorities and others to provide community facilitators. This will help local areas develop a longer-term strategic approach to capacity building and conflict resolution. The emphasis is on developing skills and knowledge and putting in place processes at local level so that communities themselves are better equipped to resolve conflict.

## Youth activities

To date, government has provided funding in a number of specific areas to run a range of activities for young people aiming to reduce crime, meet their developmental needs and specifically help to develop cross-cultural activities as a means of breaking down barriers between young people of different groups. To build on the positive impact of these activities and to achieve greater synergy with other government funding programmes, a more streamlined process is being developed in time for summer 2003.

The second strand of the government's approach involves putting in place mechanisms to encourage and assist local authorities and other agencies. Key to this is getting community cohesion effectively recognised as an issue to be addressed and integrate it into mainstream processes and procedures. In achieving this, the government is mindful of working within the spirit of the Local Government Bill now before parliament and the shared priorities agreed between government and the LGA.

The key themes of this second strand include:

- 1 providing advice and guidance;
- 2 acting to disseminate good practice; and
- 3 encouraging and facilitating new learning through pathfinder programmes.

### **1 Providing advice and guidance**

Government, primarily through the Community Cohesion Unit, has broadened its knowledge base of community cohesion issues and has been working with a wide range of local authorities. Its national perspective is being shared with partners through the organisation of, and participation in, national conferences, seminars and other events.

### **2 Acting as a source of and disseminator of good practice**

The government's aim is to integrate thinking of community cohesion in all authorities and organisations at all levels of society. The intention is that community cohesion should be formalised into planning and delivery mechanisms, rather than requiring specialised or dedicated resources or structures.

This will involve central government having a clear understanding of what is actually taking place in local areas in order to transmit good practice across the country. The Community Cohesion Unit and the LGA have already collated a range of good practice examples covering a variety of community cohesion issues. These are hosted on both LGA's website and at [www.communitycohesion.gov.uk](http://www.communitycohesion.gov.uk), which will be added to on an ongoing basis.

Of specific note is the inclusion of community cohesion as a theme for the fourth round of the Beacon Council scheme with successful applicants to be announced in April 2003. These successful applicants will be engaged in a dissemination programme during 2003/04 – organised through and with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Details of all community cohesion beacon councils will be included on the Community Cohesion Unit's website with relevant links as appropriate.

### **3 Encouraging and facilitating new learning through the community cohesion pathfinder programme**

A lot can be learnt from the effective dissemination of existing good practice. However, the changing nature of community cohesion is such that local authorities and other agencies could also benefit and learn from developing new processes and methods by which community cohesion can be integrated across planning and service delivery. To encourage and assist in this learning process government announced, in October 2002, a community cohesion pathfinder programme that will involve 15 local areas (with resources to be provided for the local authorities, the community and voluntary sector) over a two-year period. The programme aims to build real life examples of local areas that are getting community cohesion right – by developing approaches to integrating community cohesion into forward planning and long term sustainability. The key issue, from a local authority perspective, will be the mainstreaming of community cohesion – not treating it as an add-on activity that sits apart from core service delivery functions. Interim findings and final guidance on lessons learnt will be actively disseminated (to other authorities and agencies) both during and at the end of the programme. As part of a package of support that the Community Cohesion Unit and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit will be offering to pathfinder areas, there will be access to face to face advice and support in developing and implementing their plans.

# ownership of the community cohesion agenda

## Why is ownership important?

It is essential that the local approach to community cohesion is developed and owned by all local agencies and organisations. They should work in partnership, and integrate the issues within the community strategy and service planning systems in order to sustain progress and achieve the positive benefits. Local strategic partnerships (LSPs) are one means of developing community and neighbourhood renewal strategies. They are multi-layered structures that seek to facilitate joint working across and consultation with the public, private and voluntary sectors. (See *Local Strategic Partnership: Government Guidance, March 2001*).

In areas where LSPs do not exist, other strategic partnership bodies can fulfil the function of securing ownership.

## Effective partnership working

- **Ensure that all partners (public, voluntary, community and private) are involved and understand the agenda.**
- **Ensure the work dovetails with the impact on relations between government and the voluntary and community sector. Refer to the HM Treasury's cross-cutting review, *The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery*.**
- **Involvement of different sections of the community is essential. Real cohesion and real change will only happen if this occurs.**
- **Recognise, value and use the diversity of knowledge and skills available in the voluntary and community sectors.**
- **Be prepared to be flexible in order to respond and adapt to circumstances and issues as they arise.**
- **Make use of the joint CRE/ODPM guidance on partnerships under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, to be issued in March 2003.**

# community and political leadership

## Why is this an important factor?

Local authorities' community leadership role, enshrined by the Local Government Act 2000, is fundamental to local government's role in building cohesive communities. It provides a legislative basis for local authorities to promote the social, economic and environmental well being of their areas. The LGA guidance document, *Community leadership: What is it?* (March 2001), provides a range of good practice examples of the way in which different authorities have been exercising their community leadership role.

Community leadership was a central theme of the local government white paper, *Strong Local Leadership-Quality Public Services* (December 2001). There is a real opportunity for local authorities, through effective local democracy and strong accountable political leadership, to consolidate their role as leaders of their local communities.

## Community strategies: political leaders roles

Local authorities have a duty to develop a community strategy. This requires them to bring together local stakeholders to agree a 'vision' for the local area and an action plan to achieve it. *Preparing Community Strategies: Government Guidance to Local Authorities* (ODPM December 2000), sets out how a community strategy should be developed via strategic partnerships and in consultation with the wider community. The guidance has been in place for two years and many authorities have made good use of it in developing their community strategies. It provides detailed guidance on partnership working, community involvement and the role of elected members. (Note numerous reports and toolkits on community strategies can be accessed from Improvement & Development Agency's (IDeA) knowledge at [www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge](http://www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge)).

## The role of local councillors

Local councillors have a key role to play in building cohesive communities at ward level. Local forums that bring together different community interests can be convened by councillors as a mechanism not only to feed into the council's decision-making process but also to address conflicts or misunderstandings between different groups within a local community. Under new political management structures, non-executive council members may find they have more capacity in building links with broad cross sections of constituents.

Wards in rural areas may contain multiple small villages. In these cases councillors will need to work with local structures such as parish councils to promote community cohesion and tackling conflicts.

## Community representatives

There are differing views when gauging the role of 'community leaders.' There is often a need to rely on the views of 'community representatives' when there is neither the time, nor the resource, for broader consultation. Local authorities should seek to work closely with community representatives who are themselves democratically elected, ie in parish and town councils, and with those who are less formally elected such as, residents' and community associations, neighbourhood watch groups and resident panels. This work should dovetail with an area's community strategy, which should also seek to develop the knowledge base and capacity of community representatives.

The independent review report and others, emphasised the importance of ensuring the active involvement of young people, who were not always most effectively represented by existing community leaders. This can be achieved in a number of ways, including involving UK youth parliament representatives, the local youth council

or pupil parliaments. Engaging young people through youth projects or outreach projects is also important.

Care should be taken to make every effort to ensure that these representatives have the backing and support of the majority of any group that they may be seen to represent. There is the tendency to rely on the loudest voices or rely on the most vocal representative or organisation, particularly when consulting on major initiatives.

Parish and town councils are encouraged to consult widely and to ensure the breadth of views of all their residents are addressed. Rural areas have a long history of community planning through parish plans that generate wide participation as well as contributing to building local social capital. These also serve to promote mutual understanding of the widely differing needs and aspirations of residents. Parish plans are valuable vehicles for encouraging community cohesion.

### **Provide a clear lead**

- **Establish an unequivocal sign-up by all principal agencies, including the mainstream political parties, based on an acceptance of the value of diversity and to ensure that there is a common 'zero tolerance' of racism and discrimination.**
- **Develop a communications strategy to communicate the community strategy on an ongoing basis across the entire community and to ensure that there is the widest possible support.**
- **Encourage and value the work of existing representative structures in undertaking effective local community planning activity.**

- **Get a commitment from each agency to carry out actions for their own services, which underpin the strategic objectives.**
- **Encourage all sections of the local community (majority and minority groups) to establish community leaders who are also committed to the strategic objectives and to ensure that they actually do listen to the views of their community, represent them fairly and collaborate with other communities. Involve young people particularly in this process. Build capacity amongst communities that are not often heard.**
- **Build cross-cultural networks and inter faith structures.**
- **Ensure that there is a leadership capacity to facilitate the level of change required and to bring in external support as required.**
- **Encourage all councillors to represent the needs of their electorate as a whole and not a narrow constituency.**
- **Elect a member champion to lead on community cohesion work. Appoint a senior officer (and possibly a small team) to work with him or her.**
- **Set up a programme of introductory talks or seminars about community cohesion.**
- **Involve key local agencies and networks from the voluntary, community, private and public sectors.**

# vision and values

## Why is this issue important?

Political leaders need to develop a vision of the type of place that their constituents want their locality to be and the work needed to make that vision a reality as part of its community strategy. People moving towards a commonly agreed goal are more likely to interact, understand and value differences positively. This approach builds cohesive communities and can also reduce anti-social behavior.

## Developing a shared vision

A shared vision should be challenging, inspirational and inclusive, grounded in respect for our common humanity and recognition of our shared responsibility for the future of our society. It should stem from an open discussion involving the whole community and give local communities a clear sense of direction. Unity in diversity should be the theme – the message must be that cultural pluralism and integration are not incompatible. Values, principles and standards from a public authority's race equality, disability discrimination and gender equality schemes will also be relevant.

Through open discussion, each community should look to explore and discuss some of the following issues:

- developing a sense of ownership and pride in the local community;
- pride in the local physical environment;
- a desire to engage in relationships and partnerships with other local communities;
- working together to address common concerns;
- welcoming newcomers by offering support and induction that embraces the whole community;

- the need to combat discrimination on the basis of race, religion and belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age
- a desire to promote cross-cultural interaction but to celebrate and value differences;
- asking what each community can do for others as well as what others can do for them; and
- tackling serious deprivation and disaffection in ways that do not alienate other parts of the community.

Exploration of these issues should be based on an open and honest dialogue and consultation involving all sections of, and organisations involved with, the community (public, voluntary, community and private). Special efforts should be made to involve young people, especially those who are not usually engaged in issues of this sort and feel disengaged from the life of their community.

## Turning the vision into action

From this discussion, a work programme should be drawn up that outlines what needs to be done to make the shared vision a reality. This could include:

- the development of conflict resolution strategies;
- a programme of 'myth busting' to counter traditional stereotypes;
- an ongoing series of events and programmes to foster openness and cross-cultural contact; and
- developing festivals and celebrations that involve all communities.

## The benefits of an agreed vision

The vision and strategic objectives agreed should be directed towards achieving the following outcomes:

- an improvement in community cohesion for the local area;
- a reduction in racial and inter-religious tension and conflict;
- a reduction in perceived or actual inequalities for all sections of the local community;
- creating value from the diversity of the local community;
- adding to the quality of life and sense of well-being; and
- greater participation and involvement in civic life from all sectors of the community.

### **Developing a vision: getting started**

- **Make connections with all local community and neighbourhood planning activity, including those initiated by other organisations or programmes not led by the local authority.**
- **Consult widely among all communities (majority and minority) to encourage involvement and participation of different ethnic, gender, cultural, faith, disabled, young people and older peoples groups. Encourage these groups to explore together their mutual aspirations.**
- **Work with Trade Unions and the business community, encouraging them to also participate in building the vision.**
- **Ensure full involvement of all elected members and the local strategic partnership (LSP), where they exist, so that they own the work; making community cohesion a regular item at cabinet and all partnership meetings.**

### **Making a statement of intent**

- Make a public commitment, supported by all other agencies, to building good community relations and to tackling problems where they exist.
- Invite the leaders of all communities and faiths, both majority and minority, to launch the process and ask for their ideas and support. Involve them closely in the development of a work programme.
- Make it clear that the diversity in your area is valued and supported and that a modern multi-racial and multi-faith society, based on mutual respect, understanding and tolerance is the aim.
- Confront those that spread hate and division.
- Closely involve local press and media from the beginning of the process: they are key in shaping local opinion.

### **Building support**

- Get people talking and facilitate an open and honest discussion.
- Set up a local website, develop questionnaires, host meetings, get schools involved, get out on to the estates, etc.
- Focus on values – respect cultural differences and foster those basic commonly-held civic values.
- Ask, don't tell – give people a chance to have their say.
- Set out the shared values for your area as the debate unfolds. These should include both rights and responsibilities.
- Ask the local press and media to help (see section on *press and media*).
- Use existing channels like the youth service, parish and town council networks and voluntary bodies.
- Use the LGA/Inter Faith Network for the UK/DTLR/HO report *Faith and community: a good practice guide for local authorities*, (February 2002), on how to capture the resources of faith communities for promoting cohesion.

# local context, baseline assessment and monitoring progress

All local agencies, not just local authorities, need a detailed understanding of the nature of the communities they serve to assess how equipped they are in building community cohesion. An up-to-date assessment of the local context will enable improved delivery of services and monitoring of trends. Local authorities are encouraged to map and share information about such issues as ethnicity, age, culture and faith by area and by social and economic characteristics.

## Developing baseline assessments

As part of this assessment, each local authority should consider how it performs against the various themes of community cohesion, which are covered through the rest of this guidance. In particular, local areas should ask themselves questions such as:

- Are we clear about the regeneration needs and aspirations of all sections of our community?
  - Do we really listen to people who truly represent all sections of our community?
  - Do youth activities help to build understanding and tolerance between different groups?
  - Do we have effective mechanisms to listen to the views of young people? Do we respond to those views?
  - Do school pupils develop a tolerance and respect for the different cultures that make up the UK?
  - Do some groups achieve much lower levels of educational attainment than others?
  - What impact does the housing situation have on community cohesion? Do people get real choices about where they live?
- Are particular sections of the community disadvantaged in the labour market? What can be done to address these differences?
  - Is racist crime or other hate crime a feature of the local area? What measures are being taken to address it?
  - Is there evidence of religious discrimination?
  - Are local authorities, the police and other partners sensitive to the needs of different sections of the community?

The assessment should also seek to establish any particular characteristics of each group which might provide further information about their values and identity, for example, familial links in the local area, other parts of the country and within other countries; use of first and second languages; intra and inter cultural marriages; press and media usage, etc. This should not, of course, be limited to the minority communities and should compare and contrast the experience of all identifiable communities. The outcome should be a much clearer understanding of the nature of different communities – and how they relate to each other.

In spring 2003, the 2001 Census data will be published as a major source of data about local communities. The data will be available through the Office for National Statistics at below ward level.

Both the results from the 2001 Census, and the increase in data being made available at local areas through neighbourhood statistics, will provide invaluable local information for local people, local authorities, voluntary and community groups. These, and others should feed into processes measuring the impact of initiatives working to build community cohesion. In turn, this will help to identify the extent of residential segregation in local communities, where this is an issue, in order to feed into long term planning.

The perceptions and attitudes of different groups can be recorded through survey data and monitored over a period of time. The extent and nature of cross-cultural contact can also be plotted, again with a view to monitoring over time.

### **Evaluating community cohesion**

Local authorities need to decide how they will measure improvements in community cohesion. Working with the Audit Commission, the CCU has captured the essential qualitative element of community cohesion in a survey question that has been included in Quality of Life indicators. The headline indicator of community cohesion is number 25 and the indicator is 'percentage of people surveyed who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds and communities can live together harmoniously'. While this can be regarded as a headline indicator, we emphasise the need to develop a basket of measures that can be used to monitor more effectively the starting point and progress over time. The government intends to produce a booklet providing detailed advice on how to measure community cohesion. Aimed primarily at LSPs it is envisaged that the booklet will be published in early 2003.

This booklet will outline how existing data, primarily performance indicators, which relate to a wide range of organisations could be collated and together with new survey data help to build a 'picture' of community cohesion for a local area. It would not be prescriptive but suggest themes, with 'indicative' performance indicators, to assist local authorities and their partners to own the community cohesion agenda, to understand more clearly the gaps, and to monitor progress.

### **Work out where you are, get the facts and measure**

- **Make sure that you understand all your communities – where they are, who they are, how old they are, and how they live their lives.**
- **Do a baseline assessment, asking yourself questions like 'what impact does the housing situation have on community cohesion?'**
- **Decide through consultation what issues need to be addressed and act on them.**
- **Identify and develop both qualitative and quantitative measures of community cohesion to help monitor progress.**

# the value of local strategic partnerships

The key tasks of local strategic partnerships are to:

- help the local authority with the preparation and implementation of the community strategy for the area;
- bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives to provide a forum through which mainstream public service providers work effectively to meet local needs and priorities, and;
- work with local authorities who are developing local public service agreements to help devise and then meet suitable targets.

LSPs can also be key vehicles for developing composite strategies, including crime and disorder reduction strategies and health improvement and modernisation programmes. LSPs can assist in joining up local housing strategies by bringing together the housing authority with registered social landlords, social care providers and the private sector in developing local neighbourhood renewal strategies.

Police authorities are responsible for publishing policing strategies and plans that reflect the views of local communities about their priorities for policing, including the policing contribution to the community safety agenda. They are also responsible for ensuring an ongoing dialogue with all parts of the community. They are, therefore, the strategic body with which LSPs must work closely to ensure joining up of the policing and broader community cohesion agenda.

An inclusive LSP is very well placed to pull all of these various strategies together, and to look at how they are complementing each other in building cohesive communities or where they are pulling in different directions, perhaps contributing to breakdowns in community relations.

