



Report to Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 20th October 2016

Report of: Laraine Manley

Subject: Sheffield City Council's Draft Cohesion and Integration
Strategy and Action Plan

Author of Report: Angela Greenwood

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	X
Other	

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

Consider the proposals and provide views comments and recommendations ahead of the report going to Cabinet on 23rd November 2016.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers other than appendices to the report.

Category of Report: OPEN

**Briefing Paper for the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy
Development Committee**

**Sheffield City Council's Draft Cohesion and Integration Strategy and Action
Plan**

Purpose of Report

To explain the Council's new cohesion and integration action plan: what it is, why we need it and what it will do.

Why we need it

Partners in the city, including the Council, have worked collaboratively together during 2015 and 2016 to co-produce a new Community Cohesion strategy for the city. This is known as Sheffield Together: the Sheffield Cohesion Framework and has been a unique and highly regarded piece of work. It has been co-produced jointly with the voluntary, community and faith sectors through the Cohesion Advisory Group (CAG), an independent representative group in the city throughout its development. It is a framework for organisations to build their own cohesion actions from. This framework can be found at the end of this report in Appendix A.

Sheffield City Council (SCC) is now being asked what specific actions they can contribute that retains and strengthens community cohesion and integration in the city. This will be in the form of a council wide action plan for the next 3 years including to ensure our day to day and specialist services all contribute to building cohesion in the city, whilst assessing and minimising any negative un-cohesive actions in our daily activity.

The City has changed a lot since the first Cohesion Strategy for Sheffield back in 2008, produced by the Sheffield First Partnership. The city has changed in terms of its population, the economy and social and political issues.

The reduction in the public sector following budget cuts during this time means a joint partnership approach is necessary to maximise the effect of any actions, with each organisation contributing meaningful and achievable actions relevant to their aims within their current resource constraints, working together out in localities and communities in their daily work.

What it is

A plan of actions the council will do, using the cohesion framework and principles as its guidance and steer. SCC wishes to put their actions into a new Cohesion and Integration Action Plan that includes all our portfolios work, and ensures our day to day and specialist services all contribute to building cohesion in the city.

We will also include changes to our existing or planned new work that will minimise any negative actions in our daily activity. This document will incorporate the existing actions of other departments.

We will also focus not only on our services but our leadership role within the city on social cohesion issues.

Links to the Corporate Plan

The new Community Cohesion Action Plan will help the Council achieve all of its Corporate Plan Priorities in a number of ways out in the communities. Some examples are below.

Thriving Neighbourhoods and Communities

Cohesion building is an end in itself – supporting people and communities to live in harmony with respect for each other, it is an ongoing process and needs to continue as communities change and develop. Some communities will need specific help, either through supporting their community infrastructure in practical ways, through ward pot grants, additional English language classes and engaging more with their community and cultural activities. Other communities lack community infrastructure and may need support to develop their own voice and activities.

Our actions will also be a means of preventing escalation towards scapegoating vulnerable people, hate crime, and antisocial behaviour and actions will be targeted at these areas working with our new joint housing and police ASB/community safety team.

Strong Economy

Sheffield City council has a key role in developing Sheffield's economy and Creative Sheffield will be the main route for cohesive actions with the local business sector. Our business partners have a responsibility to develop opportunities and services in a way that addresses issues of economic and social inequality. In so doing they will be making an important contribution to cohesion in the city, attracting investment, encouraging more visitors and helping to achieve Sheffield's economic potential.

Tackling inequalities

Investing time and action in our most deprived communities will aid cohesion. Cohesion is often not threatened by diversity but by inequality and poverty. We will be working closely with our communities through the Equality Hubs with a number of planned actions to build on our existing cohesion work with the Hubs.

Locality working is our other route we will use. Taking a community development approach and taking time to listen to our communities through our locality working is required, ensuring that emerging local issues are passed onto the relevant agencies quickly and hate crimes and racist views are challenged.

The new Cohesion Strategy links to the work of the Sheffield Fairness Commission and identifies the importance of actions that can tackle issues of inequality and injustice. We presented yesterday and discussed links in both our work

Better Health and Wellbeing

Evidence suggests that issues such as social isolation and an inability to access services can have a negative effect on people's health and wellbeing. Sheffield City

Council now has the responsibility for public health in the city and we will continue to work with our partners

Areas of the City will need to be prioritised where people have the hardest time accessing services and actions developed to link social isolation and cohesion. Our work will also link to the Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

An in-touch organisation

We need to continuously respond to the changing needs of our customers to meet the increasing diverse needs of individuals in our city.

This starts by ensuring we know who our customers are, at the moment and in the future.

At the heart of the strategy is a commitment to regard all encounters between people (formal and informal) as an opportunity for building cohesion in the city. This includes online encounters.

Our online encounters between community organisations and our service users (e.g. tenants, the public) need improvement. We are working on a new council website to ensure it is more user-friendly.

Our services need to be redesigned to meet the diverse needs of individuals in Sheffield in 2016. This could be virtually online as well as on the street or in person in the community. Better communication in all forms is essential in any actions developed.

The SCC Cohesion Action plan

The Cohesion Framework is our guidance document to embed cohesion work in our everyday work within the Council. The aim is to get all organisations we work with to embed cohesion work in their everyday activity and services by leading by example. In terms of our Council Portfolios, Actions identified so far include, but are not limited to:

Council wide

- Training for all front line staff on migration trends and Sheffield's population changes
- Dedicated Training for managers on migration and cohesion issues

Communities

- Further developing the new community development approach to working in communities affected by rapid migration

- Supporting our valuable VCF sector working on cohesion and integration issues in the city by providing support to those groups and continued guidance and advice when needed, working in partnership on new ideas and projects.
- Continuing to develop ideas together in partnership through the 2 tier Strategic and Partnership cohesion and migration meetings
- Supporting our VCF sector through the Grant Aid review to ensure cohesion is embedded in their daily work and activities.
- Creation of a new £30,000 fund for groups to apply for to undertake prevention work and create new innovative projects that aid cohesion and integration.
- Using trained Mediators to go out into communities where there are tensions, racism and fear. And to have those difficult conversations in a safe and controlled environment so that people can voice their concerns and worries and for us all to listen and learn what the core issues are. Then with the community learn how as organisations working in those communities we can address those and move things forwards in those localities.
- New joint ASB/Community Safety Team to continue to address current concerns over crime in communities, perceived and recorded crime through the police system
- Work with Government on counter terrorism and counter extremism strategies for the city including PREVENT training for organisations.
- Practical Support for community organisations wanting to enhance cohesion and integration in their communities
- Specific training on migration and cohesion issues for front line housing staff as the new housing plus model rolls out from October 2016.
- Continued support for Councillors as community leaders and supporting our partners and groups in localities through the locality working model.
- Use of libraries for engaging with local communities in the heart of their community and promoting libraries as a free and safe space to do homework and learn about Sheffield life.
- Health: Progressing the recommendations of the Roma health needs assessment
- Progress of the people keeping well approach to locally delivered prevention health care services

- Continued public health campaigns and work in communities

Children, young people and families (CYPF) Huda Ahmed/Pam Smith

- ESOL provision: the importance of all citizens being able to speak English and be proud of it, as well as other languages.
- Delivery of more targeted English language classes including informal and pre entry learning in a family and community setting
- More collaboration between ESOL providers on the ground to ensure the individual gets the most suitable ESOL for them.

Place (Karen Lewis)

- Working with our Friends of Groups on awareness training on cohesion and integration issues
- Continued use and promotion to groups of the use of parks and open spaces for cultural and celebration activity
- Parks being a free open space for everyone to enjoy

Resources (Adele Robinson)

- Continued development of the Equalities Hubs for promoting cohesion and having regular and open discussions on current cohesion-threatening issues since Brexit

English Language Throughout

- Embedded in all actions is the need to encourage integration through English language. English is needed for social mixing, for work, for health and education opportunities

Recommendations:

That the Scrutiny Board consider the contents of this paper and make any comments or observations.

Appendix A: Sheffield Together

Sheffield Together - **The Sheffield Cohesion Strategic Framework for Action**

A renewed Cohesion Strategy for Sheffield

Sheffield has created a **strategic framework** to help guide organizations, groups, communities in the city to sign up to **cohesion commitments** and develop **action plans** for a cohesive city.

