

# CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Understanding the local context</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Defining needs</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Setting geographical boundaries</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Flexibility – working beyond the boundaries</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Relationships between communities</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Supporting new residents</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Consultation and community capacity building</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Communication</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Leadership and accountability</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Mainstreaming community cohesion</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Annex A: Case Studies</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Brighton – Portland Road and Clarendon open space</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Bristol youth gang conflict</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>‘Learning to Live Together’ (Salford and Manchester)</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Leicester – developing relationships with the media</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Leicester – consensus through better information</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>The Sandwell Partnership and the Greets Green     New Deal for Communities</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>The Shoreditch Our Way New Deal for Communities Programme</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>‘Who Am I?’ project (Sunderland NDC – Back on the Map)</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>The Thornhill Lees Community Centre</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Tewkesbury Travellers</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Annex B: Useful websites and publications</b>	<b>59</b>

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- Sandwell Community Cohesion Pathfinder
- Shoreditch Our Way NDC
- Smethwick SRB area in Sandwell
- Sunderland 'Who Am I?' Project within Sunderland NDC
- Tewkesbury Borough Council
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Community Cohesion Unit, Home Office, October 2004

## Executive Summary

- 1.1** In 2001, following the disturbances in Bradford, Oldham, Burnley and other areas, it became glaringly apparent that the people living and working in some of our towns and cities were deeply polarised and many communities were in essence living “parallel lives”. This was reinforced in so many other aspects of daily life including education, the voluntary and community sector, employment, places of worship, and social and cultural networks. A report published by the Home Office<sup>1</sup> at that time as a result of an independent review chaired by Ted Cante identified a number of actions that could be taken locally to ensure that communities were able to live and work harmoniously together. This harmony is summed up by the official term, ‘community cohesion’.
- 1.2** Through targeting resources specifically, area based initiatives (ABIs) can be highly effective in transforming neighbourhoods and improving the prospects and life chances of people living in places where there are high levels of poverty and inequality. The Cante Report referred to above did, however, identify risks of allocating resources to groups in particular areas. Tensions between people living within areas or within neighbouring areas may be exacerbated, because of perceptions that one group is receiving more favourable treatment, or because communities have not been fully consulted and involved in the funding process. For this reason, it is important that area based initiatives are implemented in a way that promotes community cohesion and does not fuel tensions between different communities.
- 1.3** The areas that the report identified for local action included leadership, community involvement, the voluntary sector, crime reduction, and press and the media. This guide explores these themes in more detail, drawing on practical examples from across England. It is based on the guidance given in the December 2003 Home Office publication *Community Cohesion*

<sup>1</sup> Community Cohesion: A report of the Independent Review Team, chaired by Ted Cante 2001

*Advice for those designing, developing and delivering Area Based Initiatives (ABIs)* (available at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs2/abi\\_advice.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs2/abi_advice.pdf)) and aims to give practical advice about how to implement that guidance locally.

- 1.4** The examples of community cohesion practice that have informed this guide have been selected from visits to various parts of England; we recognise that there are many other excellent projects and initiatives in different communities and different parts of the country that it was not possible to include.

### **Who is the guide for?**

- 1.5** This guide is for residents, community representatives and practitioners who are delivering regeneration programmes at the local level, in ABIs and other regeneration areas. However, the guide is also intended to be useful to government departments, funders and other agencies involved in regeneration, as well as partnerships responsible for monitoring and delivering regeneration outcomes. Indeed, these agencies and decision makers are strongly encouraged to learn from the experiences of people living and working at the local level, to improve how they work with local communities.

### **What will the guide help you to do?**

- 1.6** The guide suggests concrete ways in which diverse groups of people – for example of different classes, ages, faiths, races and ethnicities – can be encouraged to live and work together cohesively within ABIs, and looks at the factors that either contribute to or undermine this process. The guide draws extensively on good practice we found during our research into community cohesion initiatives. The ideas in this publication will help encourage ownership by communities of the changes occurring in their neighbourhoods.

### **How is the guide organised?**

- 1.7** We realise that some people picking the guide up for the first time will be more interested in some issues more than in others. For this reason,

the case studies have been used to demonstrate various aspects of community cohesion. As you will see, the guide has been organised into a number of individual chapters that each address one of the key issues that are outlined below and you may find that some case studies occur in more than one section to illustrate different elements of community cohesion. The chapter headings are shown in bold. We invite you to determine your own starting point.

- 1.8** Summaries of the case studies that informed this guide are set out in Annex A, including named contacts for each. Annex B contains references to useful web pages and publications.

## Key Issues

- 1.9** In order to promote good relations between different groups in an area receiving regeneration funding it is vital to develop a good **understanding of the local context**. This should include the range and quality of services and facilities, the history of the area and the needs of local residents.
- 1.10** The way in which ABIs go about **defining need and setting geographical boundaries** is very important if communities are not to be stigmatised or their separateness reinforced. Avoid drawing boundaries around small, tightly knit communities – particularly if this demarcates one ethnic group from another.
- 1.11** It is important to apply **flexibility and work beyond the boundaries** to ensure that those in similar need are included in the support offered by ABIs and that initiatives do not in themselves become a barrier to interaction between communities. Programmes should include opportunities for cross-cultural contact and may include bridge-building between communities.
- 1.12** To promote good **relationships between communities** within your area people need to work together for the benefit of the whole

neighbourhood. Projects that deal directly with local needs, rather than having a particular ‘community cohesion’ theme, are often the most successful. Positive results most often occur when interaction takes place naturally over extended periods as part of daily activity.

**1.13** In areas where there is a history of segregated housing, **supporting new residents** and preparing established residents for change is a key part of ensuring good relations between the communities.

**1.14** Effective **consultation and community capacity building** with local residents are key components of community cohesion. Progress will result when local residents feel confident and skilled enough to participate in regeneration projects and activities. A good cross-section of local people should be fully involved in deciding funding priorities from the start. Different participation processes and structures work for different people. Use the local infrastructure to promote cohesion.

**1.15** Good **communication** is essential to the success of area based regeneration initiatives. Residents both within and outside of the ABI area need to be kept fully informed of the progress of schemes, as well as the reasoning behind the allocation of funding.

**1.16** Local **leadership and accountability** through key spokespeople, local champions and the development of leadership skills amongst those living and working in ABIs all help to give local people a sense of ownership and pride in their area. Community leadership over a wider area is also important to support this local leadership.

**1.17** **Monitoring and evaluation** will help everyone involved assess whether the ABI is having a positive effect on community cohesion or actually increasing tensions or fragmentation.

**1.18** **Mainstreaming community cohesion** will help an ABI remain sustainable over a longer period of time. It can take place in a number of ways,

from influencing local policies to securing long-term investment in localities. It should be built in during the project planning phase.

## Understanding the local context

### Introduction

**2.1** To promote good relations between different groups in an area receiving regeneration funding, you need to understand the local context fully, including the range and quality of services and facilities, the history of the area and the needs of local residents.

### Good practice guidance

**2.2** You can investigate how well you understand the local context by asking a number of questions, for example:

- How well do different groups in the area get on?
- What are the main factors that prevent people from getting on? For example, is it a thematic issue such as housing or education, or a generational issue, or perhaps something related to the history of the area?
- Do people who have recently moved into the area take part in local activities?
- How long do people stay in the area?
- How well are people from different minority ethnic groups and, in particular, asylum seekers and refugees, accepted locally?
- How involved are younger people, as well as older people?
- How involved are women, compared to men?
- Are there certain people, for example those belonging to certain ethnic or faith groups, who do not take part in local activities to the same extent as others?
- Who is actively engaged in local activities? Is it mostly people from just one particular neighbourhood, or are local activities open to everyone who may be interested?

- How easy or difficult is it to find out about local activities?

**2.3** Having answers to these questions will help you to establish a baseline from which to approach community cohesion and develop goals to work towards. Guidance on how to measure some of these aspects is provided in the chapter on ‘monitoring and evaluation’.

### *Good practice tip*

It is always better to develop a good understanding of the local context at the beginning of a regeneration programme. Nevertheless, it is also possible to learn and adapt initiatives over time. Most communities are dynamic and many different issues can affect the relationships between different groups, so it is important to form a clear understanding of the complexity of the local context. Voluntary and community organisations often have wide knowledge of their specific areas and are well placed to foster cross-cultural links.

### *Involving residents in Shoreditch Our Way NDC*

The Shoreditch Our Way New Deal for Communities in the London Borough of Hackney has had good involvement from local residents right from the start, particularly through four very strong area forums. The area forums are chaired by elected resident representatives and at the forum meetings residents discuss and vote on a range of issues and priorities in relation to the regeneration of Shoreditch. These issues include housing, employment opportunities, local recreation, and education facilities. The area forum resident representatives have a seat on the Shoreditch NDC Board, which drives regeneration in the locality, and priorities agreed by residents at the area forum are taken to the Shoreditch NDC Board for decision.



However, the fact that these forums meet in the evening makes it difficult for younger women with children to take part. Therefore, practitioners from the project are looking at other ways of specifically engaging this group. One suggestion is to have a day event that is specifically targeted at young women with children, and women living in Shoreditch who have children are currently being consulted about their views on such an event, the format it should take and the timing of the event to ensure maximum involvement.

## Defining needs

### Introduction

**3.1** How you define local needs and communicate about them is important; be careful not to stigmatise a community or reinforce its separateness. Take care not to give the (false) impression that the needs of other disadvantaged communities are not being recognised. For example, bear in mind that pockets of disadvantage may exist across neighbouring communities and design schemes so that these can be included in some way.

### Good practice guidance

**3.2** The basis on which need is defined should be open and transparent. It can help if a whole city or district has its needs mapped, so that residents from across the council area can see why particular areas are targeted and that people living in different geographical areas and across ethnic groups experience similar issues.

**3.3** Do not be afraid to consider people's social and psychological needs. Regeneration is not just about doing 'things' to areas in a physical sense, it is also about instilling pride in the area, building trust and co-operation between groups, helping people to confront their fears of

difference and appreciate the value of diversity. If these needs are identified at the outset, then programmes can be devised to tackle them positively and proactively.

### *Defining need in Leicester*

Leicester City Council wanted to make it clear that it was using an objective needs-based process for managing competition for funds between different areas. Since 1998, the Council has been collecting data at a small area level that cuts across ward boundaries. Information from the local authority, the police and the Primary Care Trust is incorporated into one data set. The data is mapped and made widely available so that local people can see how the information applies to local areas, and this is made widely available through the press, community centres and public libraries. Thus the objective reasons for targeting funding on particular areas are clear to all. Residents of different areas can also appreciate that people living in other parts of the city experience similar (or worse) issues than themselves.

- 3.4** Needs within the area you are living or working in will vary. Use as much local knowledge as you can to understand what the real needs are. Consult as widely as possible as early as possible (see the Consultation and Communication chapters of this guide).

### *Good practice tip*

Ward-level data is readily available on [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk). However, when defining need in an area do not rely solely on ward-based data, as it may mask pockets of disadvantage. Consider using the government's output areas instead – these areas have around 125 households and tend to follow natural boundaries. Data is available on CD from [www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001) if your local authority does not already have it.

## Setting geographical boundaries

### Introduction

- 4.1** How you draw the boundaries of an area based initiative will have a profound effect on the project. While you need to make sure the area includes those in most need, you also need to avoid reinforcing isolation or fuelling tensions between adjacent communities.

### Good practice guidance

#### Deciding on size

- 4.2** Avoid drawing boundaries around small, tightly knit communities – particularly if this demarcates one ethnic group from another, as this may fuel tension between the targeted community and others.
- 4.3** Targeting a larger rather than a smaller area is less likely to fuel tensions with neighbouring communities. It can also provide a means of bringing separate geographic communities together and building positive relations between them.

#### *Defining the area for Greets Green NDC*

The Greets Green NDC in Sandwell includes a large white population as well as Bangladeshi, Hindu, Sikh, Pakistani, Yemeni, and African Caribbean populations. More recently, asylum seekers and new refugees are being housed in the area. It is possible to look at Greets Green in relation to where people from different ethnic groups are located, or to consider it as nine geographic communities, i.e. areas that people consider as their neighbourhood, but these divisions cause some problems in terms of promoting good relations between different groups. Having a relatively large NDC area that encompasses them all makes it easier to bring the separate communities together.

**4.4** Themed programmes that encompass a number of neighbouring communities can be used to bring different communities together. This can be particularly helpful in addressing the needs of people living in small areas of deprivation. A good example of this is current approaches to policing and community safety, which focus attention on crime and safety issues and which cut across geographical boundaries. This approach ensures that crime and community safety is addressed holistically rather than on an ad hoc basis, or on the basis of rigid boundaries, which might result in displacement.

### **Natural and political boundaries**

**4.5** Use natural boundaries to define the area you are targeting, where possible. A community is likely to be more cohesive if it recognises itself as a community. Don't be put off if natural boundaries do not coincide neatly with official boundaries – need does not usually fall neatly into these. Where a ward boundary runs through a road, households on one side are rarely less in need of support than those on the other! Crossing ward boundaries and targeting only parts of wards is fine if this makes sense in terms of the natural community.

**4.5** Crossing borough boundaries can be problematic, however, as you will need to liaise with two local authorities, with services being delivered differently by each.

### ***Drawing the boundaries for Shoreditch NDC***

Shoreditch New Deal for Communities in the London Borough of Hackney consists of parts of four wards. It makes use of natural boundaries, with the Regent's Canal to the north, Old Street and the borough boundary with Tower Hamlets Council to the south, Queensbridge Road to the east and City Road and the boundary with Islington Council to the west. This provides an area that is recognisable to both residents and officials but does not draw the boundary too tightly; 52% of the 22,000 people living in the area are from black and minority ethnic groups.

# Cohesion Guidance

- 4.6** Using ward boundaries for an area based initiative can be the root cause of unnecessary tension between communities. In particular, it can encourage local councillors to fight against each other, rather than looking to the interests of the whole area, as they perceive that decisions about targeted funding are being made on political grounds rather than need. Avoid this, particularly if you are in an area where surrounding wards have councillors from different political parties.
- 4.7** Consider whether the area you are working in should be expanded or joined with neighbouring area-focused initiatives.

## *Joining areas together in Bristol*

In Bristol, the Easton Community Association and the Council's Neighbourhood Renewal Team decided to bring together the two ward areas of Easton and Lawrence Hill to make one target area. This recognised that the ward boundaries were meaningless in terms of what local residents thought of as their community, and that creating artificial boundaries would probably cause more divisions within the community.

## **Communication**

- 4.8** The rationale for deciding the boundaries of the area needs to be communicated to community groups and the wider community right at the beginning of the process, before funding allocations are made. It is much more difficult to change people's perceptions at a later stage than it is to get them on board at the beginning. If communication takes place through one main media channel such as the local paper, or uses only one spokesperson to communicate the message, this will fail to reach a diverse constituency. This one-dimensional approach can also create unnecessary tensions locally.

# working and living

### *Leicester City Council GIS – better information*

Securing funding in a deprived area often depends on having robust baseline data. When that data is out of date there is little evidence of need to inform decision-making on how and where services should be developed. Faced with these problems, Leicester City Council sought to make it clear that they were using an objective needs-based process for managing competition for funds between different areas. The Council developed an innovative way of mapping need that cut across traditional administrative boundaries, concentrations of ethnic groups and areas with different political representation. The results of the mapping were published in the *Leicester Mercury* and two public meetings were held to discuss which areas of the city should be included in future SRB bidding rounds, by considering which areas were most in need and how they compared to each other.

## **Flexibility – working beyond the boundaries**

### **Introduction**

**5.1** Both area and theme based initiatives can be used to provide help and support across wider areas. Even where funding rules restrict activity to a particular area, there is usually some flexibility to include others in need.

### **Good practice guidance**

#### **‘Controlled flexibility’**

**5.2** You can allow people who do not live within the boundaries of the defined scheme to participate, so long as they meet the need criteria.

### *Flexibility in Whitstable*

The boundaries of Harbour Ward in Whitstable, which has received SRB6 funding, do not completely coincide with the area of need; in some cases the ward boundary divides a street. Whilst Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) rules directed funding to residents of the designated ward, this was recognised as potentially very divisive, as many of those living just outside the boundary have similar needs. The community centre in Harbour ward therefore publicises projects and events only within Harbour ward, but accepts residents from neighbouring wards so long as over 50 per cent of the participants are from the Harbour ward.

- 5.3** Community centres in the target area should be open to all groups within the area and to people from neighbouring areas, to help foster good relations between different communities. Reaching out to people from neighbouring areas can also mean that more opportunities can be provided for local residents.

### *Thornhill Lees Community Centre in Dewsbury*

The Thornhill Lees Community Centre is a very successful grass roots initiative by the local residents of Thornhill Lees to establish a venue for the residents of Saville Town, Thornhill Lees and Thornhill. It offers a wide range of activities: courses in partnership with Dewsbury College, several clubs, mothers and toddlers groups, and a youth club. The facilities of the centre are also available to the local community and it is often hired for weddings, meetings and parties. The centre is also able to offer in-house catering, helping to generate extra revenue.

The trustees of this centre (who are also local residents) make it clear that their main objective is to be open to any resident of the three townships who would like to attend a class or group, book a function, or come in for advice centred mainly around assistance with funding

applications. They make a point of not being associated with any particular political or religious group.

The centre, now three years old, has benefited from European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) funding.

- 5.4** Many areas that are seen as relatively affluent contain small pockets of deprivation that are missed when ward-based data is used. This can cause resentment if people in these pockets feel that others in more generally deprived areas are getting more help and support. Neighbouring ABIs should reach out to these pockets of disadvantage where possible and perhaps target them for specific programmes, which are not necessarily area related, e.g. ICT skills training, or working with young offenders.

### **Working with partners**

- 5.5** Funding rules do not limit you to working only with partners within your area. There can be benefits from working with partners that are outside the boundaries of your scheme. Partners might include housing associations, faith groups, voluntary organisations or businesses with expertise or facilities that your community could take advantage of.

### ***Working with partners in Shoreditch***

Shoreditch NDC, with the support of the London Development Agency, has bought a building that houses the Hoxton Apprentice Restaurant, along with other activities run by its partners. The restaurant is a social enterprise that opened in May 2004. Dining for customers from a wide area is combined with training and support for people from the local community. Profits from the restaurant are used to support future work. Prue Leith is involved in devising the menu and additional funding, expertise, secondments and logistical support have been provided by Compass Group and Whitbread.



**5.6** Different schemes in an area often have different boundaries – for example, a Sure Start scheme may work in a smaller area containing a large number of low income families, which is within the much larger target area of an initiative working to reduce crime or improve skills. Similarly there may be neighbouring schemes whose boundaries overlap with yours. Working with other schemes, even where they do not share the same boundaries, can produce benefits such as shared learning, access to expertise that your group does not have, co-ordination of information and events and sharing of local information.

## Relationships between communities

### Introduction

**6.1** You can design your project to promote good relationships between different communities within your area, through bringing people into contact and encouraging them to work together for the benefit of the whole neighbourhood. Good relations among different local groups can be the result of a wide range of initiatives on different scales.

### Good practice guidance

#### Contact

**6.2** Design your programmes to provide maximum opportunity for contact between different racial, ethnic, faith, cultural, age and social groups. Positive interaction between communities is most effective when it is woven into daily life experiences. This can be through, for example, a joint festivals programme, or links between voluntary networks.

#### *Sunderland 'Who Am I?' project*

The NDC area within which the Who Am I? project is located is one of the most ethnically diverse in Sunderland. The initiative came from a local

parent who was concerned about the increasing extremist activity in Sunderland and the impact this was having on local children. The project was designed to foster cohesion between communities by raising awareness about different religions. The project focuses on Islam, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism, exploring the basic principles underpinning belief systems. The project links primary school children with community ambassadors, drawn from adults of different faiths who live and work in the area. This has helped to dispel myths and provide greater insight and understanding about different communities, cultures and faiths. The project has developed a collection of religious artefacts and resource materials that are now used to stimulate learning and discussion about issues affecting a multi-cultural society. In addition, a structured programme of visits to local places of worship has been developed.

*“It gives children a broader outlook on life and makes people accepting of other faiths, cultures and colours” – Local Resident*

## Young people

- 6.3** Tensions between young people are often along territorial lines. It is important that an area based approach to regeneration does not fuel this behaviour.

### *Working across boundaries in Bristol to resolve tensions amongst young people*

Gang wars in 1991 left a long legacy of friction and tension between Afro Caribbean and Somali young people living in Bristol. As many of the disputes between young people centred around race, religion and territory – both in and out of school – it was clear that developing an understanding of others was going to be essential in breaking down some of the barriers between young people. A conference organised by

Community Resolve and Bristol Gang Awareness Project provided young people with an opportunity to express their concerns and meet other young people. A video highlighting the key messages from the conference is being used as a resource for practitioners working with gang crime. In addition, a partnership of organisations and agencies has been established to develop a co-ordinated response and strategy to destructive inner-city gang activity.

*“The project has raised the profile of gang related issues across the city, developed positive inter-agency work, and enhanced the opportunity for black young people to have their say and get involved. Feedback from the conference will influence new approaches in working with marginalised young people and innovative work around peer education”*  
– Local Resident/Practitioner

*“You don’t have to be in a gang to be respected – it’s just the way you treat people which makes them treat you in the same way”* – Young Resident

## **Building ownership**

- 6.4** Differences between community groups can be partly overcome by strengthening community engagement and building joint local ownership of facilities and initiatives. Involving different communities in consultation events or forums can help to break down barriers and foster better understanding between them.

### ***Community Engagement in Brighton***

Managing open space is a challenge to local authorities facing racial and inter-generational tensions between the settled communities and new arrivals to the area. The Portland Road and Clarendon area has one of the highest concentrations of ethnic minorities in Brighton, largely Asian

Muslims. There was a perception by longer-established residents that Asian Muslims, as new entrants to the community, presented a threat to the area, due to differences in culture and religion. Tension was fuelled by the September 11th terrorist attacks on America. Brighton and Hove's Neighbourhood Renewal Programme funded a youth worker, who used a range of resident involvement methods to turn a disused and mismanaged open space into a place where people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds mix and feel a sense of belonging.

A range of forums and groups have also been established, involving local residents, each with individual roles, such as the Portland Resident Action Group, the Poets' Corner Multi Cultural Group and the Park User Group.

### **Mono-cultural communities**

- 6.5** Some communities are mono-cultural in nature and you will therefore need to use a different approach to promote cross-cultural contact. This will need to concentrate on educating neighbouring communities about one another, developing projects that link the communities together and, by building contact and trust, breaking down negative images of the other community.

### ***Working with Travellers and the local community in Tewkesbury***

Gloucester County Council owns four Traveller sites, three of which are within the borough and managed by Tewkesbury Council. These sites are fairly distant from the host community, due to planning regulations, availability of land and the needs of Travellers. When friction does arise with the settled community, it tends to be fuelled by misinformation and negative stereotypes of Travellers.

# regeneration areas

Travellers tend to prefer to live within self-contained communities, with a strong sense of identity and a high level of co-dependence. The council recognised that meeting Travellers' economic and social needs means respecting their boundaries and cultural lifestyle. The council used a "hands-on" approach to building trust relationships with Travellers, alongside an intensive cleaning programme of areas around Traveller sites to ensure that Travellers are not blamed for fly tipping.

The council is also encouraging local business to stock electricity cards to meet the needs of the Traveller community. This may provide a first step toward cultural recognition and integrating the needs of Travellers into the fabric of the local community on their terms.

## Supporting new residents

### Introduction

**7.1** In many areas there is a history of housing being segregated along ethnic lines. There may be powerful reasons to break down this segregation, such as fostering good relations between communities, catering for expanding numbers in some communities and accommodating new communities coming into the area.

### Good practice guidance

**7.2** In all areas, support for new residents moving in is of utmost importance. This applies equally to those renting from social landlords, from private landlords and for owner-occupiers moving to non-traditional areas. Consider local support strategies, which could involve:

- mechanisms to ensure that new residents, regardless of ethnic origin, are not isolated;
- measures to ensure that new residents are not overcome by feelings of fear;

- working with the established communities in advance of the new communities moving into the area, to allow them to come to terms with the changes and help defuse possible tension;
- providing support and practical help for those moving in and, particularly in the initial stages, finding ways of meeting the ‘host’ community and understanding its history and norms;
- providing information of local services and facilities to residents; and
- community events and activities for all local residents.

### *Integrating new residents into local activities in Shoreditch*

In the Shoreditch NDC area, conversation classes have been a good way of helping new residents become integrated into the local area. Sessions deal with everyday issues such as registering with a GP, buying a travel card or seeking housing. The programme also includes visits to libraries and museums, and sessions on English life, politics, literature, cinema and culture. Participants who complete the course develop self-confidence that may enable them to continue training in college, or to look for work.

### *Providing individual support to people moving to non-traditional areas*

First Choice Homes, the arm’s length management organisation established by Oldham Council to manage its social housing, provides support to people moving into homes in areas that are not traditionally associated with their own community. Tenants are provided with a package of support that includes an out-of-hours call service to both housing officers and the police if they suffer from any racially motivated incidents, visits by housing officers in the initial stages of their tenancy, and security measures. Local Registered Social Landlords are now providing similar services and the scheme is being extended to owner-occupiers through the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder.

## *Supporting mixed communities in new housing in Oldham*

A review in 2001 entitled *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team* which was chaired by Ted Cantele, identified residential segregation in Oldham as acute. St Mary's estate is traditionally seen by members of the BME community as an area where sustaining a tenancy would be difficult. The estate is soon to be redeveloped under the Housing Market Renewal Programme, and it is intended that the redevelopment will be a mixed-tenure development, including some large family homes for rent and sale. The new development is incorporating some very high urban design proposals and will appeal to people from a range of different backgrounds. Community development workers started working with both the white and the Asian communities at an early stage, for example through consultation events to plan the development with potential residents from both communities. Residents from parts of Oldham have also been taken to other areas, such as Northmoor in Manchester, that have successfully regenerated run-down housing areas and overcome some similar community cohesion issues.

## **Consultation and community capacity building**

### **Introduction**

**8.1** When not enough attention has been given to the consultation of local residents, it is not unusual for residents to feel that regeneration is 'done to' them rather than by and with them. These feelings may be made worse if residents do not feel that decisions about funding, what progress is being made and reasons for delays are transparent to everyone. Better community cohesion will result when you consult effectively with local residents, and when local residents feel confident and skilled enough to participate in regeneration projects and activities.

# In Area Based

## Good practice guidance

**8.2** Residents may feel that central and local government, as well as regeneration practitioners, are out of touch with how local people wish regeneration funding to be allocated. The ideal is for local people to be fully involved in the process of determining funding priorities from the start.

### *Good practice tip*

Democratic participation can be uncomfortable, as residents will quite rightly pick up on and challenge decisions that seem to be flawed. Effective partnership working ensures that these uncomfortable situations are not glossed over.

## Consultation v involvement

**8.3** It is important to distinguish between consultation, which means asking people for their views, and involvement, which is participation in decision-making. If residents believe that they are being involved in the decision-making whereas in fact you are only seeking their views, they may feel disillusioned and resentful, and disengage from the process.

## Getting organised

**8.4** People who live in poor neighbourhoods often do not feel they can play a part in improving the quality of their lives or the way they are governed. While the factors that stop people from feeling empowered need to be addressed, local residents can improve their living environments if they are committed and organised.

### *Bringing together residents in Thornhill, Dewsbury*

The Thornhill Lees Community Centre in Dewsbury is an initiative by the residents of Thornhill Lees to establish a venue to bring together the residents of Saville Town, Thornhill Lees and Thornhill. Saville Town is a



predominantly Asian area, Thornhill Lees is approximately 60 per cent white and 40 per cent Asian and Thornhill is a predominantly white area. The allocation of regeneration funding has created a lot of feelings of mistrust and resentment among the residents of these three areas. The Thornhill Lees Community Centre was established through local fundraising over a number of years, and it has been gradually extended. The trustees and employees of the centre make it clear that all the initiatives are open to the residents of Saville Town, Thornhill Lees and Thornhill. The very dedicated trustees and local residents put together their own funding bids for projects, and have been very successful thus far.

*“It is important to have the confidence to persist”* – Local Resident

### Getting everyone involved

**8.5** Although some areas may have committed residents who are actively participating in the initiative, this is not enough: you still need to work to involve more residents. Developing capacity among all residents is an ongoing process and different participation structures and processes work for different people. It may be that some communities work best on single issues that they feel strongly about, and which unites them; this will make them more cohesive. Whilst this may not always fit the immediate priorities of complex programmes it can be more effective in ensuring long term ownership by residents of change in their localities.

### *Building community capacity in Shoreditch*

The Shoreditch Our Way New Deal for Communities programme outlines a number of ways in which people can become involved. While not all residents have the time to, for example, work towards being board or task group members, they have the opportunity to be appraisal panel members, ambassadors for Shoreditch, community sports leaders, area forum chairs and Shoreditch volunteers. The NDC also offers residents

extra support to make participation possible, such as training, childcare, mentoring and conversation classes.

*“You won’t get people to take part in something that is a forced learning event. It is much better to put on events that provide the opportunity for people to learn more about one another incidentally” – Local Resident*

- 8.6** Try to involve as large a section of local residents as possible, covering diversity in age, culture, faith, gender and race. Take care to avoid reinforcing the separation and isolation of local residents, particularly if there is domination by one culture or group. Adopt culturally appropriate methods of consultation for different communities. Always ask the communities concerned how they would like to be involved.
- 8.7** Some groups may face particular difficulties in giving their views in consultation, for a number of reasons: language and communication difficulties; racism, cultural and religious intolerance and associated discrimination; and lack of physical, educational and organisational access. It is important to be aware of these issues, as they affect the ability of people to take part to their full capacity in local activities. Developing confidence and skills takes time and patience. Some groups may therefore need more help than others initially, but make sure that the capacity of each group is built into a separate institutional framework and that they share resources and advocacy arrangements as soon as possible.
- 8.8** There is also a tendency to build the leadership and develop representatives from the minority communities. Do not neglect the white community who will also need to be involved in the change.

### *Addressing diverse community needs in Greets Green NDC*

The Positive Action Steering Group (PASG) has been in existence since the beginning of the Greets Green NDC programme. It is a deliberate

attempt to promote the representation of black and minority ethnic residents as community leaders and ensure that the different communities have equal access to information, support and funding. It was established to bring together representatives from the six main black and minority ethnic (BME) groups (Hindu, Sikh, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Afro-Caribbean and Yemeni) in the area into an umbrella organisation to ensure BME issues and needs are adequately addressed by the Greets Green NDC Partnership. The six main BME communities in the area have different capacity in relation to acquiring resources and developing projects to support various activities within these communities. The PASG addresses this in a spirit of co-operation and mutual support. It focuses in particular on factors such as poor access to mainstream agencies, the need to improve outside awareness of their needs and the need for internal capacity building, training and organisational support.

The focus on ‘positive action’ comes from the realisation that regeneration programmes do not necessarily ‘even the playing field’. Some groups do not benefit from regeneration initiatives to the extent that they might. The PASG plays a role in facilitating dialogue and joint working across all BME groups in the Greets Green NDC area.

### *Involving diverse communities in Salford and Manchester*

The ‘Learning to Live Together’ research project in Salford and Manchester is funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and seeks practical ways of involving all sections of the community in discussions about community cohesion. A number of local people from different groups, including refugees, people born in Salford, and other communities, are employed as paid community researchers. Capacity-building support is provided by Salford University on ways of doing research, such as group interviews and analysing and interpreting data.

*“People wanted to talk to us about how they feel about living together because of the way this research project has approached them with respect” – Resident/Community Researcher*

### ***Involving residents in developing open space***

Portland Road and Clarendon is one of ten priority areas in Brighton and Hove’s Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. More established residents perceived that Asian Muslims, as new entrants to the community, presented a threat to the area due to differences in culture and religion; tensions were fuelled by the events of 11 September 2001. Although there were very few recorded racist incidents, there was a general lack of understanding of cultural and ethnic differences.

Brighton and Hove’s Neighbourhood Renewal Programme funded a youth worker who used a range of resident involvement methods to turn a disused and mismanaged open space into a place where people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds mix and feel a sense of belonging. A range of forums and groups have been established involving local residents, each with individual roles, such as the Portland Resident Action Group, the Poets’ Corner Multi Cultural Group and the Park User Group. Young people, who were perceived as a social problem, are now working as volunteers in charge of updating the graffiti wall and representing the views of other young people on steering groups and local boards.

## Communication

### Introduction

**9.1** Good communication is essential to the success of area based regeneration initiatives. Residents both within and outside of the ABI area need to be kept fully informed of the progress of schemes, as well as the reasoning behind the allocation of funding. Communication is also an essential part of many of the other themes covered by this guide.

### Good practice guidance

**9.2** You should communicate clearly from the start of the process of designing and implementing area based regeneration projects. For example, be open about the structures and processes that are inherent to area based regeneration programmes, while at the same time negotiating about how to adapt these to local needs. Explain clearly why you are targeting specific communities or themes and what the benefits to the wider community might be. Communication is one of the most critical tools in building pride and community ownership in any initiative.

#### *Good practice tip*

Identifying champions among stakeholder groups helps to maximise dialogue across communities. Important messages should not only be targeted at the recipient local community, but also at adjoining communities.

**9.3** A public commitment to building good community relations is necessary. You will need to confront anyone who is spreading rumour and causing friction between projects or groups. Have key spokespeople on hand who understand the issues in your neighbourhood and can articulate them in a way that recognises the issue but does not seek to divide communities. Keep them briefed on your vision for an area and your successes. Ensure that these spokespeople are from a wide range of backgrounds and can reach smaller isolated communities and mainstream communities.

### *Limiting damage caused by political extremists in Thornhill, Dewsbury*

In Thornhill Lees, someone spotted a local candidate from a politically extreme party being photographed in front of the Thornhill Lees Community Centre. Realising the implications if this photograph was published in the local media, especially as the centre endeavours to be a facility that is open to all local residents, regardless of background, race or age, the trustees of the centre arranged a meeting with the candidate. They stopped the photograph from being used by reinforcing the message that the centre is a resource for all local residents. They agreed that if the candidate was elected he could use the centre as a surgery in the same way as other councillors, but that the centre cannot be associated with any political or faith group in isolation.

- 9.4** The local media and press can play a vital role in shaping local views. IDeA have produced a guide to working with the local media on community cohesion issues which is available from [www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk) or by calling IDeA on 020 7296 6600. Their guide includes the following top 10 tips for working with the media on community cohesion.

#### *Top 10 Tips for working with the media on community cohesion*

- 1.** Develop a good working relationship with journalists and media editors based on openness, honesty and trust. This will allow for a detailed discussion of issues and will be useful if things go wrong, as they may be open to discussion about giving you the opportunity to make the authority's views known.
- 2.** Agree your key messages and stick to them.
- 3.** Make it your mission to educate and inform residents – myths and prejudice thrive on ignorance. Often this may mean having a strategy for covering news stories over a lengthy period of time.

# Community

4. Review your target media with the help of your Census statistics. You could consider media such as the mainstream press, TV and radio, the ethnic minority media, media for disabled people, community TV channels etc.
5. Speak to the editor or news editor of your local newspaper, local radio stations or community TV channels, to see if they would be willing to run a joint campaign to improve community relations, for example, on themes such as civic pride or cleaning up the local environment.
6. Think like a journalist – would this story really interest the audience? If it's complicated, try and give the story a human-interest angle.
7. Seek out community champions – members of voluntary or faith groups or elected members who are well respected and an authority in their area. If it is difficult to get your message across they may be willing to work with you to do so.
8. Do not assume that the journalist knows the subject as well as you do – offer fact sheets and updates to keep them informed.
9. Don't expect journalists to ignore a story they feel is newsworthy even though it may well be potentially damaging. It is their job to report news. Instead try to make sure the authority's viewpoint is given.
10. Build up a database of newsletters created by partner organisations and community groups – they can be used to send out messages to the community too.

*Extract from IDeA 'Connecting with Communities'*

- 9.5 Communities are complex and have multiple issues to address. They are also in constant flux. Practitioners involved in the area based initiative may need training to ensure they are equipped to address these issues. Staff turnover at area based regeneration projects often has an adverse effect on communication with local residents.

# Cohesion and Inclusion

**9.6** Communication with local residents needs to be properly resourced. In the case of groups that are continually hard-to-reach, funding for outreach, training and community engagement is not just desirable, it is essential.

#### *Good practice tip*

Identify partners from the outset, including any long-standing partnerships that have built up a good level of trust with the community. It is important to celebrate diversity and cultural richness, but also to dispel any misconceptions by key spokespeople. Local strategic partnerships (LSPs), voluntary and community organisations and faith organisations can play an important role in communication.

#### *Good practice tip*

Community development workers can play a very important role in keeping residents informed. These workers need to be able to give local residents a clear idea of progress and stumbling blocks. They should not be put in a position where they are forced to make empty promises.

## **Leadership and accountability**

### **Introduction**

**10.1** People living and working in ABIs need to have a sense of ownership and pride in their community, and need to develop leadership skills to enable them to work effectively with organisations at the local level.

### **Good practice guidance**

**10.2** Identify key spokespersons and project champions who are able to lead the development of a partnership to drive the initiative, and ensure that the initiative is firmly embedded in the local area.



### *Leadership for Sunderland NDC ‘Who Am I?’ project*

A local parent who was concerned about racist activity in Sunderland, had the idea for the ‘Who Am I?’ Project, and approached Education Business Connections, a local not-for-profit organisation, for support. The project focuses on the similarities and differences between faiths groups in Sunderland. It is targeted at very young children in primary years 1 and 2 as at this age children are particularly open to new opinions and influences.

A steering group made up of local parents drives the project, supported by the work of eight multi-lingual Community Ambassadors representing different faiths. The Community Ambassadors were trained by a Neighbourhood Renewal Advisor deployed at the NDC’s request by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, and a facilitator was recruited who has taken on the recruitment, co-ordination and training of the Ambassadors. The Community Ambassadors organise a programme of structured visits to different places of worship and explore the basis of different belief systems with primary school children, through resource materials, discussions and debates, and exhibits of religious artefacts.

*“I feel that the children are gaining a lot from the project and there are indirect benefits for parents. They really appreciate the role of the Community Ambassadors and what we are doing locally” – Local Resident and Community Ambassador*

**10.3** Community leadership can be established over a larger area, for example to provide an environment that is supportive to people living and working in existing ABIs in various parts of a city. Community leadership over a larger area such as a local authority area can also create a climate that encourages the development of new community cohesion approaches.

**10.4** It is helpful to have a prominent spokesperson as a project champion who is able to secure the involvement of leaders of other influential local organisations. Together, this core group of representatives can ensure

that the project remains stable when changes in the membership of the partnership inevitably occur.

- 10.5** Adopting informal partnership arrangements can help to ensure a swift response to local challenges.

### *Developing cohesive relationships with the media*

Both the editor of the *Leicester Mercury* and the City Council wanted to develop a close working relationship as the basis for responding to local tension within various communities in Leicester. The result was Leicester City's Multi-Cultural Advisory Group, an unofficial monitoring body for Leicester City's various initiatives to tackle obstacles to community cohesion.

The Multi-Cultural Advisory Group is an informal association of local people who have the backing of their organisations and the support of their constituents. Members include the editor of the *Leicester Mercury*, people from BBC Radio Leicester and other local media, the leader and chief executive of the City Council and the Bishop of Leicester; as well as community leaders and representatives from the police, Leicester Council of Faiths, Youth Voice, Leicester Race Equality Council, Leicester Asian Business Association, schools and universities. The group has also worked with a number of voluntary and community organisations on specific issues, including the Council of Faiths and the Confederation of Muslim Organisations.

The group has had a positive effect across Leicester, because all of the media are firmly on board in terms of sensitive reporting of events. Other positive achievements of the group include joint action to prohibit incitement to racial hatred through the banning of an extremist march in 2002, and sensitive reporting of the process by which areas have been selected for ABI funding.

# Community

## Monitoring and evaluation

### Introduction

**11.1** You need to understand how your ABI is affecting communities, in order to assess whether what you are doing is having a positive effect on community cohesion or actually increasing tensions or fragmentation and, if so, what you can do about it.

**11.2** A cohesive community will have many of the following characteristics:

- local residents share a common vision and a sense of belonging;
- practitioners engage with and listen to people who truly represent all sections of the community;
- local activities, engagement and communication take place in a way that appreciates and values people's different backgrounds and circumstances;
- local opportunities such as education, housing and jobs are equally accessible to all local residents;
- all local residents feel equally safe in their local environment, and they do not have particular fears in relation to racist crime or hate crime; and
- local initiatives contribute to the creation of strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds, generations and social classes, in places of employment, schools and within local neighbourhoods.

**11.3** You need to measure some or all of these elements in order to establish the effect that the ABI is having on community cohesion.

### Good practice guidance

#### Measurement

**11.4** Projects that form part of ABIs should demonstrate how they would measure their impact on community cohesion. Indeed, this should be part of the selection criteria used to assess project applications.

**11.5** The impact of initiatives on community cohesion can be difficult to measure, as the issues are often hard to quantify. Practitioners and local residents often say that it is very difficult to know exactly what they are working towards, i.e. when has ‘community cohesion’ been achieved. However, local people are interested in positive changes in their environment and it is possible to develop a sense of how things have changed by speaking with them.

**11.6** A Home Office guide to measurement called *Building a Picture of Community Cohesion* has been produced for local authorities and their partners; it contains useful information on measurement for those living and working in ABIs (the guide can be downloaded from [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs2/buildpicturecomcohesion.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs2/buildpicturecomcohesion.html) or obtained by telephoning the Home Office on 020 7035 5479).

### ***Measuring community cohesion as part of the Sunderland NDC ‘Who Am I?’ project***

Practitioners and residents involved in the ‘Who Am I?’ project have worked with local primary school teachers to develop a baseline questionnaire customised for children of primary school age. The questionnaire is designed to test the knowledge children have of different faiths when they initially engage with the project, during the project, and at the end.

### ***Measuring community cohesion in Camden***

Camden Council is using the concept of social capital as one way of measuring the impact of their neighbourhood renewal funding. A survey of a sample of residents was carried out to set a baseline figure against which any improvements could be measured. The questionnaire asked residents to say how much they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements, including: ‘*this is a neighbourhood where people from different cultures and religions can live together without difficulty*’; ‘*I enjoy living in a neighbourhood with people from different cultures*’; and ‘*this is*

*an area that has a good sense of community*'. It also measured residents' involvement in local groups, activities and events. A number of social capital workshops were also held in each of Camden's ten neighbourhood renewal areas, to bring the statistics to life and involve residents in a more hands-on discussion of their area and the priorities for improvement.

### **Make sure people understand the term**

**11.7** In monitoring the impact of initiatives on community cohesion, ground your discussions with local stakeholders in an understanding of what 'community cohesion' means and the various ways in which it can be interpreted. Salford's 'Learning to Live Together' project led discussions around the theme of 'living together' rather than around the term 'community cohesion', because people were rather put off by the official term and were unable to see what relevance it had for them.

### *Using community researchers to monitor impact*

The 'Learning to Live Together' project is focused on the City of Salford and Manchester, where there are dispersed people seeking asylum. The project involves all sections of the community in discussions and research about 'community cohesion' and assessments of the impact of various local initiatives on community cohesion. In order to strengthen bonds within and between communities and different areas of the city in receipt of various funds, a number of local people were employed as paid community researchers. The community researchers included refugees, people born in Salford and people from other communities who had moved into Salford. The community researchers worked alongside experienced researchers from Salford University to explore three sets of activities in the city: a footballers' group, a women's museum project, and the Salford and Manchester Community Networks funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. The research explored the views of the people involved in those activities, specifically how they felt the activities helped people in the area to live together.

# Initiatives (ABIs)

## Measure the wider effects

**11.8** Although funding for area based regeneration projects is often limited to a specific geographical area, local residents outside the area may also be affected. It is important to monitor the impact of changes inside and outside the area.

### *Measuring community cohesion in Rochdale and Oldham*

Rochdale and Oldham carried out a survey to find out how residents felt about a number of issues. The questions included some designed to measure community cohesion: respondents were asked to rate how far they agreed or disagreed with statements such as *'I feel safe in my area'* and *'the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together'*.

There were 33,000 responses to the survey, which means that the data is robust enough to provide a benchmark for individual neighbourhoods. The survey will be repeated every two years to track changes in community cohesion.

Participation levels in community events are also measured and ethnic monitoring of tenants of new developments is carried out.

## Mainstreaming community cohesion

**12.1** One of the major issues for ABIs is whether the initiatives that are used to remove barriers between communities are sustainable over a longer period of time. For an initiative to be sustainable it needs to be 'mainstreamed', i.e. become part of the everyday activity of the community. Mainstreaming can take place in a number of ways, from influencing local policies to securing long-term investment in localities. It is an on-going process of consultation, development, implementation and review, and in order to be effective it should be built into the project at the planning phase.

The Tewkesbury case study demonstrates a creative way to ensure that community cohesion stays on the agenda of all council services.

### *Mainstreaming community cohesion in Tewkesbury*

Tewkesbury Borough Council has established a network of community cohesion practitioners across rural areas in Gloucestershire to share intelligence and solutions to problems such as the distribution of Traveller sites across districts and county councils. The Council has also adopted a broad definition of community cohesion in order to get the issues related to Travellers and other minority groups mainstreamed across all Council services, as well as to gain support from elected members across a range of political persuasions. The next challenge is to secure the rights of Travellers to own their own property and develop sustainable solutions to their problems through introducing social enterprises.

**12.2** All statutory agencies should take responsibility for ensuring that their work contributes to community cohesion by considering the impact that their services and programmes have on this.

regeneration areas

# ANNEX A: Case Studies

## Brighton – Portland Road and Clarendon open space

### Background

**13.1** Managing open space is a challenge to local authorities facing racial and inter-generational tensions between the settled community and new arrivals to the area. Portland Road and Clarendon is one of ten priority areas in Brighton and Hove's Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. It has one of the highest concentrations of ethnic minorities in Brighton, largely Asian Muslims. There was a perception by more established residents that Asian Muslims, as new entrants to the community, presented a threat to the area due to differences in culture and religion; tensions were fuelled by the events of 11 September 2001. Although there were very few recorded racist incidents, there was a general lack of understanding of cultural and ethnic differences.

### Description

**13.2** A Talkshop based in the open-plan Stoneham Park has been funded through Brighton and Hove's Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. It provides a range of services, including information and advice, meeting rooms, IT training, health care, a café/kiosk and public toilets. The Neighbourhood Renewal Programme has also funded a youth worker, who has used a range of resident involvement methods to turn a disused and mismanaged open space into a place where people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds mix and feel a sense of belonging. A range of forums and groups have been established involving local residents, each with their individual roles, such as the Portland Resident Action Group, the Poets' Corner Multi Cultural Group and the Park User Group. Young people, who were perceived as a social problem, are now working as volunteers in charge of updating the graffiti wall and representing the views of other young people on steering groups and local boards.

**13.3** The youth worker has acted as a local champion and developed strong relationships with young people and community leaders from the



# Cohesion Guidance

Muslim faith. He has been able to encourage the YMCA, a Christian organisation, to provide space for Muslims to meet and socialise both with other Muslims and young people of other faiths. In addition, a youth-based multi-cultural event in the park helped to develop broader racial understanding. Local Asian and Bangladeshi businesses provided food representing the diverse ethnic groups in the area. The area now has its own quarterly newsletter, *West Hove News*, which is used to keep the community informed.

**13.4** The project has developed strong relationships with other agencies, for example local police who regularly patrol the park. The park now has a dedicated community police officer.

**Contacts:** Sarah Hardman, Neighbourhood Renewal Coordinator, Brighton and Hove City Council, Tel: 01273 291025

Don Brown, Community Development Worker, Hove YMCA,  
Tel: 01273 731724

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## Bristol youth gang conflict

### Background

**14.1** Bristol has established ethnic communities, as well as newer communities of recent refugees and asylum seekers from Africa and Eastern Europe. The area is still addressing the social issues that culminated in a turf war between Somali and Afro Caribbean youth in 1991. More recently, a number of area based initiatives have sought to address the causes of youth disengagement and social unrest.

### Description

**14.2** Easton Community Association (ECA), a local voluntary organisation, has been instrumental in building local partnerships, changing perceptions

of the area and working across area boundaries to address the needs of young people. A partnership of over 40 voluntary organisations has been developed to co-ordinate responses to youth crime. The Easton Community Association and the Neighbourhood Renewal Team decided to bring together two ward areas (Easton and Lawrence Hill) to make it the largest area in Bristol with an area based initiative. This change provided opportunities to address gang territorial boundaries and movement within and across areas. Working across geographical as well as organisational boundaries, ECA has been able to address community cohesion issues, as well as managing competition and rivalry between organisations funded through different government initiatives.

**14.3** Community Resolve and Bristol Gang Awareness were commissioned by ECA to use their specialist skills in conflict resolution and mediation to do specific work with gangs. Since then, a partnership of organisations and agencies has been working to develop a co-ordinated strategy to address destructive inner-city gang activity. A conference called ‘Our Gang’s Family’ was organised in May 2004, bringing together young people from different areas and ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds to address gang crimes and territorial conflict. Young people spoke about their experiences and had a chance to break down some of the tensions between them. A video has been produced highlighting key messages captured during the conference, and this is being used as a resource to practitioners working with gang crime in other areas.

**14.4** A specialist team of gang workers drawn from all sections of the community is being trained to act as paid peer educators. This new peer-learning programme, called ‘Sort It’, will promote active listening, communication skills, body language and presentation skills. A conflict resolution tool kit is being used in local schools, youth clubs and community projects with young people between the ages of 13 and 23. The intention is also to place outreach workers in one-stop grass roots organisations where they can be accessible to young people. In

addition, a rapid response team involving police and youth workers is being developed.

- 14.5** The ECA has developed a web site ([www.smarteties.net](http://www.smarteties.net)) and also an electronic information base. Smarteties stands for ‘specific, measurable, area based, relevant and timely information, and electronic information exchange service’.

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Tel: 0117 941 5102

## **‘Learning to Live Together’ (Salford and Manchester)**

### **Background**

- 15.1** The Salford-based RAPAR (Refugee and Asylum Seekers Participatory Action Research) is a local charity formed in 2002 by people seeking asylum, community organisations and Salford and Manchester University researchers. RAPAR has succeeded in obtaining funding, including from SRB 5 and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF). The JRF project was called ‘Learning to Live Together’.

### **Description**

- 15.2** The ‘Learning to Live Together’ research project is funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and anchored in involving all sections of the community in discussions and research about ‘community cohesion’. In order to strengthen existing bonds within and between communities, a number of local people from different groups within Salford and Manchester were employed as paid community researchers. The community researchers, who included refugees, people born in Salford, and people from other communities who had moved into Salford, worked with RAPAR to develop a funding submission to the JRF.

Having obtained funding, the community researchers worked alongside experienced researchers from Salford University to look at three sets of activities in the city: a footballers' group, a women's museum project, and the Salford and Manchester Community Networks funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. The research explored the views of the people involved in those activities, specifically how they felt the activities helped people in the area live together. Salford University provided capacity building support for the community researchers on research methods, such as group interviews and analysing and interpreting data.

**15.3** A final report setting out the process and the conclusions that emerged from the research is forthcoming from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation: *Learning to Live Together: developing communities where there are dispersed refugee people seeking asylum*. The community researchers are joint authors to the report and will be provided with a certificate by JRF. Members of RAPAR, along with a number of voluntary and statutory agencies, also ran a series of seminars funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. This has resulted in the publication of a set of good practice research guidelines looking at the importance of involving refugees in research. The researchers from Salford University who steered the project and two members of RAPAR were invited to give a workshop presentation at the Home Office National Refugee Integration Conference in July 2004.

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## Leicester – developing relationships with the media

### Background

**16.1** Leicester City Council's positive relationship with the media emerged out of a recognition that the media and the City Council needed to work in partnership to agree responses to local issues and tensions. The driving force was the *Leicester Mercury*, the largest newspaper in Leicester and Leicestershire. The result was the formation of Leicester City's Multi-Cultural Advisory Group, which acts as an unofficial monitoring body for the city's various initiatives aimed at tackling obstacles to community cohesion.

### Description

**16.2** The Multi-Cultural Advisory Group is an informal association of local people who have the backing of their organisations and the support of their constituents. Members include the editor of the *Leicester Mercury*, people from BBC Radio Leicester and other local media, the leader and chief executive of the City Council and the Bishop of Leicester; as well as community leaders and representatives from the police, Leicester Council of Faiths, Youth Voice, Leicester Race Equality Council, Leicester Asian Business Association, schools and universities.