Guidance on community strategies provides advice on developing strategies, working with central

government and local agencies. These include regional bodies, business, community and voluntary groups. It also offers advice on ensuring that the strategy is developed across the whole of the community to gain the widest possible sense of ownership.

There are a great many opportunities for these public bodies (local authorities, police authorities and forces, health trusts, government departments and agencies and education and learning provision including schools) to work together at both the political and technical level, sharing best practice and building consensus.

It is essential that each organisation also works closely with their own stakeholders and service users. This should again help to build a wider community ownership of all aspects of community cohesion.

# community and voluntary organisations

## Why is the role of the community and voluntary sector important?

The voluntary and community sector covers an enormous spectrum, with organisations being key partners working to build community cohesion. However, their skills are sometimes not fully utilised by the statutory agencies.

The Compact on relations between government and the voluntary and community sector in England (1998), provides a framework to build closer working between the sector and local and central government. It recognises the importance of voluntary and community organisations as active partners bringing experience and expertise to initiatives.

The subsequent cross-cutting review completed by HM Treasury in September 2002, provides further reinforcement of the value and the importance played by the sector in the reform of public services and invigoration of civic life. This review, now being implemented, will have far reaching consequences for service delivery in achieving its aim of providing more efficient services in a more caring and cohesive society.

## What makes up the sector?

Voluntary and community organisations vary in size and capacity, from highly professionalised, national bodies to small, informal associations at neighbourhood level. National organisations have the capacity to act as a strategic resource. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) for example, is one of the sector's main umbrella organisations. Its activities include co-ordination of the sector's views for the purposes of consultation, as well as dissemination of information, advice and good practice. 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. Another example is Age Concern

and the National Neighbourhood Watch Association. Both organisations have local and regional structures (with Neighbourhood Watch groups often formed down to street and ward level) supported by a national body. Local statutory agencies will often already have a working relationship with such umbrella organisations. This relationship may need only a relatively small amount of development to release its potential for contributing to community cohesion.

The regional voluntary sector networks and the related regional black and minority ethnic networks represent additional infrastructure. Though relatively new, these networks are a valuable route to engagement with the sector. Part of their purpose is to build the capacity of the sector for more effective involvement in society.

## How can they help?

Smaller community organisations at the local level play an integral part in community development. One of their great strengths can be sensitivity to local issues and culture. Many such organisations live a precarious, hand-to-mouth existence because of scarcity of funding. Despite this they will often have accumulated extensive expertise and knowledge of their specific areas. In some cases an organisation working at the neighbourhood level can offer unrivalled insight into the perceptions of local people about their community. They are generally well placed, given the right support and encouragement, to foster cross-cultural links.

Engagement with these groups will support a 'bottom up' approach to building community cohesion. The Standing Conference for Community Development's *Strategic Framework*, published in 2001, offers a good starting point for local partnership building and engaging the sector at a strategic level.

Where a local 'Compact' exists, there is already a sound basis on which to engage the sector's

resources for community cohesion. The process of establishing a local Compact will enable all partners to address community cohesion issues more effectively. The national Compact and its associated codes also contain material relevant at a local level.

### **Make best use of voluntary and community networks**

- **Adopt a 'Compact' between local authority and the voluntary and community sector and adapt the new framework to suit your relationship with the sector.**
- **Use the networks of statutory and voluntary agencies to develop cross-cultural contact at all levels.**
- **Review and influence the funding of voluntary and community organisations (including that of national and regional agencies) to provide incentives to promote community cohesion and cross-cultural contact and understanding.**
- **Recognise that voluntary and community organisations providing culturally or religiously sensitive services continue to have an important role to play in many communities.**
- **Develop joint training between the local authority and those involved in the sector, particularly those representing Hard to Reach Groups. Courses on the workings of government (local and central) and how they differ from the sector are useful.**

- **Reappraise your policy-making processes. Ensure it is flexible enough to allow for the more dynamic contribution the sector can bring – dispel myths of 'red tape' barriers.**
- **Allow enough time for meaningful consultation.**
- **Gather best practice examples and evaluate your own experiences, feeding back learning.**
- **Ensure you have the right people around the table and be open to contributions and suggestions.**

# faith communities

## Why is addressing faith issues important?

Faith can be a powerful factor in personal and community identity. The diversity of British society cannot be fully described if faith is left out of the picture. Policies for the promotion of diversity are incomplete if they fail to recognise that multi-cultural communities are also often multi-faith communities. Equality statements now routinely deal with the need to tackle discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. The place of faith communities in the public life of communities has been increasingly understood and acknowledged in recent years.

At community level it is important to foster understanding and respect between different faith traditions as well as between different cultural and ethnic groups. All major faiths promote equality and respect for others as a fundamental value. In most cases, at a personal and community level, this translates into good community relations and integrity in public life. Such values can be a real resource in the practical implementation of community cohesion strategies.

The school curriculum (including the early education element) is important in establishing this understanding and respect from an early age. Opinions differ about the role and value of faith schools in developing positive images of others. But this does not detract from the basic commitment of even those who hold opposing views on this subject to the importance of education in resisting negative stereotypes of different identities.

Stereotypes based on religion can be stubborn and pernicious, as in the cases of anti-semitism and Islamophobia. Such attitudes must be addressed within cohesion strategies if people of all faiths are to feel an equal sense of belonging and enjoy equal security in society.

Faith communities often provide significant forms of association at the local level and can offer a

wide range of services from their place of worship. This can be a particularly important method of delivering mainstream services in a culturally sensitive way. Or in more informal ways it can represent a valuable form of community self-help, through work with the young, older people, lunch clubs or drop-in and advice centres. Resources and support need to be given wherever possible to increase their involvement.

When a celebration can incorporate contributions from different local faith communities, as a public witness to their shared values, this can be a practical source of community pride and cohesion.

The development of effective local inter faith structures, bringing together representatives of different faith communities in a local authority area, can provide a valuable framework both for promoting mutual understanding and co-operation between them and as a mechanism for consultation by the local authority and other public bodies. Local authorities can provide valuable encouragement and support for the launching of initiatives of this kind in areas where they have yet to be established and also in helping to sustain existing local inter faith structures.

### Working with faith communities

- 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 this role in relations with the local voluntary and community sector infrastructure.
- Explore local potential for a forum of faiths.
- Seek opportunities to support the public celebration of festivals.
- Challenge religious stereotypes, particularly in media reporting.
- Use available resources to establish good practice in working with faith communities:

1. *The Local Inter Faith Guide, (1999)*, The Inter Faith Network for the UK in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council

2. *Faith and Community, (2002)*, Local Government Association in association with Inner Cities Religious Council, Active Community Unit, Home Office, and the Inter Faith Network for the UK (available on the LGA's website at: [www.lga.gov.uk/documents/publication/faith.pdf](http://www.lga.gov.uk/documents/publication/faith.pdf))

3. *Religions in the UK, Directory 2001-03, (2001)*, The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby and the Inter Faith Network for the UK

4. *Shap calendar of religious festivals, (2002)*, Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education

5. Inner Cities Religious Council

6. Local Government National Training Organisation's *Cultural Competence framework* (see [www.lgnto.gov.uk/culture/index.htm](http://www.lgnto.gov.uk/culture/index.htm))

- Seek advice from existing local and national organisations:

1. Inter Faith Network for the UK, 5-7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN, Tel: 020 7388 0008, Fax: 020 7388 7124, e-mail: [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk), Website: [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

2. Inner Cities Religious Council, Urban Policy Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 4/J10 Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU, Tel: 020 7944 3704, Fax: 020 7944 3729, e-mail: [icrc@odpm.gov.uk](mailto:icrc@odpm.gov.uk), Webpages: [www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/community/faith/index.htm](http://www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/community/faith/index.htm)

- Promote use of local places of worship by schools and youth organisations as a resource in teaching the values of diversity.
- Establish and sustain a strong local inter faith structure for inter faith co-operation and mechanism for consultation with faith communities by the local authority and other local public bodies.

# young people

## Why is engaging with children and young people important?

Children and young people are a core group that must be centrally involved in helping to build and sustain strong local cohesive communities. By all local partners and institutions involving children and young people locally and taking responsibility for doing so, the local community can benefit enormously in bringing segregated communities together.

Failure to recognise this has a detrimental impact on society in many ways: lack of involvement of children and young people now affects communities negatively in the present and future. The social capital to be gained by communities through involving young people fully is large. It supplements the benefits from avoiding negative impacts on communities (such as offending in drugs and crime) that may surface when children and young people are disenfranchised and excluded from processes.

The disengagement of young people from local democratic processes is clear to see from local election turnouts and the age profile of those involved in local politics.

Young people are our future leaders and involving them in the decision-making process can therefore be regarded as a long-term approach to capacity building and community development. The LGA's report *Representing the People: Democracy and Diversity (July 2001)*, examined the reasons behind the lack of diversity in our council chambers, and made a series of recommendations for addressing this in the medium and longer term.

