

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**24 April 2008**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **CABINET DECISION**

**Corporate and Social Inclusion – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Laing**

#### **COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY**

1. Summary

This report introduces the draft Community Cohesion Strategy and requests Cabinet approve both the strategy and its action plan.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

Approve the Community Cohesion Strategy and its action plan.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The Community Cohesion Strategy is key in delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy in particular the Stronger Communities theme. Approving the Community Cohesion Strategy will 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 has been approved by Stockton Renaissance.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.**

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## **CABINET DECISION**

### **COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY**

#### **SUMMARY**

This report introduces the draft Community Cohesion Strategy and requests Cabinet approve both the strategy and its action plan.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended to:

Approve the Community Cohesion Strategy and its action plan.

#### **DETAIL**

##### **Community Cohesion**

1. The importance of Community Cohesion has become magnified the wake of the unrest in Bradford and Oldham in 2001 and the London terrorist attacks of 2005. This 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 has informed the development of this strategy.
2. The Commission identified a cohesive community as one where there is a shared sense of individual rights and responsibilities, those from different backgrounds have similar opportunities and strong positive relationships, where there is a strong sense of trust in local institutions and a focus on common values. This cohesiveness can be influenced by amongst other issues, population characteristics, crime, satisfaction and deprivation levels as well as perceived and actual discrimination.

##### **Stockton's Community Cohesion Strategy**

3. In Stockton on Tees, the key issues which could influence community cohesion are levels of resident satisfaction, levels of deprivation in some areas and perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour.
4. 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.

5. This strategy has now been developed and approved by Stockton Renaissance. It outlines the key themes for promoting community cohesion in Stockton-on-Tees. These are:
- 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 ensure the strategy is in line with the recommendations of the Commission but are also reflective of the borough's unique circumstances.

6. The action plan to accompany the strategy has been developed through a process of consultation with the various thematic partnerships of Renaissance who have adopted the draft strategy and agreed actions, milestones and dates where appropriate.
7. Delivery against the strategy and its action plan will be supported by the Council's Diversity Team with progress being reported on a bi-annual basis.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8. There are no financial implications arising as a direct result of this report.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9. Whilst there is no legal duty to produce a Community Cohesion Strategy, doing so helps the Council meet legislative requirements including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Education and Assessments Act 2006.

#### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

10. The Community Cohesion Strategy is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

#### **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

11. The Community Cohesion Strategy supports all themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy in particular the Stronger Communities theme.

#### **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

12. The Community Cohesion Strategy has been subject to an equalities impact assessment and has been found to have a positive effect in promoting equality and diversity.

#### **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

13. The strategy has been developed by a sub-group of Stockton Renaissance and is informed by the Council's usual consultation activities. All Thematic Partnerships of Renaissance have contributed to the strategy and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Social Inclusion has been consulted.

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Background Papers

None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

The Community Cohesion Strategy effects all wards in the borough.

Property

There are no links to the Council's Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan