

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive Citizens and Communities

Report to the Executive Board

Date: 21 September 2016

Subject: Strong and Resilient Communities – A Refreshed Approach to Delivering Cohesion and Prevent Across the City

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report sets out a refreshed approach outlining how the Council will seek to work differently across directorates to deliver new ways of working which helps improve community relations across the city. The Strong and Resilient Communities project will seek to harness the combined effort of staff and activities across a continuum ranging from universal work that takes place in all communities through to more targeted ways of working in specific areas of the city. It will be delivered as a strand of work within the context of the new Breakthrough programme; 'Strong Communities Benefitting from a Strong City'
2. The Strong and Resilient Communities project will build on existing activity to promote good community relations, cultural & religious respect, and the celebration of diversity, whilst acknowledging that in some areas of the city a more targeted approach is needed to develop resilience and address vulnerabilities linked to potential radicalisation.

Recommendations

3. Executive Board is asked to:

- Endorse the refreshed approach to cohesion and prevent outlined in this report.
- Agree the staged approach to the Pathfinder projects set out in section 4.10 of this report as follows:
 - **Stage 1:** Undertake consultation with services and elected members to identify issues, skills gaps and agree a range of activities – commence by October 2016
 - **Stage 2:** Development of local cohesion plans for each of the 10 Community Committee Areas – to 31 March 2017
 - **Stage 3:** Build the capacity and confidence of frontline staff and elected members – to April 2017 (then ongoing)
 - **Stage 4:** Identify pathfinder projects – 1st project to commence in Autumn of 2016; and
- Request the Chief Officer Communities takes forward the development and implementation of the staged approach and the Pathfinder projects and provides a progress report in 2017.
- Request the Chief Officer Communities provide an update report on the implications of the Casey Review for Leeds following national publication of the report.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 For the Council's Executive Board to endorse and provide comment on the refreshed approach outlined in this report in relation to cohesion and the statutory Prevent Duty and support the development of new ways of working, seeking to embed cohesion, compassion and mutual respect across all the city's communities. The approach seeks to build on good work that has already taken place in the city over a number of years. It provides for improved coordination and harnesses a cross council contribution that also actively engages different sectors and communities in Leeds, encouraging them to contribute their knowledge, strengths and expertise to our collective endeavours on cohesion over the coming years.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Leeds has always been a welcoming and compassionate city, both to its residents and visitors, regardless of background, ethnicity or faith and we are proud of our diversity and multiculturalism. As the make-up of the city's population changes, the Council recognises that this change will bring both opportunities and also challenges. We want all of our communities to feel included in the life of the city and we want new residents and visitors to feel welcome whilst also acknowledging that change can create a sense of unease and may leave some communities feeling isolated from wider society.
- 2.2 A lack of community cohesion can contribute to the conditions where tensions can flourish. The city's work to tackle this issue should embed cultural and religious respect and pursue fair and cohesive communities that are resilient to all types of threat, including extremism. By working to embed community cohesion and respect in all the work that we do, inequalities, both perceived and real, will reduce and the medium and long term risk of individuals and groups being drawn into extremism and towards committing violent acts will diminish.
- 2.3 The drivers for extremism are complex and are often linked to social and economic injustice and grievances. Some of which are also linked to international events which are largely beyond the control of local government. Nevertheless, the presence of extremism in all its forms makes the achievement of an integrated and harmonious community more challenging.
- 2.4 The Strong and Resilient Communities project forms a key strand of the 'Strong Communities Benefitting from a Strong City' Breakthrough Programme that is currently in development. It sets out the Leeds' approach to Prevent and Community Cohesion embedding the former in to the latter and acknowledging that everyone has a part to play in keeping the city safe from extremism in the here and now, whilst understanding that a society which does not promote a common sense of belonging and respect can become a breeding ground for disharmony and threat

in the longer term. The programme will seek to build on existing good practice as well as deliver new cross council ways of working that :

- Raises community aspirations
- Develops community leadership (children, young people and adults)
- Improves the engagement of migrant communities in the life of the city
- Increases levels of volunteering
- Uses community assets better to improve local engagement and supports communities to develop local initiatives
- Develops community capacity
- Intervenes earlier and prevents difficulties escalating
- Tackles all forms of extremism