A sense of belonging is critical to children and young people taking ownership and responsibility for their community and their local area. Children and young people in modern Britain are more diverse than ever – they have a large variety of experiences and cultures. Young people living

within close proximity can have very different experiences. The young are not a homogeneous group and a variety of activities and methods will be required to ensure they are able to contribute fully to the shared local vision. Different approaches may be required depending on age, disability, gender, ethnicity or geographical location. It is of paramount importance that work on shared values takes account of the diversity of young people's experiences and opinions. The Children and Young People's Unit (CYPU) 'Colour Blind' video can help stimulate debate with young people on what it means to be British and our shared values (available from [mailbox@cypu.gov.uk](mailto:mailbox@cypu.gov.uk)).

Children and young people need to be involved at a strategic as well as delivery level in public services, particularly those that directly affect them. In some cases this may require opportunities to build their capacity in order to involve them. Giving responsibility to children and young people needs appropriate management that caters for local needs, but is essential. The capacity for staff and institutions to connect with children and young people in relation to community cohesion should also be enhanced in staff training and in service planning. This will allow better and more appropriate interaction and engagement with children and young people.

## Why are the youth service and Connexions important?

The role of the local youth service, voluntary and community sectors in provision of local facilities and activities, and the benefits to the local community, cannot be underestimated. The quality and quantity of youth service provision is an important component in building community cohesion.

Youth services should work in partnership with key local stakeholders – private and public. Innovative methods of involving private partners such as local

football clubs or arts and culture bodies should be sought. In particular local voluntary and community organisations should be used where shared expertise can improve the delivery of youth provision.

This includes effective engagement with existing and developing Connexions partnerships, Children's Fund programmes and other initiatives underway to support young people. In this way, holistic and flexible approaches can be ensured.

Connexions is a crucial partner. By providing tailored support to young people, Connexions partnerships will help to ensure that young people receive the necessary advice and support to make a smooth transition to adulthood. For many young people, especially those who may become disaffected, Connexions will be an important source of support. Linking with Connexions partnerships – both to make sure that its work is fully responsive to community cohesion issues, and to take on the views of young people – is crucial.

### **Tools available to encourage engagement and better youth provision**

Young people are key members of any community, however, there is evidence of widespread disengagement of young people. A variety of tools are available to help reverse this trend within local democratic processes. These include the LGA/National Youth Agency report, *Hear by right: setting standards for the active involvement of young people in democracy (July 2001)*, which sets out key principles in engaging young people and highlights good practice examples. The report establishes standards for engaging young people, which the LGA encourages all member authorities to adopt.

The 'Hear by right' initiative is complemented centrally by the government's *Learning to Listen: Core Principles for the Involvement of Children and Young People, (November 2001)*, in the planning,

delivery and evaluation of government policies and services. These can be found on the CYPU website [www.cypu.gov.uk](http://www.cypu.gov.uk)

The Youth Service, in accordance with the government's Transforming Youth Work agenda, can provide the corporate lead for the engagement of young people across the community.

The Youth Justice Board, through schemes such as youth inclusion programmes, has been engaging young people – particularly those who are disaffected and disengaged – in various prevention and pre-court processes and activities. [www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk](http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk)

The *Transforming Youth Work* consultation document and the *Common Planning Framework (Sept 2001)* provides clear guidance on what youth services should do to promote community cohesion. Also the *Resourcing Excellent Youth Services Adequacy and Sufficiency Document (Dec 2002)* details what should be expected from a modern youth service. [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

Youth workers have a crucial role to play in helping to build trust and respect across communities. Having sufficient youth provision is clearly essential. It also needs to be accessible and accessed by people from different backgrounds. Youth services should monitor the extent to which take up varies by socio-economic or ethnic group.

In some parts of the country, youth provision can become segregated – with local youth clubs staffed by a particular ethnic group servicing the needs of that particular ethnic group.

Assisted by the greater emphasis on detached youth work, there is a significant potential for youth workers to help break down such divisions – by tailoring provision so that it helps people from different backgrounds interact. The staffing of youth services is also of crucial importance – in particular, local authorities may need to put in

place specific development programmes which identify, train and mentor youth workers from groups which are under-represented. For example, one local authority has been working with the local race equality council to recruit and develop youth workers by setting up a special programme, which brings together people from different ethnic groups for youth activities. This programme has helped to build community cohesion in the locality – whilst also training a new cohort of youth workers.

### **Give young people a chance**

- Use the provision of 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 – not just the youth services/Connexions and education.
- Engage with disaffected young people, using ‘what works’ programmes – for example, using peers and positive role models.
- Develop a ‘youth voices’ programme which young people recognise as their own and is designed to a national standard to facilitate the development of their input into political processes, ensuring that programmes are connected to actual political processes in a meaningful manner.
- Ensure that service design and delivery is truly responsive to the points raised by young people.

### **Youth services should:**

- ensure integrated service provision that is flexible and holistic, to meet the needs of young people;
- develop youth provision which can achieve national or statutory standards (standards to be agreed between local authorities and other agencies);
- provide community cohesion training and support for staff involved in youth provision;
- ensure a diverse workforce is recruited and represented within youth services;
- ensure youth workers from a diverse range of backgrounds are employed in youth services to help build bridges between communities;
- train and use teams of workers from different backgrounds to deliver programmes, particularly in mono-cultural areas;
- 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, and
- promote values of tolerance and respect between communities.

# asylum seekers, refugee and travelling communities

## Why is this an important issue?

The dispersal of asylum seekers can result in rapid changes to the ethnic or cultural 'mix' of a geographic community. If communities are unprepared, they can feel threatened by new arrivals, giving rise to tensions that may lead to incidents of public disorder. Central government is taking practical steps to ensure that community cohesion concerns are taken into account when dispersing asylum seekers and refugees. However, local authorities have a vital role to play in working with asylum seekers and the wider community to help reduce tension.

Local authorities have a role in providing adequate services to new and existing communities. As well as providing services, local authorities and local agencies need to 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 or refugees they tend to be more understanding and accepting of differences and better able to empathise with the plight of their new neighbours. The process of raising awareness of incoming communities can and should involve local schools, youth clubs and community centres. Local press and media can also be an important means of communicating the experiences of new arrivals and explaining their circumstances.

Local authorities, working with local partners, also have an important role to play in seeking to facilitate the integration of newly arrived communities. Again, this may best be achieved through information sharing – by publicising the community and leisure activities that can be accessed locally. 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. There are problems with encouraging asylum seekers to volunteer. Police checks will often be difficult for those who want to work with

children. Voluntary organisations' insurance policies may often not cover those with a poor grasp of the English language. But the benefits are great.

Volunteering can help develop social skills and self-esteem. Such initiatives can be helpful not only as a means of helping asylum seekers and refugees feel at home in unfamiliar communities but also as a means of demonstrating to the 'host' community the benefits that new arrivals can bring.

## The benefits of this approach

These initiatives will help to achieve the following outcomes:

- a reduction in tension on the ground in dispersal areas;
- an increase in the contribution to the community from asylum seekers;
- a sense of well-being for asylum seekers in their new communities; and
- local communities feeling informed and involved in the settlement process.

The first national strategy for the integration of refugees, Full and Equal Citizens, was published in November 2000. The strategy seeks to identify what constitutes good practice in integration, building where possible on examples, which already exist in many areas of the country and elsewhere.

## How you can help

- **Locate and communicate with local voluntary organisations and refugee self-help organisations in identifying the needs of asylum seekers that could be catered for by local authorities.**

- **Work with local police to ensure that systems are in place to monitor community tension.**
- **Appoint local personnel with the appropriate skills to mediate in cases of conflict.**
- **Get the local police force to explain their role to asylum seekers as soon as possible after their arrival.**
- **Produce leaflets explaining the backgrounds and cultures of asylum seekers that can be placed in public areas such as libraries, GP surgeries and churches. The leaflets could include a 'mythbusting' section.**
- **Include a section on the local authority website offering information about the local area to asylum seekers and information on the cultures and backgrounds of asylum seekers.**
- **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 talk of their experiences at community meetings.**
- **Allocate clear responsibility for promoting positive coverage of asylum seekers and refugees in the local media.**
- **Draw up a programme of awareness raising in schools, residents associations, libraries and other such organisations.**
- **Introduce a programme of volunteering for asylum seekers,**

**matching their skills to those shortages in the local areas, where possible.**

**Produce leaflets for asylum seekers, outlining the benefits of volunteering, and the local organisations that can help them obtain a volunteering post.**

- **Communicate with local self-help organisations and other local authorities in recognising and building on examples of good practice.**

## **Travellers**

Travelling communities – both settled and nomadic – are often isolated from non-travelling communities and may be viewed with suspicion by areas where they choose to set up sites. Local authorities can play a key role in partnership with other agencies to facilitate communication and interaction between settled and travelling communities. Schools, youth clubs and community centres might invite travellers' representatives to talk to pupils about their background, experiences and ways of life. Authorities should also seek to ensure that travellers are appropriately advised and informed as to involvement in local community life.

