

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC

Report to: CABINET

Report of: Jonathan Tew, Assistant Chief Executive

Date of Decision: 26 June 2018

SUBJECT: BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY
GREEN PAPER

Key Decision: Yes **Relevant Forward Plan Ref:** 005172/2018

If not in the Forward Plan: **Chief Executive approved**
(please "X" box) **O&S Chair approved**

Relevant Cabinet Member(s) or **Cllr Tristan Chatfield, Cabinet Member for Social**
Relevant Executive Member: **Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities**

Relevant O&S Chair: **Cllr Penny Holbrook , Housing & Neighbourhoods**
Wards affected: **All**

1. Purpose of report:

1.1 To seek approval for the draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy, as set out at Appendix 1, to be released for consultation with external partners and communities.

2. Decision(s) recommended:

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes the proposed approach set out in the draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy; and
- 2.2 Approves the commencement of a public consultation to seek partner and community views on the draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy prior to refinement and final publication in autumn 2018.

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3. Consultation:

3.1 Internal

3.1.1 The Strategy was discussed with all members of the Cross Party group for Community Safety and Equalities. All Cabinet Members have been consulted on the contents of the draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy and they support this report.

3.1.2 The Council's Corporate Management Team and directorate Senior Management Teams have been actively consulted and involved in the preparation of the Executive Management Team report.

3.1.3 A number of internal stakeholder meetings and briefings were also carried out during the development of the strategy.

3.2 External

3.2.1 A series of meetings with external partners and a Partnership Summit was held in December 2017, to help shape the City's draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy outcomes of the discussions are attached in appendix 2. Subsequently, all elected members were invited to attend a briefing on the discussions from the Summit and to garner their views on community cohesion in Birmingham. Three elected members attended the briefing and their comments have been included in shaping the draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy. A Youth Summit was held in March 2018, inviting young people from across the City to share their views and understanding of what community cohesion means to them, appendix 3 sets out the outcomes of the discussions that have been included in the draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy.

4. Compliance Issues:

4.1 Are the recommended decisions consistent with the Council's policies, plans and Strategies?

4.1.1 This draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy supports all four of the Council's priority areas consistent with the council's vision and Forward Plan 2017:

- Children – a great place to grow up in: make the best of our diversity and create a safe and secure city for our children and young people to learn and grow. The strategy supports achieving the best outcomes in childhood that lead to good life chances of all children and young people. Furthermore, it promotes the rights and

responsibilities of all children and young people, through the Council's work to utilise the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to promote equality in schools. Also, to improve employment opportunities through Birmingham's Youth Promise Plus programme.

- Housing – a great place to live in: provide housing in a range of types and tenures to meet the housing needs of all the current and future citizens of Birmingham. The strategy supports access to decent and secure housing as a means to promote community cohesion. Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+ includes proposals that promote cohesion.
- Health – a great place to grow old in: help people become healthier and more independent with measurable improvement in physical activity and mental wellbeing. The strategy aligns to the Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which promotes community cohesion.
- Jobs and Skills – a great place to succeed in: build on our assets, talents, and capacity for enterprise and innovation to shape the market and harness opportunity. The strategy's approach aligns with the Birmingham Skills Investment Plan (BSIP) which sets out how the Council will work with partners to create the right conditions for business, and our workforce that promotes cohesion.

4.1.2 The draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy also supports delivery of a number of current work streams, strategies and partnerships being led by the Council and its partners as described in section 5 of this report such as the:

- The West Midlands Combined Authority's inclusive growth agenda;
- The Birmingham Financial Inclusion Strategy 2017: recognises families who experience financial hardship, exclusion and poverty are vulnerable to social isolation;
- The Birmingham Migration partnership; and
- The Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board.

4.2 Financial Implications

(How will decisions be carried out within existing finances and Resources?)

4.2.1 £30,000 was allocated for partnership working last year pending a project such as this strategy. This will be invested, in partnership development work regarding community cohesion. This funding will be directed following the refinement of the strategy in autumn 2018.

4.2.2 Through the 'mainstreaming' of cohesion outcomes through the Council's core business, it is proposed that directorates would consider how they can address the themes within this strategy through use of existing resources.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 The recommendations in this report are consistent with the Localism Act 2011. S1 of the Localism Act 2011 contains the Council's general competence power. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the City Council may incur expenditure in relation to anything which is incidental to the discharge of its functions.
- 4.3.2 The draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy contributes to the Council's legal requirement to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty, under the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.3.3 Public Sector Equality Duty (see separate guidance note)
- 4.3.4. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and is attached at appendix 4. The initial EIA concluded that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required, as there are no adverse impacts on any protected groups. A further EIA will be carried out prior to the publication of the final Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy.

5. **Relevant background / chronology of key events:**

- 5.1 In September 2016, the Council published a cross party community cohesion statement setting out the Council's vision and commitment towards this agenda. In 2017, the Birmingham Independent Improvement Panel suggested that the Council focus on developing a strategic partnership approach to community and social cohesion. In response to this, the Council convened a series of meetings with partners across the public, faith and community sector to agree a strategic approach to promoting community cohesion.
- 5.2 In December 2017, the Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion, Community Safety and Equalities hosted a Community Cohesion Strategy Summit to discuss and identify how the Council, partners and communities can each play their part to improve and support community cohesion across the City. The Summit brought together academics, policy makers, practitioners, voluntary, community and faith sector and leaders from public and private sectors. This summit kick-started the development of the Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy. It was agreed at the summit, that the strategy would not be exclusively led and owned by the Council; instead it would be a city partnership strategy with an emphasis on the Council playing a facilitative and convening role.
- 5.3 In March 2018, the Government published an Integrated Communities Green Paper, which sets out its plans to achieve 'integration' through a programme of policy interventions and a long term action plan to tackle the root causes of societal segregation. Five local authority areas were selected to trial approaches including Walsall. Councils are asked to ensure services have a strong focus on integration and take a 'whole council' approach to integration, develop a local vision with partners, businesses, the voluntary and community sector and communities, and mainstreaming

integration objectives across policy and service delivery. Birmingham City Council submitted its response to the Integrated Communities Green Paper, as set out in appendix 5.