3. Main issues

- 3.1 Leeds is a welcoming and compassionate city, a city of sanctuary (an update report will be provided to the September 2016 meeting of the Executive Board) and one with an increasingly diverse population. In the last decade the makeup of Leeds' communities has changed significantly and we now have residents from over 140 ethnic groups residing in Leeds' neighbourhoods. The changing nature of our communities means that the relationships we already have and those we will build with people new to the city, will play a much more important part in the city's success.
- 3.2 At the same time, the city's economy has continued to prosper despite significant financial challenges. However, some of our communities have not benefitted from this success, with approximately 164,000 people living in areas that are ranked amongst the most deprived 10% nationally and 65,000 households living in poverty. The council embarked on an ambitious programme of work to alleviate the effects of poverty and improve economic wellbeing in the city through the Citizens@Leeds programme. An update report on this work will be provided to the September 2016 meeting of the Executive Board.
- 3.3 Economic and social deprivation remains concentrated in specific localities with long-term challenges such as access to employment, poor housing, language and literacy barriers, skills, health and caring responsibilities. Many of these places also lack community capacity, leadership and infrastructure.
- 3.4 In part linked to demographic change, in part linked to wider social change, patterns of faith have also changed across the city with many of the newly arrived communities originating from cultures that have a higher rate of religious observance than our more settled communities. Different ethnic and religious groups have very different age profiles and needs. Understanding these differences has become increasingly important as we plan and deliver services.

- 3.5 Changes in the make-up of our communities has also resulted in some localised impacts across the city, with complex related issues such as 'national identity', language proficiency, transient populations and variations in birth rates, that in turn influence both service provision and the relationships between different communities.
- 3.6 As the city's population and diversity continues to grow and change in the future we want to ensure that both our established and our newer residents are the primary beneficiaries of the city's economic prosperity and that people living in Leeds get on well with one another. As a consequence, we need to improve our ability to predict the impact of rapid change and support communities to withstand difficulties and accept differences.
- 3.7 Continued public sector budget reductions mean that the Council and its partners need to seek new ways of working within localities with a radically different approach based on need, vulnerability and the provision of support to play a more active role in the success of Leeds..
- 3.8 We also need intervene earlier to avoid situations in neighbourhoods and amongst different communities escalating and placing an increasing strain on public services. To work better across the Council with our partners and with and alongside local communities, to address problems more pro-actively, whilst developing and embedding problem solving, conflict resolution, mediation and leadership skills within those communities.
- 3.9 Following the European Union (EU) referendum in June 2016, the city has seen a slight increase in reported hate related incidents/crimes. The comparative figures for Leeds show that in the year to date (01/04/16 to 11/08/2016), there were 107 hate related enquires reported to the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT), compared to 101 for the same period last year. Although, the reported figures are only slightly higher, third sector partners have reported that newcomers to the city feel less safe since the referendum and that they have been subject to more race hate incidents, most of which are thought to be largely unreported. A refresh of the Leeds Hate Crime Strategy and action plan is underway to ensure that we are able to respond to the post-Brexit challenges and increase the reach and promotion of the city's hate crime reporting structures.
- 3.10 The Strong and Resilient Communities project will work alongside the LASBT to explore related issues and consider how the city can reduce the incidents of Hate Crime and better understand the underlying issues which create the environments that lead to individuals committing these types of offences.
- 3.11 Reducing the risk of more radical forms of extremism often linked to political and religious ideology will also be considered in the approach. Extremism, in all its forms, seeks to undermine the values of fairness, mutual respect and equality which

underpin a strong and cohesive society. We need to do more to understand and challenge the threat of extremism by building the confidence and surefootedness of our staff, elected members and of those who live and work in the city, to provide that challenge.

4. Strong and Resilient Communities Project – A Refreshed Approach to Prevent and Cohesion

- 4.1 The Government published its National Counter Extremism Strategy on the 19th of October 2015. The strategy seeks to tackle all forms of extremism, and improve the understanding of its causes and its impacts. It provides a timely impetus for the Council to strengthen its approach to promoting cohesion and preventing extremism. Leeds is well regarded in this area of work due to the city's proactive approach to tackling issues related to extremism. In comparison to some other areas in the country, the city has an experienced and knowledgeable coordinator who has worked with statutory and community partners for many years to develop a balanced and measured programme of activity. This approach is crucial in developing trust and confidence in what can be seen as a very sensitive area of work. Much work is being undertaken to engage with local communities to develop a response to the agenda with which communities can identify. Many other areas of the country do work with statutory partners to assist them with fulfilling their legal requirements under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and whilst this is an important aspect of the Prevent Strategy, real success necessitates the involvement and buy-in of local communities and civil society groups. Other areas have found this involvement to be a real challenge. Leeds is regarded as being at the forefront of such activity and it is committed to continuing this important work.
- 4.2 Work to promote community cohesion and bring people together, already takes place all over the city in a range of different formats which includes; community festivals and galas; events that bring the city together as a whole and have a presence on a global stage, the city's beauty, unity and friendliness; support and advocacy networks; activities that help new communities integrate and feel welcome; activities that promote understanding and respect between communities and activities that promote equality to name but a few. Much of this work is led by the City's ten Community Committees in partnership with local communities, the Third Sector and other local service providers.
- 4.3 To support our approach to community development, Leeds was successful at securing funding from the Community Led Local Development (CLLD) programme to develop draft local development strategies and Local Action Groups for three areas of Leeds in Inner West, Inner South, and Inner East. Strategies for each of the areas were submitted for consideration on 31st August 2016. Subject to the strategies being approved, the CLLD will provide support to:

- Encourage local communities to **develop integrated bottom-up approaches** in circumstances where there is a need to respond to local challenges calling for change;
- **Build community capacity and stimulate innovation** (including social innovation), entrepreneurship and capacity for change by encouraging the development and discovery of untapped potential from within communities and territories;
- **Promote community ownership** by increasing participation within communities and build the sense of involvement and ownership that can increase the effectiveness of EU policies; and
- **Assist multi-level governance** by providing a route for local communities to fully take part in shaping the implementation of EU objectives in all areas.

4.4 The Leeds Prevent programme has been in place since 2007. The programme seeks to work with communities, to develop community led solutions with support, raise awareness, improve confidence and build community resilience. This has involved:

- Support to a wide range of public sector authorities, particularly schools in relation to their obligations in the delivery of the statutory Prevent Duty
- Training and awareness raising for statutory and community partners to increase awareness of Prevent
- Delivery of key messages to communities on issues such as safer giving and travel to conflict zones
- Engagement of target audiences such as women's groups and youth organisations
- Developing resources for schools and other establishments to build the confidence of staff to discuss issues related to extremism in a safe space
- Coordination of the Channel project to safeguard vulnerable individuals

4.5 During 2016/17, further activity will be delivered under key themes that have been prioritised by the Home Office. This includes:

- Work to engage with women and families;
- Engagement vulnerable young people;
- Support to educational establishments;
- Tackling online radicalisation; and
- Developing positive and credible voices to counter extremist narratives

4.6 The Prevent programme has been the responsibility of Safer Leeds for the past 5 years. From the 1st of January 2016 the leadership of this work was transferred to the Chief Officer Communities and its strategy and approach is being embedded in the work of the Communities Team in the Citizens and Communities Directorate and is increasingly being assimilated into the city's approach to cohesion. The

transfer has opened up new opportunities for closer working with Community Committees.

4.7 The Strong and Resilient Communities project will seek to add to existing good practice by building the capacity of officers, elected members and communities, alongside a range of other partners, and support them to become better equipped to recognise, challenge and develop locally led solutions at an early stage.

4.8 A more targeted and intensive approach will be developed to address more complex issues such as; lack of engagement with services and wider society, low aspiration, poor resilience and, where appropriate, vulnerability to extremist voices / messages.

4.9 A toolbox of activities and new ways of working will be developed to support the delivery of the project against 5 core priorities:

Priority 1: Instil a sense of belonging and pride in being a citizen of Leeds

Priority 2: Improve community resilience and sustainability

Priority 3: Develop capacity and leadership within communities

Priority 4: Raise the aspirations of communities and widen access to economic opportunity

Priority 5: Improve our understanding of our communities and provide more targeted support to those that may be considered more vulnerable to extremist narratives

4.10 The project will initially be developed in four stages:

Stage 1: Undertake consultation with services and elected members to identify issues, skills gaps and agree a range of activities – commence October 2016

Stage 2: Development of local cohesion and resilience plans for each of the 10 Community Committee Areas – to 31 March 2017

Stage 3: Build the capacity and confidence of frontline staff and elected members – to April 2017 (then ongoing)

Stage 4: Identify pathfinder projects – 1st project to commence in autumn of 2016

4.11 Initially, up to three locality based Pathfinder projects will be identified, where new ways of working on this agenda across different services will be developed and implemented. The projects will be selected using a range of poverty related indicators and in consultation with, elected members, local residents and local service providers through existing local arrangements.