Central government is reviewing its current policies on gypsy and traveller site management, which will include the publication of a good practice guidance for local authorities, police services and both the settled and traveller communities.

Government strategies already in place include the extension of the 2003/04 round of the Gypsy Sites Refurbishment Grant, which currently upgrades the existing network of 234 local authority authorised sites. This round will now include funding for new temporary and emergency stopping places.

# regeneration

## Why is addressing regeneration and neighbourhood renewal issues important?

Historically, the competitive nature of some regeneration funding has been a focus for inter-community and inter-neighbourhood tension. Some regeneration schemes had the effect of pitting neighbourhoods against each other in competing for resources. They relied on one-off regeneration expenditure, which made it difficult for local authorities and other local agencies to develop and deliver a long-term comprehensive approach to addressing poverty and deprivation within their locality. Furthermore, in many cases regeneration funding failed to meet the needs of ethnic minority populations and ethnic minority groups were significantly under-represented amongst those running regeneration projects.

These factors have generated resentment and suspicion across communities in some areas – a feeling that ‘other’ areas were being favoured in the allocation of resources. This seems to be exacerbated in parts of the country where ethnic minority communities live in different areas to white communities. These affect perceptions that one community is being favoured by the local authority and others who provide central funding. People in these areas do not understand why they too do not receive similar levels of funding. The reports from the local and regional roundtable meetings, convened by LGA member authorities in October and November 2001, highlighted some of these problems.

Recognition of other partners and agencies involved in regeneration activity also needs to be made. It is recognised that decisions on allocating regeneration funding do not solely rest with local authorities and local residents. Regional and sub regional partnerships also have a role. For example in London economic development, skills and training (including post 16 and adult learning) and business competitiveness issues are split between

the London Development Agency, Learning and Skills Council and Business Link for London. Their priorities are set regionally and sub regionally. In order to ensure community cohesion issues are adequately reflected, more input from local communities is encouraged.

Local authorities are encouraged to establish liaison and partnership arrangements with neighbouring boroughs and together appraise new ways to build and further enhance cohesion within their communities.

## A suggested approach

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal is designed to address many of these issues. Resources will always need to be targeted at those areas and communities suffering the worst deprivation but the new approach puts the onus on local agencies, through the local strategic partnership, to prioritise and target expenditure. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund provides unhypothecated additional funding to the most deprived local authorities to help start delivering real improvements on the ground. Further work is planned through the regeneration practitioner group established by the independent Community Cohesion Panel.

The process of defining need is confusing and can lead to perceptions of unfairness if not handled appropriately. Local authorities need to ensure that the process is open and transparent. Communicating the defining process should involve not only the target community but also those in the neighbouring areas.

Use the voluntary and community representative on the LSP as part of your communication strategy and ensure that positive aspects of the regeneration programme are highlighted to the local media.

In areas where relations between communities are already under strain, however, delivering these new

programmes and dealing with the wind down of old regeneration programmes will be an exceptionally challenging task. Local strategic partnerships, where they are established, need to consider how:

- conflict and suspicion between communities in their area can be addressed to enable everyone to participate effectively in the renewal of their neighbourhoods;
- to involve local communities in the development and decision-making of Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies so that the reasons behind priorities are understood;
- to ensure that their understanding of the conditions in local neighbourhoods is kept up to date to reflect changing needs and to take account of the new data from Census 2001;
- they promote their approach to regeneration so that perceptions of unfairness are countered;
- they can ensure that the lessons and benefits of more targeted regeneration programmes are spread and shared amongst other parts of the community; and
- segregated communities are encouraged to work together on projects of mutual benefit.

## Regeneration in rural areas

Building community cohesion is equally important within suburban and rural areas. Incidents have occurred in less populated areas that could have escalated. In some local authorities the issue of balancing the needs and interests of urban and rural areas within their own boundaries will be an important one. The more mixed the community in socio-economic terms, the wider the diversity of individual aspirations for the very local neighbourhood. The conflicting pressures that this can bring needs resolution in agreeing a shared vision for the community and building cohesion within it.

### **Provide a fair deal**

- Ensure all authorities, at district, county, unitary and regional level are involved.
- Identify the most disadvantaged and disaffected sections of the community and devise programmes that tackle their needs.
- Develop programmes that promote community cohesion as an end in itself, through cross cultural contact, understanding and respect for diversity.
- Work to develop a long-term agreement between all local agencies and funding partners in central and regional bodies, which establishes priorities for all sections of the community that is transparent and equitable.
- Develop and deliver a local neighbourhood renewal strategy to secure more jobs, better education, improved health, reduced crime, and better housing, narrowing the gap between deprived neighbourhoods and others and contributing to national targets to tackle deprivation.
- Develop clear links with regional and sub regional partnerships in planning regeneration programmes and in jointly working to build and enhance cohesion.
- Ensure that each partnership has representation from the community it serves – both majority and minority communities and, moreover, a full

understanding of the dynamics of community cohesion and a programme to promote it.

- Promote greater transparency and understanding of investment priorities, in the context of a long-term strategy.
- Develop a communications strategy to counter false perceptions about resource distribution.
- Ensure that the local strategic partnership's local action on learning plan, which will support delivery of the outcomes of the local neighbourhood renewal strategy, includes the learning needed by all sections of the community to participate fully in the regeneration of their neighbourhood.

# sports and cultural services

## Why are sports and cultural services important?

Art, sport and leisure services can be a powerful tool to engage all sections of the community and to break down barriers that exist between them. People take part in leisure and cultural activities through choice and marginalised groups are often more willing to engage with such activities than other locally/nationally government funded activities.

It can provide personal and community development through different avenues and the personal space to express and share experiences. The sector is also one of the fastest growing areas of the economy and therefore provides job opportunities.

Sport and cultural activities also provide an opportunity for 'joined up working' with other public and voluntary agencies seeking to address social issues, which contribute to community cohesion. For example, the sector can be used as a means of tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, encouraging investment and as an avenue to lead people into formal training, education and employment. Arts, sport, libraries, museums, parks and tourism can all impact on social issues.

## How to address the issue

The Department for Culture, Media and Sports has published guidance on *Local Cultural Strategies (December 2000)*, in partnership with the Local Government Association, the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers' Association and a steering group of professional associations and non-government agencies. The cultural strategy should link other area strategies and make a key contribution to the overarching community strategy.

However, as a discretionary service the potential of sport and cultural activities to address community cohesion will only be sustainable and maximised if:

- a clear strategy is established which reflects the needs of all sections of the local community; and
- this strategy is reflected within the overall corporate strategy for the local authority.

Integrating the role of these services with the community strategy and Compacts with the voluntary and community sector will help to maximise and sustain the valued inputs cultural and leisure services can bring to building a cohesive community.

### **The power of sport and culture to break down barriers**

- 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 accessing facilities and activities for particular groups. These could be proximity related, cost related, perception related or related to times that facilities are open/activities take place. And then identify actions that can be taken.
  - Involve all sections of the community in planning, delivering and evaluating. Consider how this can be done in innovative ways, eg using video or theatre.
  - Develop realistic targets for sport and cultural activities.
  - Empower and encourage schools to open up schools as a resource.
  - Introduce safeguards to ensure that PFI arrangements do not adversely impact on the ability of a school to be a community school.
  - Organise inter-school sports and cultural events.
  - Organise cultural events to promote inter-cultural and inter-faith understanding and respect.
- Mainstreaming summer activities for children and young people into all year round activities, eg by providing supported entry and exit routes.
  - Consider thematic approaches to problems such as drug use, literacy and communication skills using leisure and cultural activities to engage people from across communities/ethnic groups rather than area-based initiatives.
  - Ensure an effective information/communications plan is in place so that all sections of the community know what is available.

# education

## Why are education issues important?

One of the most frequently made observations in assessing polarised or fragmented communities is the need for communities to develop common values and a common identity. Education is often cited as the best way to introduce positive values, because the opinions formed by young people will often be those they carry with them into adulthood. Education, including pre-school activities, should bring with it enlightenment, knowledge, tolerance, understanding and appreciation of others. All forms of education provision – including schools and pre-school activities – have a vital role to play in promoting community cohesion. Schools, and educational institutions generally, are well placed to tackle social exclusion and make communities more cohesive. By raising attainment levels, and promoting the participation in education and training of all those who under achieve, educational institutions can improve opportunities for finding employment and therefore enhancing people's life chances.

## Initiatives underway to assist local authorities

The government has taken a number of steps to close the achievement gap between pupils of different ethnic origins by introducing key policies such as:

- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 which, from May 2002, placed a duty 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;
- The *Pupil Level Annual Schools Census* published in January 2003 will contain 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 will develop and encourage pupils' understanding and mutual respect of each other's differences; and
- The Learning and Skills Council has a statutory duty to promote race equality and diversity within post-16 education.

The education white paper 2001 set out the government's wish to welcome more faith schools, ie schools with a religious character, into the maintained sector where there is clear local agreement. There are currently 7,000 existing maintained schools with a religious character such as Church of England, Roman Catholic and, in smaller numbers, Muslim and other religious schools. However, as the Cattle report pointed out, a more significant issue is that of mono-cultural schools, which include many non-faith schools.

## The impact of schools on the wider community

Schools also often reflect the segregation within housing and the wider community and, therefore, cross agency work between housing and education should be promoted. Many local Learning Partnerships are well placed to co-ordinate cross agency work in support of lifelong learning and community cohesion.

As the Cattle report also highlights, the use of inter-school activities, particularly in areas of segregated schooling, can go a long way to help raise awareness of other people's cultures, break down barriers and promote shared values. Schools contain the leaders of the future, and have a huge potential to demonstrate the benefits of community cohesion and bring together groups

within the community. Citizenship education as introduced in both primary and secondary schools will encourage all pupils to respect and understand all forms of diversity and help them to develop skills and confidence to combat all forms of prejudice in becoming responsible citizens.

### **Using education to promote community cohesion**

- **Ensure 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. Anti-bullying guidance for schools already gives advice on the tracking and prevention of racist bullying. It is currently being updated in light of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.**
  - **Ensure that all 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, make a contribution to citizenship education.**
  - **Ensure that schools for which the LEA is the admission authority attract an intake that reflects their community. Encourage other schools and education providers to do so.**
- **Ensure schools promote cross-cultural 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 (and by gender) 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 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, travel to school arrangements and seating plans.**
  - **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.**
  - **Ensure every effort is made to reach out to parents, whose help is needed in creating tolerant home environments and supporting the values taught in schools.**

- Review supplementary education programmes to focus on basic education and cross-cultural contact.
- Assist the review of further education and higher education provision at a local level to ensure that it provides equal opportunities.
- Consider setting up extended schools, which provide additional facilities from the school site, to help engage local communities. (See DfES guidance on extended schools, October 2002).
- Use Adult and Community Learning to encourage greater awareness, understanding and participation amongst 'mature' learners.

# housing and planning

## Why are housing and planning issues important?

It is generally accepted that people should, wherever possible, be able to exercise meaningful choice over housing options, including the area in which they live. Choice may contribute to the concentration of people from one ethnic background in particular localities. This is not in itself a problem, and there are many examples of successful communities in the UK and overseas that have high concentrations of residents from one ethnic background. There is clear evidence, however, that concentrations of people from one ethnic background in certain areas of housing, and their separation from other groups living in adjacent areas has contributed significantly to inter-community tensions and conflict. Further evidence shows that in some towns, Asian communities are concentrated in poor quality private rented housing and impoverished members of the white community on social housing estates. In other towns Bangladeshi households are less likely to be owner occupiers than Indian or Pakistani households, and black Caribbean households are significantly over-represented in social housing. The role of local authority housing departments, housing associations (also known as RSLs) and private sector housing is crucial in reversing these trends and building cohesive communities.

## The effects of segregation

The lack of interaction, as a result of segregation, may lead to fear and mistrust. This can be passed on through generations as segregated housing leads to segregated schooling and leisure activities. Resentment can build up as area-based regeneration programmes are perceived to have unfairly favoured other groups. Equal opportunities in employment and education may be limited by the physical distance of some groups from these opportunities. The more entrenched the segregation, the harder it is to break out of it and ensure true equality of opportunity for all groups.

Housing, therefore, has an important role to play alongside other factors such as low incomes, poor health, lack of education and employment opportunities and options and limited skills.

## The impact of housing policies

The causes of housing segregation are extremely complex. Historical, cultural preferences, nearness to sources of work and cultural facilities, willingness and ability to travel, lack of experience in accessing social housing or fear of harassment are all factors. It is not straightforward to assess whether segregation is 'voluntary' or 'enforced'. Neither is it straightforward to reverse. Unless there is a comprehensive understanding of the reasons for segregation, and the aspirations of different groups, attempts to reverse segregation are likely to fail.

It is critical that policies are informed by sound information on the issues facing each group in the locality. As part of this, any barriers (perceived or otherwise) by black and minority ethnic (BME) groups in terms of their access to different housing tenures need to be clearly understood. Choice-based lettings approaches can be used to help break down barriers that exist for some BME groups in relation to certain tenures, eg social housing.

## How local authorities and housing associations can play a part

Not all of the causes of segregation are within the control of the local authority but there is still much they can do. Local authority housing departments must ask whether their current policies have helped to build integrated and mixed communities, or whether they have exacerbated social, racial and faith divisions within them. Where policies are found to have failed in this respect, action must be taken. *A Framework for Partnership* produced by LGA/National Housing Federation/Housing Corporation, suggests that local authorities and

housing associations can work together on research and service delivery that helps them understand housing need and supply in their area in addition to sharing knowledge on community participation.

The need for further advice and guidance has been identified by the Housing Practitioner Group established by the Community Cohesion Panel and the Community Cohesion Unit.

### **Long term strategic approaches through housing investment**

The financing of housing programmes is still largely tenure driven and interaction between this and segregation based on tenure needs to be addressed at national, regional and local level. Some communities have been perceived as 'winning' or 'losing' over the years according to the pattern of investment in different tenures. In the 1970s, for example, urban based renewal programmes were perceived as benefiting private rented households in inner city areas.

The 2000 housing green paper sought to tackle years of under-investment in council housing by pledging to bring all social housing to a decent standard by 2010.

The Spending Review 2002 announced that this target would be extended to cover private housing occupied by 'vulnerable households'. An ambitious target for improving the quality of rundown private sector homes occupied by low income families could help address some of the underlying causes of the disturbances in 2001 and address the imbalance caused by the previous focus on investment in social housing.

The government's intention to take forward nine sub-regional, low demand pathfinder projects to tackle those areas in the North and Midlands most acutely affected by low demand and abandonment has been welcomed. The key to the project's

success lies in stakeholders working together to a unified and comprehensive agenda – one that will deliver housing market renewal and alongside that the economic and social regeneration of the areas. As part of this, the pathfinder projects will play an important role in helping to improve community cohesion in these areas.

### **The importance of spatial planning**

The green paper *Planning: delivering a fundamental change* and the deputy prime minister's 18th July Statement *Sustainable Communities: Delivering through planning*, put forward an agenda for the reform of the planning system. The ODPM's concept of how land-use planning must operate in the future is labelled 'spatial planning'.

The reforms put forward in the green paper and the 18th July Statement propose the abolition of county structure plans and unitary development plans and their replacement with regional spatial strategies (RSS) and local development frameworks (LDF) the characteristic of these new generation of development plans is that they are spatial development strategies, as oppose to strictly land-use plans.

The ODPM perceives planning as a strategic broad ranging activity, taking a spatial (geographical), evidence based approach when formulating development plans and planning policies. Planning policy in the future will be rooted in 'a sense of place', the villages, towns, suburbs and neighbourhoods in which individuals, families and communities identify with. The RSSs and LDFs will provide the land-use element informing other partners' and stakeholders' strategies. The reformed planning system will be able to build upon its tradition of working in partnership with stakeholders to provide its partners with a positive tool to inform the delivery of environmental, regeneration and social policy objectives in any given geographical area.

The production of LDFs and the assessment of major development applications will be informed by the creation of the statements of community involvement regime. Effective community involvement in the preparation and review of development plans is crucial for achieving legitimacy for, and local ownership of, those plans that are critical to the determination of planning applications under the plan-led system.

A major aim of the planning reform agenda is to see local development planning founded in the aspirations of the community and to bring community participation higher up the agenda for local planning authorities.

### **Review housing policy**

- **Ensure that housing agencies, including housing associations, jointly review existing and proposed housing provision, to consider its impact upon cross cultural contact and community cohesion. Such reviews need to be informed by sound information on the make-up of the local community and issues and barriers they face.**
- **Review, with other services such as health, leisure and education, the impact of housing policies on access to those services. Ensure the requirements of ‘supporting people’ address community cohesion in providing appropriate support to marginalised, vulnerable and disengaged people within communities.**
- **Consult different communities about their housing preferences, and what they consider are the barriers to achieving them. Work to overcome the barriers.**
- **Encourage and facilitate inter-community contact, ensuring that methods of engagement are wide enough to reach all communities. In particular, identify the needs of under-represented groups and young people particularly in relation to housing.**
- **Work with private landlords, developers and estate agents, to challenge potentially discriminatory practices in lettings and property sales. They can also help through their procurement role, in developing new and positive approaches to the**

promotion of community cohesion and equal opportunities.

- Make sure that housing authorities improve awareness of, and access to, social housing for groups which are currently under-represented in social housing. Choice-based lettings approaches can be used to good effect here. Make use of the report *Breaking Down the Barriers*, Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), to open up access to housing, particularly objectives 1 to 4 of the report's action plan.
- Ensure that housing authorities provide accessible advice and information appropriate to the needs of different communities in the locality. There needs to be appropriate advice and assistance to help people apply for social housing. Housing authorities should evaluate, in liaison with different groups in the locality, the effectiveness of current advice.
- Build race equality and community cohesion issues into local authorities' consideration of the transfer of ownership or management responsibility of their stock to, for example, arms length management organisations. Consider housing strategies in relation to the *Race Equality Code of Practice for Housing Associations* which arose from the Race and Housing Inquiry Challenge Report. Resources should be made available not just for the physical aspects of housing improvement, but also for regenerating the wider environment and the community that lives within it – see CIH's report *Beyond Bricks and Mortar: Bringing Regeneration into Stock Transfer*.

- Implement existing good practice guidance on race and housing, equalities and diversity issues:

*Addressing the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic People: a DTLR (Housing Directorate) Action Plan (2001)*

*Joint DTLR/Housing Corporation Code of Practice for Social Landlords on Tackling Racial Harassment, DTLR 2001*

*Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategies – A Good Practice Guide* by Blackaby and Chahal (CIH, FBHO, Housing Corporation, 2000)

*Tackling Racial Harassment: ODPM/CRE/HO/ HC National Assembly for Wales 2001*

*Race Equality Toolkit – De Montfort University – H.C 2002*

[www.raceactionnet.co.uk](http://www.raceactionnet.co.uk)

### Review housing management

- Establish reappraisal systems to monitor allocations policies.
- Ensure formal and informal mechanisms for resident involvement are proportionate, representative and focused. Regular review of engagement structures need to be in place and linked to other service provision.
- Work with bodies such as the Housing Corporation and National Federation of Housing Associations in implementing race and diversity action plans and sharing good practice.
- Make available translated materials or provide access to community language speakers.
- Act promptly to address anti social behaviour (ASB) but ensure preventative approaches are in place to minimise the need for expensive or protracted legal procedures. Maximise the range of approaches to tackling ASB – ranging from mediation and Acceptable Behaviour contracts to injunctions and possession orders.
- Establish support from statutory agencies (for example police/social services) and local community groups for new households (such as asylum seekers, refugees, travellers or emerging communities) moving onto estates, particularly where those families may be at risk of hostile receptions. Ensure a planned and co-ordinated approach linked to clear and unambiguous media messages.

- Aim to ensure that when under-represented groups are exposed to social housing it is as positive an experience as possible (eg review procedures for viewing empty properties).

### Review planning procedures

- Reform the planning system to enable local authorities to be more directive in specifying the mix of property types, sizes and tenure required for particular sites.
- Ensure community cohesion is recognised as a legitimate objective for planning authorities within the planning guidance so that new development encourages greater mixing of ethnic groups, incomes and family types.

# employment and economy

## Why are these issues important?

The issue of employment is broad ranging, and affects every member of every community. Discrepancies in opportunity can affect people from a wide range of groups. We must consider age, gender, ethnicity, disability and locality as issues. All these factors, and any others that are relevant, should be tackled to ensure holistic solutions are developed and sustained.

Poor employment opportunities have an adverse impact in many areas in building cohesion. In particular, wide variation in the unemployment level within relatively small areas can breed significant resentment between communities.

One aspect of this is the research conducted recently by the Performance and Innovation Unit in the Cabinet Office into ethnic minorities and the labour market, *Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market – the Interim Analytical Response, (Feb 2002)*. This presents evidence that, despite a generally improving trend for specific ethnic minority groups, there remain significant differentials between black and minority ethnic groups and their white counterparts in terms of unemployment, earnings levels and access to promotion.

We also know that some sections of the white community are also severely disadvantaged. In particular, there are indications that some employers may operate 'postcode discrimination'.

## How to address these issues

Suitable and affordable childcare provision for all age groups can play a crucial role in maximising employment opportunities for parents. This is also important when parents are training, or retraining, and studying for employment.

Local authorities should work with public and private employers and other agencies to address poor employment opportunities through the appropriate framework for regional employment and skills action. Local authorities also need to work with local higher education institutions, further education and other forms of post-16 learning provision to address training in direct relation to employment. They should also continue with and expand on their work with regional development agencies, business representative groups, large private sector firms and other agencies with an interest in economic regeneration. In partnership they can encourage the growth of local economic clusters, which can benefit all local businesses, through for example, supply chain development.

Local authorities could also consider how the growth of corporate social responsibility can be harnessed to the greater benefit of the whole community.

Integrating workforce skills building and addressing skills mismatching (as experienced in areas of old and declining industries to be replaced by more technological industries) should be addressed through reservation programmes, work of Business Links and Learning and Skills Councils.

### **Bridging the employment gap**

- **Review employment opportunities for all sections of the community, to establish the barriers to equal opportunities and to develop a programme of remediation (delivered on a cross cultural basis).**
- **Take action to raise the expectations and, where possible, facilitate the progression of under achieving groups, through for example participation in the Entry to Employment programme currently being introduced; and challenging of views about stereotypical occupations.**
- **Encourage programmes that ensure equal access to all public sector agencies and subsequent advancement.**
- **Develop compacts with all local employers to develop equal access to the full range of employment opportunities.**
- **Develop special assistance in areas of greatest disadvantage, through regional and national aid programmes, to tackle the problems of de-population and low demand housing.**
- **Ensure proper and effective representation from the business sector on the LSP.**
- **Monitor recruitment, uptake and retention of work-based learning routes for evidence of unrepresentative recruitment (eg numbers of young people in work with training – such as Modern Apprenticeship – and those without training, by ethnic origin).**

### **Local government as an employer and as a purchaser of services**

Authorities should consider their own role as major employers especially under their specific duty on employment made as a result of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. In particular, it is important that the workforce of local authorities is seen to be representative of those who live in the local areas. Unfortunately, in many areas that have populations that are ethnically diverse, the local authority workforce is much less diverse, particularly at senior levels. Addressing this is a key issue – if the authority is to maintain credibility, then it will need to develop a strategy to address this and to meet the requirements in forthcoming UK legislation to give effect to the European Directive on discrimination in the employment field.

Local authorities now purchase a significant volume of services from the private and voluntary sector. Proactive use of the new powers to take workforce matters into account in contracting could contribute to the development of, and improvement in, jobs by contractors. There are some legal constraints arising from European public procurement rules, but there is more scope than most authorities are aware of and use.

In relation to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the public duty, the CRE will be publishing a guide to Race Equality and Procurement in March 2003.

### Set an example as an employer

- Public authorities need to ensure they are compliant with the specific duty on employment introduced by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
- Conduct detailed ethnic monitoring to establish the composition of your workforce.
- Develop an action plan, where the workforce is unrepresentative, for addressing the issues including targets for representation from different sections of the community and by gender, utilising positive action schemes where possible.
- Consider mentoring programmes for ethnic minority staff, outreach into local communities, participation in schemes such as Common Purpose using head-hunters and secondments for senior vacancies.

# community safety and policing

## The role of crime and disorder reduction partnerships

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 establishes local crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) led by local authorities and police. They are required to conduct a full audit of crime and disorder issues in their areas and then develop and implement a strategy for dealing with the main problems identified. CDRPs are required to consult with a wide range of local public, private, voluntary and community groups to formulate and implement their crime and disorder strategies.

The measures in the Police Reform Act 2002 reflect the increasing contribution that crime and disorder and its impact has on the health, well-being and economic welfare of neighbourhoods. The 1998 Act and the amendments made by the Police Reform Act recognise that tackling crime and disorder is not a matter for the police alone but should engage the community. Working in partnership means adopting a cross-cutting approach which not only identifies more effective interventions to tackle crime and disorder, but also delivering solutions which help create safer neighbourhoods which contribute to healthier, more productive communities.

## The need to build trust and confidence

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.

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report highlighted the importance of the use of stop and search powers in the context of policing and community relations. A draft PACE Code A contains new provisions. These aim to significantly increase both the confidence of the public and officers using the powers. These include:

- a new obligation on forces to involve police authorities in the monitoring and supervision of stop and search records by communities;
- an officer who has carried out a search must now give a copy of the record made immediately to the person searched; and
- the Code gives a clearer definition of what constitutes 'reasonable grounds for suspicion' in the exercise of stop and search powers.

The Lawrence Steering Group has agreed a work programme to look at five key issues that were central to the Lawrence Inquiry Report. These are: racist incidents; stop and search; recruitment, retention, and progression of minority ethnic officers; community and race relations training; and trust and confidence of minority ethnic communities in the wider Criminal Justice System. In particular, the work will assess the current situation, evaluating the impact of the relevant recommendations and making proposals for the future. Monitoring progress in these areas will figure in the work of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Police Standards Unit.