It is being developed as a collaboration between partners – the lead partners in the co-production being Sheffield City Council (SCC) and the Sheffield Cohesion Advisory Group.

The Cohesion, Migration and Integration Strategic Group, a partnership group chaired by the chief executive of SCC, has formally agreed the Strategic Framework outlined below and will act as guardians of the strategic framework and its implementation.

The CMI Strategic Group invites partner organisations and groups to consider how they can implement the strategic framework and develop action plans in the context of their own circumstances and opportunities.

Sign up to the cohesion strategic framework

The office of the Vice Chancellor of Sheffield University has made a corporate statement of support for the cohesion strategy and has offered the expertise in the Social Science Faculty to support the strategy through research and development.

The South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner has requested SYP to sign up to the strategic framework and align action plans with the Commissioner's Strategic Priorities. A Chief Inspector has been asked to lead on these developments.

Several VCF organisations have developed Action Plans or have committed to do so.

Children, Young People and Families Directorate initiated their own cohesion strategy which has been aligned with the Strategic Framework. There is good engagement within public health, youth services and some schools.

We need to push for more corporate activity, for example, to promote equality of opportunity and diversity from employers across all sectors - cohesion is not only neighbourhood facing.

29th April 2016

Sheffield Together: the Sheffield Cohesion Strategic Framework for Action



Statement of purpose

"We, the people of Sheffield will *continue to work* towards making our city a place where everyone is made to feel welcome and valued, in a community where everyone is treated with dignity & respect regardless of age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, language, belief, religion, or financial wealth, and that these values shall apply equally within the family unit, community and places of learning and work, recreation or worship."

What do we mean by cohesion in Sheffield?

Cohesion means **people living and working in harmony with respect for each other**. This requires building good relationships with neighbours and across the city. We recognize that good relations require a commitment to equality and justice. We regard economic opportunity and wellbeing as essential conditions for cohesion.

Why cohesion?

-  We all benefit – not just particular social groups. Social cohesion creates a safe and resilient city for all.
-  Its good for economic prosperity of the city, its people and its businesses.

What factors impact on cohesion?

"Cohesion is not threatened by diversity, it is threatened by deprivation"
(Ratcliffe & Newman, 2011)

Inequality (economic, social and educational) undermines cohesion, especially in the context of segregation.

Fear of the unknown and feeling powerless and insignificant undermines cohesion. The tendency is to **blame others** rather than take responsibility for ones situation.

In such situations people are **vulnerable to being exploited**, and recruited to extremism.

Diversity improves community life when there is relative prosperity and little segregation. The wealth gap undermines community life.

Substantial and rapid change creates challenges for services (public and private) to respond. Need for increased school places, more housing, increased NHS resources.

International events can have major impacts on cohesion in Sheffield – their impact sends shock waves around the world, through the media and through people who have family connections in far away places.

Currently **ISIS in Syria and Iraq** via social media is drawing vulnerable and idealistic young people to their cause. This creates immense distress to families and fear in the wider population. Recent attacks in European cities combined with escalation of recruitment by ISIS have increased monitoring of perceived potential recruits. Although safeguards are necessary, increased monitoring can create a climate of suspicion and threaten cohesion.

Media reporting can increase the stigmatising of targeted groups, and it can feel unsafe to offer alternative views for fear of escalating and perpetuating a *media frenzy*. Yet, *alternative narratives* are essential to allow people to form more complex views, beyond simplistic headlines. Positive stories of working together need to be told. What helps is: critical attitudes to the press; diversity awareness –

of history and situations in the context of racism, or of other prejudices that stigmatise; facts that dispel the myths.

Reduced capacity: Cohesion is also potentially undermined within organisations in all sectors when they have to reduce capacity while maintaining or increasing service levels. In some contexts, communications have to be streamlined to the bare essentials, whole hearted people have less capacity to deal with the exception, and clients that they are not welcome, they don't belong.

Threats to resilience - risks and realities. Need to be prepared for disruption - important not to be complacent. What situations could make Sheffield vulnerable to reduced cohesion? What can be done in preparation – to prevent or mediate impact?

Working towards cohesion involves:

- Building relationships where power is shared on a basis of cooperation and collaboration
- Seeing each other as neighbours, recognising similarities and hearing each others' stories
- Do what we can to reduce barriers, particularly related to educational, economic and other inequalities
- Encouraging integration alongside addressing issues of differences in development between communities
- Recognising that community tensions are natural - that all voices need to be heard.
- Supporting skills development that enables people to work through differences and express their needs through open and honest discussions.

The Sheffield Commitment – the 8 point commitment to cohesion in Sheffield

1. We recognise that **cohesion building is an end in itself** – supporting people and communities to live in harmony with respect for each other – and is also a means of preventing escalation towards scapegoating vulnerable people, hate crime, and antisocial behaviour.
2. At the heart of the strategic framework is a commitment to **regard all encounters between people (formal and informal) as an opportunity for building cohesion in the city**. This includes encounters between neighbours and between community organisations, and with volunteers; between staff of service provider organisations and their service users (e.g. tenants, the public); between partner organisations; and within organisations, how staff relate to each other, and how managers relate to staff. At every level, and with every opportunity, cohesion or lack of it is being modelled whether we are aware of it or not.
3. Austerity and increasing financial inequalities are undermining cohesion. Many people are poorer and have become fearful. The tendency is to look for 'who is to blame'. It produces what has been described as 'siege mentality'; and the stranger, the unknown other, the migrant, and other discriminated against groups, are being scapegoated. **We need to acknowledge scapegoating is happening** and challenges prejudice in a way that engages and informs.
4. The strategic framework links to the work of the Sheffield Fairness Commission and identifies the importance of actions that can **tackle issues of inequality and injustice**.

5. The strategic framework is underpinned by the **Sheffield Commitment: to diversity and inclusion, a welcoming place to be, living and working with respect for each other**. The *Sheffield Commitment* is to be aware of the potential consequences of one's actions – as individuals and as services – and to commit wherever possible to act in ways that build positive relationships and promote cohesion.
6. The *Sheffield Commitment* arises from **values historically important in Sheffield and to Sheffielders** – for example those based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A first step will be to confirm these values and the feeling of welcome and commitment that arises from them.
7. The *Sheffield Commitment* is **supported by leaders from all sectors** in Sheffield.

FOR GROUPS, ORGANISATIONS and SERVICES

8. The *Sheffield Commitment* includes a **commitment to co-design and co-production**, between statutory services, and with relevant community organisations in all neighbourhood facing initiatives.

Creative opportunities. Although the *Sheffield Commitment* is focused on how we do things, partners with influence over structural factors – for example creation of economic opportunity, development of services – have a responsibility in their domain to **develop such opportunities and services** in a way that addresses issues of economic and social inequality, knowing that by doing so they are making an important contribution to cohesion in the city.

Development of implementation infrastructure – provisional thinking – will require resources

1. **All sectors in Sheffield will need the capability and capacity to implement the cohesion strategic framework through action plans.**

We need to encourage and support cross sector partnership working, which is being modelled by the co-production of the cohesion strategy.

The multi-partner Cohesion, Migration and Integration Strategic Group is overseeing development of the strategy. It may need to create a subgroup to more directly oversee implementation.

Take to Sheffield Partnership Board to promote commitment, partnership working and leadership across all sectors.

2. **VCF cohesion co-ordination - infrastructure to manage implementation of the cohesion strategy in the vcf sector.**

This would hold the Strategic Framework, and be the champion for cohesion commitments made by vcf groups/organisations, promote *stories of cohesion*, examples of good practice, Action Plans, news items, planned events, reports, awards and so on.

The Cohesion Commitment is an umbrella commitment that can embrace other pledges, charters, commitments in Sheffield (fairness, women's, disability, LGBT etc). We need to support these different initiatives to work together. Then to create

an Action Plan with objectives and outcomes, by viewing the organisations activities through a *cohesion lens*.

It will be important to clarify how this infrastructure relates to the Equalities Hub.

3. Develop a community dialogue and development forum - to build capacity and capability in the city. Many organisations are contributing to community dialogue and development in the city and this forum will link up those initiatives, building on best practice.

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