

Cohesion and Integration
Annual report
2008/09

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Background

Cohesion and integration is a key challenge for most large urban cities, including Leeds.

For most people, Leeds is a quality place to live, work and raise families. The current population is over 750,000, which is made up of a rich diversity of over 130 nationalities. This diversity is valuable and has helped fuel the prosperity of our city and the wider area. Most of our communities are comfortable with each other and, in comparison to other major cities, we have little history of major civil unrest.

Leeds does, however, face a number of challenges related to the inequality of outcomes for many residents in terms of health, education and employment. There is clear evidence of the contribution that social and economic inequality makes to social division, exclusion and conflict. Communities are changing and this will have an ever increasing demand on the services we provide. There are still key challenges in terms of narrowing the gap for our most deprived communities to respond to the persistent inequalities that exist.

How we respond to the changing demographics of our city; tensions that arise within and between communities; whilst seeking to provide harmonious communities, are critical for the future success of the city and its people.

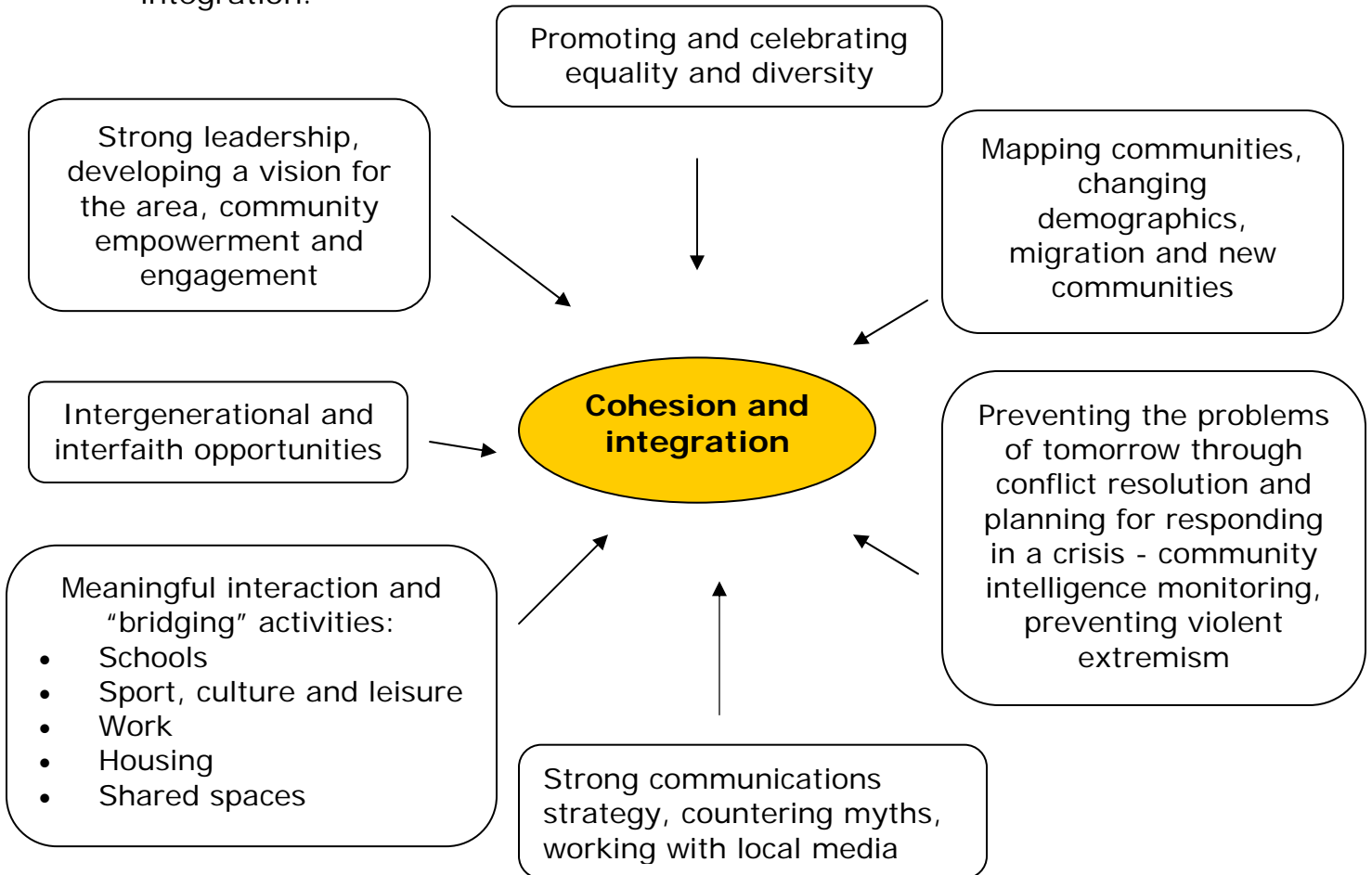
Improving integration and cohesion remains a key improvement priority for the council. In October 2008, the Executive Board agreed a set of Cohesion and Integration Priorities for the council. This policy framework provides the council with our strategic approach for the next three years.

The policy document was supported by a delivery plan outlining the activities across our services that contribute to our cohesion priorities and what we want to achieve for the city.

This approach built on the work that has been taking since 2006, including the production of Community Cohesion action plans and progress updates.

What do we mean by cohesion and integration?

The diagram below shows the different dimensions of cohesion and integration.



The council has adopted the Government's definition of cohesion and integration to set its priorities.

Community cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on three foundations:

- People from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- People know their rights and responsibilities
- People trust one another and trust local institutions to act fairly.

And three key ways of living together:

- A shared future vision and sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

Our cohesion and integration priorities 2008-2011

We have six cohesion and integration priorities:

- **Leadership and Community Empowerment**

Strong community leadership at all levels is vital to support good community relations across Leeds.

- **Sense of Belonging and Opportunities for All**

How people behave with, and to, their neighbours, or respond to strangers in their local communities is critical to the how relationships develop locally. The importance of individual actions in building cohesion and integration needs to be understood and recognised.

- **Preventing the Problems of Tomorrow**

Any approach to cohesion and integration needs to include a focus on breaking down tensions and building relations within, and between, all communities. This involves dealing with not just facts, but also with rumours and perceptions, and recognising that any of these can fuel tensions between groups. This will also include our approach to the preventing extremism agenda.

- **Children and Young People**

The vision in the Children and Young People's Plan is that we want all children and young people in Leeds to be happy, healthy, safe, successful and free from the effects of poverty. The five outcomes of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing all contribute to achieving cohesive and integrated communities.

- **Communication and Information**

The importance of our understanding how our local areas are changing and that factual information and reassurance messages need to be communicated to all communities. Cohesion and integration messages need to be targeted at the whole community.

- **The inclusion of cohesion and integration into key council and city policies and practices**

Provide a commitment to ensuring that, wherever possible, our policies and services promote cohesion and integration and help reduce any tensions and conflict that may arise within our communities.

Cohesion and integration achievements during 2008/09

Through our delivery plan we have been able to track the progress of activities across the council that contribute to our cohesion priorities.

Some of the key achievements are outlined below.

Leadership and Community Empowerment

- A Harmonious Leeds Partnership has been established which brings together representatives, agencies and organisations who work to create good community relations between and within the diverse communities of Leeds.
- New guidance has been agreed which will ensure that equality and cohesion issues are considered as part of Scrutiny Board enquiries.
- Local people have identified local priorities and helped to shape the new Area Delivery plans. By defining issues and solving problems together, communities and local services have been able to target resources where they are most needed.
- Two participatory budgeting pilots were held in Drighlington and Broadleas areas of the city which gave local people the opportunity to influence how money should be spent supporting local projects in their communities.
- Consultation events were held in Holbeck Urban Village to identify local skills with the aim to attract appropriate business partners
- The 'Sharing the Success' programme, which aims to unlock the potential in deprived communities using enterprise, continues to support and help individuals and businesses in some of our most deprived communities.

Sense of belonging and opportunities for all

- A two year programme of targeted cohesion and integration activity has started in three neighbourhoods.
- Research was carried out which focussed on the needs, experiences and expectations of European Migrant Workers and a successful funding application was made to the government's Migration Impact Fund.
- A programme of events was held to recognise European Year of Inter-Cultural Dialogue 2008
- Local residents through the Community Asset Engagement Strategy, have been able to influence how three council owned buildings, Tiger 11 in Beeston, Shine in Harehills and Harts in

Headingley have been brought back to use making them accessible to the local community.

- A wide range of exhibitions and activities have taken place across the city that celebrate the diversity of Leeds. Some examples include the Faith in the City exhibition at the City Museum, the 'Time Together' refugee mentoring project that was run through the Library and Information Service and community festivals and celebrations such as St Patrick's Day parade, Breeze international Youth Festival and Leeds Pride.
- A range of sporting activities bringing children and young people together such as the 'Lets Play Together' project.

Preventing the problems of tomorrow

- The Leeds Prevent Strategy and Leeds Multi Agency Prevent action plan have been developed which outline key activities across Leeds to respond to the national preventing violent extremism agenda.
- Funding was secured to undertake targeted activities with schools, youth groups and colleges.
- Consultation with community organisations was carried out to inform the Leeds Prevent Community Programme.
- A programme of intergenerational work for secondary schools – Building Bridges 2 was launched building on the successful work that has taken place in over 50 primary schools across Leeds.

Children and Young People

- The continued expansion of the Stephen Lawrence Educational Standard in schools and Children's centres.
- A range of volunteering opportunities for young people has been developed, in partnership with Leeds University.
- An anti-bullying campaign 'Power of Me' has been rolled out across the city.
- Leadership and participative opportunities for young people at risk and priority BME groups have been delivered through a new project 'The Project'.
- The Positive Activities for Young People provision has been extended to specifically include young asylum seekers.
- Funding has been secured until 2010 to establish a mentoring programme for young people potentially at risk of radicalisation.
- The Youth Offending Service has worked with Stop Hate UK to address hate crime with young people.
- The Safer Schools Partnership was extended to all secondary schools.

Communication and information

- The second 'Leeds Now' supplement was distributed to all households in September 2008.
- Work started to develop a Welcome to Leeds website.

The inclusion of cohesion and integration into key council and city based policies and practices

- Equality and cohesion impact assessments continue to be carried out across the council.

What difference have we made?

In the delivery plan, we have included a number of targets and indicator to help measure how we are performing against our cohesion and integration priorities. These include key national cohesion indicators.

At the time when the delivery plan was written, very few baselines and targets were set for 2008/09 for the individual indicators as the information was not available. This has meant that there is limited comparison data to track progress against the range of success measures within the delivery plan. Further work to develop cohesion measures is taking place during 2009/10 and it is hoped that better analysis can be made as part of the reporting for next year.

However we do have some information about local resident's perceptions of their local area from the Place Survey which was carried out between September and December 2008. The Place Survey was a postal self-completion survey.

Results for Leeds show that:

- 74% of people agree that people from different backgrounds get on well
- 55% of people feel they belong to their neighbourhood
- 31% of people agree that they can influence decisions in their locality

Between July and September 2009, we undertook a Residents Survey which provided a more rigorous and controlled sample and so we believe is more representative of views of the people of Leeds. The Residents Survey did ask some different questions to the Place Survey but the results for the key cohesion measure was as follows:

- 78% of people agree that people from different backgrounds get on well

Moving Forward

To make sure that our cohesion and integration delivery is still relevant and reflects the ambitions of the council, as part of the annual review, a new delivery plan has been produced which will be monitored and reviewed as part of our annual reporting through the council's officer, political and partnership governance arrangements.

The impact of recession is being felt within and across different communities in Leeds. The council and our partners are working together to better understand where the impact of the recession is greatest so that we know how to target resources and support.

Achieving our cohesion and integration ambitions for the city is a long term issue and not something the council can do alone. To achieve our cohesion and integration ambitions, it is essential that we ensure we continue to work in partnership with everyone across the city, including public agencies, private businesses and voluntary, community and faith organisations and local communities.