### Ongoing work at central, force and basic command unit level

The Community Cohesion Practitioner Group on policing and crime is developing a definition of what community cohesion means in the context of policing. There is also a range of work underway embedding and mainstreaming community cohesion within the police reform programme. This includes:

- the first 'National Policing Plan' reflects the importance of community cohesion, and this is critical as it will determine the national policing agenda;
  - the Police Performance Assessment Framework will include indicators to measure forces' performance in building cohesive communities;
  - the government, together with Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and practitioners, is currently developing and sharing good practice so that forces are able to systematically identify priority areas where social tension is high or rising and why, and to commit resources necessary to achieve long-term change. These include: NCF guidance on policing community disorder, ACPO operational guidance on the management of inter-ethnic conflict, and further ACPO work on effective community involvement and the development of tactical policing options to support community cohesion;
  - the full establishment of the National Centre for Policing Excellence in April 2003 will be an important part of developing knowledge and expertise in community cohesion, and disseminating good practice;
  - continue the work to establish a service, which reflects the community it serves and which progresses minority ethnic officers at the same rate as white colleagues. This will be monitored through the Lawrence Steering Group sub-group on recruitment, retention and progression; and
- for the revised PACE Code A, Centrex, formerly National Police Training (NPT), have prepared a full training package. This includes four packages to cover probationers, substantive constables, supervisors and strategic managers.

The promotion of community cohesion and community safety should be central to the work of the police, and policing strategies and tactics should be consistent with approaches that support the achievement of those objectives. The reasons why communities fragment can be varied, but disproportionate vulnerability, high crime levels and the alienation of young people can all play a part. It is critical that forces are able to systematically identify 'priority areas' where social tension is high or rising, identify the causes and commit the resources necessary to sustain long-term change. In this context, the ability of forces to support neighbourhood renewal initiatives in partnership with local authorities and other agencies will be of particular importance to crime reduction.

The government, together with ACPO, and the policing and crime practitioner group, is currently developing best practice and guidance for this work and forces should look to embed it into 'mainstream policing'.

### What local authorities can do

Local authorities have a statutory requirement to work with police and others on crime and disorder. They are also required to consider the impact of crime and disorder on the exercise of all their functions. These requirements are in place to reflect the seriousness of the impact of crime and disorder on individuals and the effects on community cohesion. Delivery of local authority services must be reviewed against their contribution to reducing crime and disorder and raising community safety. Some local authorities have raised their commitment to CDRPs by creating multi-disciplinary teams to support service delivery. This provides senior level input into the

partnerships, resource allocation, leadership and a strong sense of ownership.

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

### **The role of police authorities**

It is the job of police authorities to make sure that there is an efficient and effective local police force, which gives best value to the whole local community. Police authorities set the strategic direction for the force through three-year strategic and annual policing plans, and hold the chief constables' to account on behalf of the local community for the policing service delivered through consultation and dialogue. Police authorities are increasingly building strong links between individual members of the police authority and divisional commanders at Basic Command Unit (BCU) level and the performance assessment framework being developed for policing will increasingly focus attention on monitoring at BCU level.

The relevant police authority member can therefore act as a powerful bridge between discussions between partners at BCU level, and the strategic considerations of the police authority and chief constable of the force.

### **Crack down on crime**

- **Ensure CDRP's have effective stakeholder representation (including a housing association (or RSL) nominated representative) on the partnership body in addition to active involvement in task groups addressing key objective areas.**
- **Establish targets and actions with the crime and disorder strategy, ensuring that these are reviewed and measured.**
- **Ensure that there are good relations between police authorities and forces and the local authority with regular meetings to ensure close working.**
- **Review with the police authority and force the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour generally and at the local and neighbourhood community level; take account of existing and developing strategic policing plans in drawing up local strategies through the CDRPs; and, work with the police authority and force to ensure that police, local authority and other community safety resources are appropriately targeted.**
- **Review and assess local authorities' contribution to crime reduction and safer more cohesive communities across the full range of their service and strategic responsibilities and to work constructively with the police including the sharing of information.**
- **Work with the police authorities, forces and other partners to ensure that strong links are developed with**

**all sections of the community through recognisable patch responsibilities, with clear and rapid communication channels, especially with local young people, and the ability to respond to and manage rumours.**

- **Work with police authorities, forces and other partners to ensure consistent high standards of diversity/community and race relations training in public agencies.**
- **Encourage effective multi-agency arrangements for addressing racist incidents and where possible set in place third party reporting arrangements. Use these arrangements for monitoring particular hotspots such as badly run pubs that may act as a focal point for racist activities.**
- **Ensure wide consultation on the crime and disorder reduction partnerships involving all sections of the community. Ensure that the consultative mechanisms used actually reach and actively involve all communities, in particular 'Hard to Reach' groups.**
- **Discuss with the police authority a strategy to ensure that the police respond to all racist and provocative incidents with vigour on the basis of pre-established routines.**
- **Develop a contingency plan for any future disturbances and to identify and respond to triggers which may increase community tensions or potential social disorder.**

# press and media

## Their role and impact

The independent review report, led by Ted Cattle, highlighted the positive and negative roles that the media can play (particularly local and regional media), in framing the perceptions of local people. Many local authorities are all too aware of the power that local and regional press can wield in this respect. There are examples of authorities developing close relations with local papers and other media to promote more positive reporting of events in the community and to promote better liaison between the media and community representatives. This is something that could be essential in helping to dispel rumours and to project clear messages to the whole community. Local authorities should use their own media such as newsletters to promote community cohesion (eg advertise shared activities and successes and bust myths). Positive media relations prove productive in not only building community cohesion, but also in allaying other concerns such as the fear of crime and downturns in local economies.

Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council has worked with the local press to ensure sensitive and balanced reporting of the introduction of asylum seekers and refugees to the area. This is thought to have been a key factor in the welcome that local people have extended to their new neighbours.

Leicester City Council services a community forum chaired by the editor of the Leicester Mercury. This allows a direct channel of communication between community representatives and the local media that is of benefit to all parties.

The Independent Broadcasting Commission is keen that its constituent members develop positive relations with the communities they serve. Offering positions to media representatives on regeneration partnership, the LSPs or community planning forums can help to build positive relations between communities and the media.

A practitioner group focussing on press and media issues will be established working to the independent Community Cohesion Panel and the government's Community Cohesion Unit. Working with the LGA, this group will also look at larger regional and national media, often owned by national conglomerates.

### **Make sure the press and media hear and see the picture**

- Ensure that the press and media are keeping pace with improving community relations and reporting on positive developments as well as setbacks.
- Invite the press and media to discuss a protocol between themselves and other agencies to ensure extremist views do not predominate, nor do such views get reported in ways in which they prey upon fears and prejudice.
- Encourage press and media participation in strategic and delivery partnerships.
- Encourage the press and media to promote a positive view of diversity, dispel ignorance and promote understanding – again covered by a local protocol.
- Consider whether the press and media have fair representation from all sections of the community amongst their staff and offer training in local diversity issues.
- Provide press with information relating to community cohesion activities and achievements.
- Use the local press and media more generally to promote an honest and open dialogue about attitudes, behaviour and culture – again within the protocol.

## references

This document refers to many existing guidance notes that are relevant. For ease of reference the key documents are listed below.

*Preparing Community Strategies: Government Guidance to Local Authorities*  
(ODPM, December 2000)

*Community Leadership: What is it?*  
(LGA, March 2001)

*The Duty to Promote Race Equality: The statutory code of practice and non-statutory guides for public authorities*  
(CRE, May 2002)

*Faith and Community*  
(Local Government Association in association with Inner Cities Religious Council, Active Community Unit, Home Office, and the Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2002)

*Local Strategic Partnerships: Government Guidance*  
(ODPM, March 2001)

*Representing the People: Democracy and Diversity*  
(LGA, July 2001)

*Hear By Right: Setting Standards for the Active Involvement of Young People in Democracy*  
(LGA/National Youth Agency, July 2001)

*Learning to Listen: Core Principles for the Involvement of Children and Young People*  
(Children and Young Peoples Unit, November 2001)

*Resourcing Excellent Youth Services: Adequacy and Sufficiency Document*  
(DfES, Dec 2002)

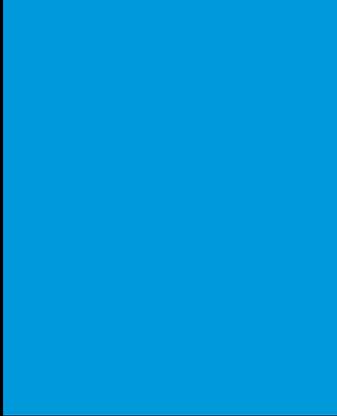
*Full and Equal Citizens*  
(Home Office, November 2000)

*Local Cultural Strategies*  
(DCMS/LGA, December 2000)

*A Framework for Partnership*  
(LGA/National Housing Federation/  
Housing Corporation, September 2001)

There are further references to more specific guidance on particular issues within the relevant sections of the main body of this document. Full details about LGA publications can be found on the LGA's website at [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)





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