

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting24th April 2008

1. Title of Item/Report

Community Cohesion Strategy

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet considered a report that introduced the Council's draft Community Strategy and requested the approval of it and its action plan.

The importance of Community Cohesion had become magnified in the wake of the unrest in Bradford and Oldham in 2001 and the London terrorist attacks of 2005. These events had prompted the government to set up the Commission on Integration and Cohesion to make recommendations for improving cohesion across the country. This report "Our Shared Future" was released in the autumn of 2007 and had informed the development of the draft strategy.

The Commission identified a cohesive community as one where there was a shared sense of individual rights and responsibilities, those from different backgrounds had similar opportunities and strong positive relationships, where there was a strong sense of trust in local institutions and a focus on common values. This cohesiveness could be influenced by amongst other issues, population characteristics, crime, satisfaction and deprivation levels as well as perceived and actual discrimination.

In Stockton on Tees, the key issues which could influence community cohesion were levels of resident satisfaction, levels of deprivation in some areas and perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour.

In order to prevent a breakdown in Community Cohesion in the Borough, Stockton Renaissance established a Community Cohesion task group with representation from across all sectors in the partnership, to develop the Borough's Community Cohesion Strategy.

This strategy had been developed and approved by Stockton Renaissance. It outlined the key themes for promoting community cohesion in Stockton-on-Tees. These were:

- Promoting equality of opportunity

- Community well-being and pride
- Meeting needs and aspirations
- Celebrating diversity and commonality
- Creating boundaries
- Reducing conflict and tension
- Myth busting
- Empowerment

These themes ensured the strategy was in line with the recommendations of the Commission but were also reflective of the borough's unique circumstances.

The action plan to accompany the strategy had been developed through a process of consultation with the various thematic partnerships of Renaissance who had adopted the draft strategy and agreed actions, milestones and dates where appropriate.

Delivery against the strategy and its action plan would be supported by the Council's Diversity Team with progress being reported on a bi-annual basis.

Cabinet was provided with copies of the draft strategy and action plan

RESOLVED that the Community Cohesion Strategy and its action plan be approved.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The Community Cohesion Strategy was key in delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy in particular the Stronger Communities theme. Approving the Community Cohesion Strategy would help the Council work with partners across Renaissance to deliver against various legislative requirements including the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and the Education and Assessments Act 2006. The Strategy had been approved by Stockton Renaissance.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not Applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not later than Midnight on Friday 2nd May 2008

Proper Officer
28 April 2008