- 4.12 The pathfinder projects will report to the local Neighbourhood Improvement Boards (NIB) focused on priority neighbourhoods with highlight reports/updates provided to the relevant Community Committee.
- 4.13 In addition, work will commence to develop tailored cohesion and resilience plans for each of the 10 Community Committees and these will form a part of existing community planning arrangements.
- 4.14 A review into *opportunity and integration in some of our most isolated communities*, as part of the government's broader efforts to tackle extremism is currently being undertaken by the Government's Director General, Dame Louise Casey DBE CB. The findings of the review are expected to be published in the autumn, and will feed in to the city's new approach to Prevent and Cohesion. The Leeds response to the Casey Review was well received and recognised for its strong innovative content. It is considered that the aspirations for the refreshed approach articulated in this paper will be in line with recommendations from the Casey Review. An update paper on the Casey Review and its implications for Leeds will be brought to a subsequent meeting following publication.
- 4.15 A further update on progress will be provided to Executive Board at an appropriate time during 2017.

5. Corporate Considerations

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1.1 The delivery of the National Prevent policy is highly topical, and as such, a deputation was presented to full Council on the 23 March 2016. This report provides a response to this deputation.
- 5.1.2 Discussions on the merger of cohesion and Prevent related work commenced in the summer of 2015, led by the Council's Leader and the Executive Member for Communities.
- 5.1.3 A report was presented in February 2016 to the 10 Community Committee Chairs, who were supportive of the approach outlined in this report and agreed to develop it further.
- 5.1.4 Discussions have also commenced with Community Committees with further consultation planned.
- 5.1.5 A cross sector workshop session took place in December 2015 to discuss the council's current approach to community cohesion. This was followed up in April 2016 with an internal audience. An example of some of the feedback from the session was as follows:

- The need to engage with a wider range of partners on the development and delivery of the project
- Supportive of the direction of travel proposed in the new approach
- Need to build capacity and confidence of residents and staff
- Resources – limited resources so need to ensure that these are used effectively
- Timescales – need to see delivery and transformational change over the longer term
- Building trust with communities and local organisations is key
- Managing aspirations – need to be clear what the project will and will not delivery
- Good community engagement and involvement is critical

5.1.6 A range of consultation sessions with wider partners is now taking place, including workshops with the Third and Faith Sectors, discussions with NHS Trust, the Equality Assembly and a number of Council services, to further develop the project and consider new approaches. These will include Ward based sessions.

5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

5.2.1 The cross cutting project of work will promote good community relations, cultural and religious tolerance and respect, and the celebration of cultural diversity, which will support improved community cohesion across the city.

5.2.2 This will also support the delivery of the Equality Improvement Priorities which provide focus to address issues of inequality. The tools and mechanisms that the council use will continue to play a pivotal role in identifying and addressing inequality and the programme of work which will be developed will be an additional strand of this approach.

5.2.3 Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken on each area of the Strong and Resilient Communities Project.

5.3 Council Policies and Best Council Plan

5.3.1 The project will support the delivery of the Councils 'Strong Economy and a Compassionate City' ambition by contributing to the 2016/17 Best Council Plan priority 2051-20 to; 'Support communities and raise aspirations', by working with communities and partners, to encourage respect, tolerance and instill a sense of belonging and pride in being a citizen of Leeds, develop resilience, improve confidence and capacity by developing leadership and improve aspirations particularly within the city's most deprived communities. It will also support the delivery of the Council's Equality Improvement Priorities and the Best Council Plan's outcomes of 'be safe and feels safe', enjoy healthy, happy and active lives', and the Plan's priorities on 'keeping people safe from harm' and 'supporting communities, raising aspirations'.

5.3.2 The project will support the delivery of the Vision for Leeds overarching ambition that by 2030, Leeds will be the best city in the UK:

- Leeds will be fair, open and welcoming.
- Leeds' economy will be prosperous and sustainable.
- All Leeds' communities will be successful

5.3.3 The Strong and Resilient Communities project will form a part of the 'Stronger Communities Benefitting from a Strong City' breakthrough programme. Please refer to section 2.4 of this report, where further details are provided.

5.3.4 The approach described will also support the delivery of the Faith Covenant – which is a joint commitment between faith communities and local authorities to a set of principles that guide engagement aiming to remove some of the mistrust arises just to a lack of mutual understanding, and to promote, practical levels of working on all levels.

5.4 Resources and Value for Money

5.4.1 A dedicated programme manager has been allocated to oversee the delivery of this work. Additional resources will be identified to support specific pieces of work. However, one of the main aims of the project is to develop new ways of working that promote a model of early intervention, resulting in a reduction in public spending by dealing with potential risks within communities before they become a strain on public sector resources. This will be achieved by developing more joined up and targeted work between different service providers.

5.4.2 The Home Office provides funding to the Council to undertake work to address vulnerability in relation to violent extremism based on identified risks and harms. More recently, discussions have begun with the Office for Counter Extremism to consider the resources required for the city to meet the expectations of the National Counter Extremism strategy.

5.4.3 The Council's Community Committees already provide funding to support a range of activities which aim to enhance community cohesion and bring people together in the spirit of mutual benefit and understanding through their Well Being budgets and other locally delegated funds.

5.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

5.5.1 There are no legal or access to information implications associated with this report. This report sets out a direction of travel in relation to how the Council will improve its policy approach to help support good community relations and cohesion, and deal with potential risk associated with vulnerability to extremist messages.

5.6 Risk Management

- 5.6.1 Activity delivered as part of the project will contribute to the management of two corporate risks related to city resilience (emergency planning) and council resilience (business continuity management) in the event of a major incident. This will be achieved by helping to improve the city's resilience and that of the wider Councils, to protect against a major incident occurring, by helping to reduce the potential for community tensions and grievances arising, thereby mitigating the risk of civil unrest or in more serious cases, acts relating to terrorism or violent extremism being connected to the city.
- 5.6.2 Failure to identify at an early stage, understand, manage, mitigate against and effectively communicate the range of issues which could have a negative impact on communities. The project will seek to mitigate risks by developing new ways of working, including restorative approaches, which helps to deal with community based issues more pro-actively, thereby preventing them from becoming damaging to community wellbeing.
- 5.6.3 Following the result of the EU referendum in June 2016, the Council has put in place actions to provide reassurance and manage the risk associated with the Country's decision to withdraw, and the potential negative impact of this on the communities of Leeds and its wider economy. The Stronger Communities Breakthrough project will support the delivery of more tolerant, open and inclusive communities that is welcoming to all. Through close working with a range of council services and partners, work streams will be developed to consider how community tensions can be more effectively monitored, so that early interventions can be deployed, and improvements to the existing hate crime reporting arrangements and wider strategy are being led by Safer Leeds.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The communities of Leeds are changing and will continue to do so. We want Leeds to continue to be a welcoming and compassionate city, where all its citizens feel included in the life of the city and where there is greater sense of equality, particularly, in relation to economic opportunity. One which recognises that though our communities may be different in character and diversity, we are all united in our pride in being a citizen of Leeds and respect one another.
- 6.2 The Strong and Resilient Communities project, will seek to develop an improved policy approach to the way that we deliver community cohesion across the city. Also, in how we develop targeted approaches, linked to the government's Prevent programme, to support those communities and places that would benefit from a more tailored approach which helps build good community relations, resilience and

leadership, and improve aspirations. Discussions on the city's response to the National Counter Extremism Strategy are also taking place with local partners and government and these will inform the development of a targeted programme activity in the near future.

- 6.3 The work will be integral to the new Breakthrough programme; 'Strong Communities Benefitting from a Strong City', which seeks to deliver a programme of change which contributes to more resilient and sustainable communities and helps the city to adapt to the challenges of living in a more globalised society, ensuring that the city continues to prosper as change occurs.
- 6.4 A review into *opportunity and integration in some of our most isolated communities*, as part of the government's broader efforts to tackle extremism is currently being undertaken by the Government's Director General, Dame Louise Casey CB. The findings of the review are expected to be published in the autumn, and will feed in to the city's new approach to Prevent and Cohesion.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Executive Board is asked to:

- Endorse the refreshed approach to cohesion and prevent outlined in this report.
- Agree the staged approach to the Pathfinder projects set out in section 4.10 of this report as follows:
 - **Stage 1:** Undertake consultation with services and elected members to identify issues, skills gaps and agree a range of activities – commence by October 2016
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- Request the Chief Officer Communities takes forward the development and implementation of the staged approach and the Pathfinder projects and provides a progress report in 2017.
- Request the Chief Officer Communities provide an update report on the implications of the Casey Review for Leeds following national publication of the report.

8. Background documents¹

8.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.