**16.3** The group aims to deal with tensions between and within communities by developing a constructive city-wide dialogue and jointly owned responses to issues arising at city level. For example, a local crisis involving an application made by a politically extreme party to march through Leicester on St George's Day 2001 brought a swift and collective response from members of the Multi-Cultural Advisory Group. Members of the group were in agreement that the march would create and exacerbate local tensions, and supported action by the police, the Council and a number of voluntary and community organisations, including the Council of Faiths and the Confederation of Muslim Organisations, to stop the march. The Home Secretary took a decision to

ban the march on the basis of a recommendation made by Leicestershire Constabulary, following approaches from the Council. The *Leicester Mercury* gave prominence to the pressure for the ban and the decision of the Home Secretary. As well as local issues, the group has also discussed the disturbances in Gujarat, the events of 11 September 2001 and the Iraq war.

**16.4** The initiative has proved effective because the group is highly cohesive, and the media is firmly on board in terms of sensitive reporting of events. For example, issues concerning funding within ABIs and levels of deprivation have been reported sensitively by local media as a means of reducing negative perceptions of areas. The members of the group meet at the offices of the *Leicester Mercury*, and the group has the support of other local media, including BBC Radio Leicester and Midlands Asian Television.

**Contact:** Nick Carter, Editor, Leicester Mercury, Tel: 0116 2512512

Monica Glover, Policy Unit Leicester City Council, Tel: 0116 252 6065

## **Leicester – consensus through better information**

### **Background**

**17.1** Leicester City Council began this initiative in 1998 for three main reasons. First, voluntary sector activity was unevenly distributed, with highly organised groups in some areas and little or no voluntary sector infrastructure in others, so there were sometimes difficulties in getting funding initiatives off the ground. Secondly, data at that time only existed at ward level and the information from the 1991 Census was out of date. Thirdly, there was concern that data collected on an electoral ward basis encouraged fragmented interests and had become enmeshed in political wrangling at ward level, rather than being used to consider

what would ultimately benefit the city as a whole. A perception had developed that decisions were being taken on political grounds and not on the basis of need. Leicester City Council therefore wanted to make it clear that it was using an objective needs-based process for managing competition for ABI resources between different areas.

## Description

**17.2** The City Council mapped age distribution across the city, assigning different colours to different age groups. It repeated this process with other data – housing benefit take up, crime rates, etc – using postcodes to identify small areas. The mapping areas crossed electoral boundaries and thus attention was focused on issues such as poverty and crime experienced by all communities, and away from ward boundaries, the political process, and race and ethnicity. The results of the mapping were published in the *Leicester Mercury*, and public meetings were held in 1998 and 2000 to discuss which areas of the city should be included in future SRB bidding rounds, based on which areas were more in need and how they compared with each other. The initiative was also publicised on BBC Radio Leicester, and through the local libraries and community venues.

**17.3** Leicester City Council works closely with the Primary Care Trust and the police through a forum called the Leicester Partnership Information Group (LPIG); all partners are able to use the collected data. Leicester City Council's approach caught the attention of Brussels and informed the approach of the Policy Action Team 18 Report called *Better Information*, and is now mainstreamed as a key part of the government's approach to local information.

**Contact:** Andy Thomas, Leicester City Council [thoma001@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:thoma001@leicester.gov.uk)

Tel: 0116 252 6516

## The Sandwell Partnership and the Greets Green New Deal for Communities

### Background

**18.1** Sandwell is a deprived borough situated in the West Midlands. It is made up of six individual towns: Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich. Sandwell has been chosen as one of fifteen Home Office Community Cohesion Pathfinder areas. The Sandwell Partnership brings together all major public sector agencies, together with community and voluntary sector and business representatives to develop joined-up approaches for a better future for Sandwell and its residents.

### The REWIND programme

**18.2** One of the projects supported by the Sandwell Partnership is the REWIND programme. The project is based on exposing the myths that have been created around issues of 'race'. It challenges deep-seated beliefs underlying the way that young people in particular can relate to each other, by using practical and factual examples, such as DNA evidence from the human genome programme, academia, general media articles, audio-tapes and everyday situations. By exposing 'race' as a false concept, various types of racism are explored, as well as their implications. Theoretical perspectives on race are broken down and turned into accessible exercises and sessions. The programme is currently delivered in schools and youth settings.

**18.3** The project has received national recognition in various ways. It has: been used in a Home Office video on community cohesion; featured in the National Youth Agency's 'Toolkit on Racism'; been used as a model of good practice at a world conference on Xenophobia and Racism in South Africa; been delivered in over 30 areas of the UK (including Bradford and Burnley); featured in national publications and on BBC TV; and it is published by the Runnymede Trust.



**18.4** The existing REWIND team is based in the Primary Care Trust. Pathfinder Funding, together with money from the NRF and the Children's Fund, has secured this project for two years. The Local Educational Authority is also a partner and negotiations are taking place on how aspects of the programme can be mainstreamed. In addition to the work with young people, REWIND will also support training and awareness raising among elected members, decision-makers, leaders and officers working in Sandwell.

### **The Greets Green New Deal for Communities programme**

**18.5** The Greets Green New Deal for Communities area in Sandwell includes a large white population and six black and minority ethnic groups. It also houses increasing numbers of asylum seekers and refugees.

**18.6** Conversations with residents of the Greets Green area made clear that community cohesion was a multi-layered issue. Many positive initiatives are taking place on a small scale, such as activities in local community centres, but the NDC recognises that community cohesion is not something that can be achieved instantly. The Greets Green NDC recently celebrated Bonfire Night and Diwali together, which worked well. The Positive Action Steering Group in the Greets Green Area attempts to promote community leaders, including black and minority ethnic residents, as community leaders.

**18.7** Residents of the area feel that in order to promote good relations between different racial groups, the focus should be on the relationship between the regeneration project and the residents in the area as a whole. It is important that practitioners should listen to residents' needs, and be open and transparent about progress and obstacles. Staff turnover among those implementing regeneration projects, although inevitable, creates uncertainty and distrust, especially when residents feel that their needs are not prioritised and the goal posts are being shifted. Enthusiastic and committed individuals can make a huge

difference to establishing good relations among different racial groups, although it takes a lot of effort.

**18.8** The name of a regeneration project can be hugely influential. In many cases consultants just ‘name’ areas inappropriately. For example, most of the funding within the Greets Green NDC is actually mostly allocated on the Hallam Estate.

**Contacts:** Garry Bowman (Sandwell Partnership) Tel: 0121 569 2200

Dave Allport (REWIND) Tel: 0121 543 3986

Ally Allerson (Chief Executive, Greets Green NDC)

Tel: 0121 533 3181

## **The Shoreditch Our Way New Deal for Communities Programme**

### **Background**

**19.1** Shoreditch NDC is a Round One NDC partnership that lies within the London Borough of Hackney. It is one of the largest NDC partnerships, because of the substantial local population – about 22,000 people living in 9,000 homes. Approximately 52 per cent of the population is from black and minority ethnic groups and some 12 per cent are unemployed (compared to a national average of 3 per cent). The NDC area consists of parts of four wards: Moorfields, Haggerston, De Beauvoir and Wenlock. The area’s boundaries are the Regent’s Canal to the north, Old Street and the borough boundary with Tower Hamlets in the south, Queensbridge Road to the east and City Road and the boundary with Islington to the west.

### **Description**

**19.2** Shoreditch NDC works in an innovative way to deliver services in the area, along with partners such as the London Development Agency, Job

Centre Plus, London Transport and the local Primary Care Trust; its approach is one of ‘controlled flexibility’. Regeneration money has been spent, under the firm leadership of local residents, to ensure that initiatives are sustainable.

**19.3** Shoreditch NDC has undertaken a major consultation process to ensure that tenants are happy in the area. It is trying to ensure that council housing tenants can remain with Hackney Council as landlord. When local residents made it clear at the outset of the programme that transport is an issue, Shoreditch NDC bought a bus and put on its own bus route through the area. This was so successful that London Transport took over the service.

**19.4** The partnership is not content with the current level of engagement, but actively seeks to increase the involvement and support of local residents. Local residents are invited to participate in the programme in a variety of ways, e.g. by becoming board members, task group members, appraisal panel members, ambassadors for Shoreditch, community sports leaders, area forum chairs and Shoreditch volunteers. Shoreditch NDC also offers support to make it easier for residents to engage, such as comprehensive training, child care and other enabling support, the Tom Peters Leadership Programme, mentoring support, and conversation classes. Although none of these initiatives is particularly aimed at ‘community cohesion’, they aim to create capacity among local residents to engage in regeneration. Often when people are successful, they move on. The challenge for the Shoreditch NDC is to create an area where people would like to stay.

**Contact: Michael Pyner (Chief Executive for Shoreditch NDC),**

**Tel: 0207 324 5595**

## Who Am I?' project (Sunderland NDC – Back on the Map)

### Background

**20.1** The 'Who Am I?' project started in November 2003 and is funded by the East End and Hendon New Deal for Communities initiative also known as Back on the Map, and by Sunderland City Council through its Strategic Initiatives Budget. Education Business Connections Limited (EBC), a not-for-profit organisation that delivers brokerage services between schools and industry, is delivering the project.

**20.2** Sunderland has a relatively small BME population of approximately 1.4 per cent, but the total BME population in the NDC area is 7 per cent, making the area the most ethnically diverse in Sunderland. Furthermore, according to LEA figures, 60 per cent of pupils from BME backgrounds live in and around the NDC area in which the 'Who Am I?' project is located. The initiative was the brainchild of a local parent and worker, Nejun Rahman, who was aware of the serious problems faced by black and minority ethnic residents in the NDC area: increasing racist violence, and concerns about their safety and the safety of their children resulting from growing extremist activity in Sunderland. Extremist candidates contested every ward in Sunderland in the last local election. The number of racist incidences reported to the police in Sunderland in 2002/3 was 396; two-thirds of these were in the NDC area.

### Description

**20.3** The 'Who Am I?' Project is designed to foster cohesion between communities by raising awareness about different religions in a positive way. Its principal objective is to educate children at an early age, thus lessening the effects of racism now and in the future. Nejun Rahman, supported by other local parents and professionals, and with the support of EBC, established a steering group to drive the project, and to oversee a programme of community involvement in the design and

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shape of the project through surveys, public meetings and articles in the local media.

**20.4** The project centres its activities on five major faiths – Islam, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism. It explores the basic principles underpinning belief systems through practical activities to develop children’s awareness of differences in religious observance and worship. The project links primary school children in the NDC area with Community Ambassadors drawn from the principal faiths. The Community Ambassadors support classroom learning within the framework offered by the National Curriculum. Community Ambassadors arrange visits to places of worship and other practical activities, such as dressing up in religious clothes, looking at religious artefacts and producing materials. They also tell the primary school children stories about their lives and beliefs, to provide greater insight and understanding about different communities and dispel myths about different cultures and different faiths.

**Contact: Nejun Rahman (Community Ambassador), Tel: 0191 514 3463**

**Sohan Singh (Project Facilitator), Tel: 0191 553 7754**

## **The Thornhill Lees Community Centre**

### **Background**

**21.1** The Thornhill Lees Community Centre is situated in Dewsbury. The ward of Thornhill comprises three areas: Saville Town, Thornhill Lees and Thornhill. Approximately 18,012 people live in the ward, according to 2001 Census statistics, although 8,060 people live in areas specifically prioritised for neighbourhood renewal. The ward is within the most deprived 7 per cent of wards nationally. Educational attainment, low incomes and child poverty are areas of particular concern. Traditionally, residents of these areas worked in the textile industry, but employment opportunities have dwindled as local industries perished.

## Description

**21.2** The residents of Saville Town mainly have Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origins, Thornhill is a predominantly white area, and Thornhill Lees has a population that is approximately 60 per cent white and 40 per cent Asian. Kirklees Council owns most of the housing in this area. These three areas have a history of competition around regeneration funding and, while there are many examples of work to promote good relations between different groups, there is also a lot of mistrust and resentment.

**21.3** The Thornhill Lees Community Centre is a very successful grass roots initiative to establish a venue to bring together the residents of Saville Town, Thornhill Lees and Thornhill. The centre and its activities came about through extreme dedication and resourcefulness by residents of this deprived area, who put together their own bids to access regeneration funding. The centre, now three years old, has benefited from ERDF, SRB and NRF funding. It offers a wide range of activities: courses run in partnership with Dewsbury College, several clubs, mothers and toddlers groups and a youth club. The facilities of the centre are also available to local residents and it is often hired for weddings, meetings and parties. The centre is also able to offer in-house catering, generating additional revenue. The centre employs a caretaker and a co-ordinator, but the rest of the work is undertaken on a voluntary basis. Two of the trustees, who are now retired, spend on average 40 hours per week at the centre. The centre is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It is run like a business, which the trustees note is an important element to consider. While community enterprises like this can be hugely successful, they need the appropriate mixture of skills and dedication to keep going.

**Contacts:** Marlene Chambers and Peter Marsden (Thornhill Lees Community Centre), Tel: 01924 468053

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## Tewkesbury Travellers

### Background

**22.1** Tewkesbury, like most prosperous rural areas, has the perception of being a homogenous community, as there is no critical mass of minority groups. However, the Traveller community has been resident to the community for the last 400 years and forms the largest minority ethnic group in Tewkesbury. Tewkesbury Council has been recently awarded a Community Cohesion Beacon award and Shadow Pathfinder status for the work it has done in the field of community cohesion with Travellers.

### Description

**22.2** Tewkesbury Council has developed a three-year cross-cutting plan to address the needs of Travellers. The Council has also established a number of planning groups, as well as a rural network for community cohesion to share best practice and learning.

**22.3** Gloucester County Council owns four Traveller sites, three of which are within the borough and managed by Tewkesbury. These sites are generally distant from the host community, due to planning regulations, availability of land and the needs of Travellers on the sites. When friction does arise with the settled community, it tends to be fuelled by misinformation and negative stereotypes of Travellers. Travellers are often perceived as the cause of social problems (such as fly tipping), or as freeloaders, living off state benefits, unwilling to pay tax and receiving more support than the settled community. This is particularly the case when ‘travelling through’ Gypsies occupy unauthorised spaces. In order to alleviate these concerns, the council has intensified the cleaning programme of areas surrounding Traveller sites to ensure that Travellers are not blamed for fly tipping. They are also addressing the lack of information on Travellers and identifying gaps in the ward/census data that renders their status invisible, even though they have been residents in the community for over 400 years.

**22.4** Travellers tend to prefer to remain a distant and self-contained community, with a strong sense of identity and co-dependence. The council recognises that the Travellers do not like anything externally imposed on them and therefore adopted a hands-on approach, building strong relationships with key opinion formers. The process of change has been slow and small steps have been taken to engage with both Traveller and host communities, such as sports activities and encouraging local shops to store electricity cards used by Travellers. The council now wishes to develop more recognised routes to gaining a wider range of views, and is introducing a careful mix of activities, including consultation and videos, local football matches and drama productions. Further work is planned to raise awareness of Travellers and their lifestyles. The next challenge is to address more Traveller needs, from site maintenance to site purchase options through introducing social enterprises and working with housing associations.

**Contacts:** James Kelly, Director of Community Services, and Paul Kenyon, Environmental Safety Manager, Tel: 07836 585 088



# ANNEX B: Useful websites and publications

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## Central Government Sites

### Community Cohesion Unit

[www.communitycohesion.gov.uk](http://www.communitycohesion.gov.uk)

### Home Office

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

### ABI Website, Regional Co-ordination Unit

[www.rcu.gov.uk/abi](http://www.rcu.gov.uk/abi)

### Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

[www.neighbourhood.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk)

[www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net)

### Neighbourhood Statistics

[www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)

### Audit Commission

[www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)

## Other Organisations

### Commission for Racial Equality

[www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk)

### Local Government Association

[www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)

### The Interfaith Network for the UK

[www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

### Runnymede Trust

[www.runnymedetrust.org](http://www.runnymedetrust.org)

## Improvement and Development Agency

[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

## Joseph Rowntree Foundation

[www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)

## Useful Publications

- *Community Cohesion Advice for those designing, developing and delivering Area Based Initiatives (ABIs)* published by Home Office and ODPM.

This was the initial guidance on community cohesion in ABIs aimed primarily at policy makers which this, more practical guidance, is based on. It is available at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs2/abi\\_advice.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs2/abi_advice.pdf)

- *Building a Picture of Community Cohesion* published by the Home Office

This guide to measuring community cohesion is available at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs2/buildpicturecomcohesion.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs2/buildpicturecomcohesion.html) or can be obtained by calling the Home Office on 020 7035 5479.

- *Guidance on Community Cohesion* published by the Local Government Association, Home Office, the Commission for Racial Equality, and the Interfaith Network.

This gives some useful background information and advice on ways to review existing policies and practices so that they help to build more cohesive communities. It is available from: [www.lga.gov.uk/Documents/Publication/communitycohesion.pdf](http://www.lga.gov.uk/Documents/Publication/communitycohesion.pdf) or by calling the LGA on 020 7664 3000. The guidance is being updated and a revised version will be available in the winter of 2004.

- *Community Cohesion and Housing: A good practice guide* published by the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Housing Corporation 2004. Available from [www.cih.org/publications](http://www.cih.org/publications)

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- *How Housing Management can contribute to Community Cohesion* published by the Chartered Institute of Housing 2004.

Available from [www.cih.org/publications](http://www.cih.org/publications)

- *Community Cohesion – Building a relationship with the media* in the ‘Connecting with Communities’ resource on IDeA Knowledge.

Available from [www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk) or by calling IDeA on 020 7296 6600.



# Community

## Cohesion Guidance

for those

working and living

in Area Based

Initiatives (ABIs)

and other

regeneration areas

# Community Cohesion Guidance for those working and living in Area Based Initiatives (ABIs) and other

For further information, please contact the Community Cohesion Unit at:

Allington Towers (4th Floor)  
19 Allington Street  
London SW1E 5EB

*Telephone:* **020 7035 5479** *Fax:* **020 7035 5399**

*Website:* [www.communitycohesion.gov.uk](http://www.communitycohesion.gov.uk)

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