- 5.4 The key objectives of the draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy broadly align with the Integrated Communities Strategy and the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities and the Assistant Chief Executive will be leading on the Council's input into the government's strategy, working closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to share learning and good practice from Birmingham. Equally, our work with Government will identify where additional resource/support can be provided to help Birmingham take forward its strategy.
- 5.5 Birmingham's draft Community Cohesion Strategy sets out a citywide approach to promote community cohesion that benefits everyone who lives, works and visits the City. Promoting Community Cohesion is not a time limited policy initiative, but instead is an ongoing process that responds and adapts to changing needs of communities. Therefore, Birmingham's Community Cohesion Strategy is a living document that sets out the City's longer-term ambition to deliver its shared vision, developed from the views of communities and partners.
- 5.6 In dialogue with partners and community organisations, it was felt that the Commission for Integration and Cohesion's definition of Community Cohesion reflected a joint understanding of what community cohesion means in Birmingham.
- 5.7 The framework for delivering community cohesion focusses on eight guiding principles which were identified from conversations with partners, communities and young people:
1. Mainstream cohesion: making community cohesion everyday business
 2. Connecting and exchanging ideas that promote community cohesion and mobilise social action
 3. Nurturing and supporting aspiration of young people
 4. Promote citizens' rights and responsibilities
 5. Progress equality in all spheres of social and economic life
 6. Promote inclusive economic growth that benefits everyone across Birmingham
 7. Empowered and engaged neighbourhoods
 8. Bringing together people through art, culture and sports
- 5.8 The draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy sets out the key building blocks on how the City will effectively deliver its vision and embed the key principles as outlined

above. To achieve city wide community cohesion, strong balanced leadership from across city partners, the Council and community sector is required.

5.9 Local Councillors in their community leadership role will play an important role to promote community cohesion as an integral part of the Council's approach to Localism. Their role will also be crucial in working with communities and local partner organisations to design place based solutions that are evidence led.

5.10 A central plank to our approach is about building our knowledge and understanding of the dynamic nature of diverse communities. Continual research and analysis of the challenges and opportunities will enable evidence based policy and decision making. The Council will set up a public web portal as repository for case studies of good practice and research in this area.

5.11 The draft Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy emphasises the importance of working in partnership with our partners and communities to jointly exploit opportunities that will benefit individuals, families and communities.

5.12 As a City, we need to work collaboratively, but also provide leadership in our different spheres of influence to effect real change. We will do this by:

- An annual citywide Community Cohesion Summit, built from local / neighbourhood dialogues, will enable communities, Council and City partners to share learning and exchange ideas; forge new relationships and identify opportunities for joint working; evaluate our learning and identify what works and what doesn't and collectively respond to new opportunities and challenges;
- Where it makes sense for Birmingham, we will strategically align our approach to national and regional policies;
- Co-designing and co-producing local solutions that promote an asset based approach to local problem solving;
- Establishing a city-wide network that will facilitate sharing ideas, information and solutions across a network of neighbourhoods to promote community cohesion;
- Creating safe spaces to generate community conversations on real community concerns and grievances – to help dispel misconceptions and myths; and
- Designing research and evaluation that informs mainstream agency spend and delivery.

5.13 To help deliver community cohesion that responds to our changing and multi-layered ethnicities and identities, we need to test and support new approaches and trial

innovations by reshaping existing resources through mainstreaming community cohesion. In addition, the Council and partners will explore opportunities with West Midlands Combined Authority, Government departments and funders such as Big Lottery.

5.14 The public consultation will commence following Cabinet approval, the draft strategy will be publicly launched for wider consultation from 9th July to 20th August 2018. Comments will be captured during a summer of consultation and engagement. The methods for capturing feedback on the Green Paper will include: social media, written submissions and a series of focussed events to ensure that we get the wider feedback the goes beyond the 'usual suspects'. We will work with our partners to deliver consultation events across communities, neighbourhoods and City partnerships. The refined Birmingham Community Cohesion Strategy will be presented to Cabinet on 2nd October. We anticipate holding our first Annual Birmingham Community Cohesion Summit in November 2018, building from a series of community dialogues delivered in conjunction with our partners.

6. Evaluation of alternative option(s):

6.1 It is felt that the Council has no option other than to develop, with partners, a robust and agile community cohesion strategy for the City. Clearly, the points of emphasis and content of the strategy will change and adapt in light of views and feedback.

7. Reasons for Decision(s):

7.1 A report will be brought back to Cabinet on 2nd October 2018, which will include the findings of the consultation and will seek approval of the Community Cohesion Strategy for Birmingham.

Signatures

Date

Cllr Tristan Chatfield, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities

..... **Date:**

Jonathan Tew, Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate Policy:

..... **Date:**

List of Background Documents used to compile this Report:

The Government's Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper

List of Appendices accompanying this Report (if any):

1. Draft Community Cohesion Strategy & Community Cohesion Strategy on a Page
2. Community Cohesion Summit outcomes
3. Youth Summit Outcomes
4. Initial Equality Assessment

5. Council response to Government's Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper