

Name of meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
Date: 13 January 2020
Title of report: Cohesion Review: Interim Findings Report

Purpose of report

This report provides the Committee with an update on the review of the Cohesion Strategy, focusing on the initial findings from data analysis following engagement with individuals and communities through approximately 50 focus groups.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Yes – Rachel Spencer-Henshaw 7/1/20
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	NA
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	NA
Cabinet member portfolio	Give name of Portfolio Holder Cllr Carole Pattison

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: All councillors have been made aware of the cohesion review, they will be invited to the partnership event to be part of the co-production and the development of the place based cohesion action plans.

Public or private: Public

Have you considered GDPR? Yes – N/A

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Panel with an update on the development of the Cohesion Strategy, focusing on findings from analysis of the 50 focus groups held to help inform the vision and strategy.

2. Information required to take a decision

The Interim Report (attached), outlines key themes identified from the conversations held with individuals and communities across Kirklees.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

The Cohesion Strategy has been developed with co-production principles at its foundation. The Interim Report attached reflects the views of approximately 650 residents from across Kirklees who were engaged in an attempt to develop an understanding of what Cohesion means to our residents, as well as what they feel hampers it.

The next stage of strategy development will involve playing these findings back to participants and other community members and groups at a partnership event in January, to ensure their voices have been reflected as accurately as possible.

Once drafted, the strategy will be shared universally for comment from individuals, groups and communities across Kirklees, and once published we will be establishing a mechanism to ensure people are able to continue engaging with and shaping the work programme as it is delivered.

3.2 Working with Partners

The Cohesion Strategy will be overseen by the Communities Board in the first instance, which has representation from a number of key partners working in and with communities.

The Strategy will be taken to this Board for initial sign off. In addition, partners will have the opportunity to shape the vision and strategy at the abovementioned January partnership event.

The success of the strategy will be heavily reliant on a range of partners, including schools, police, health care providers, businesses and more working together to improve cohesion in Kirklees.

3.3 Place Based Working

While we recognise that cohesion needs to be a consideration across the whole of Kirklees, as every town, ward and street is affected by cohesion and its related issues, people's experiences of cohesion, and therefore their needs can differ significantly in different places. We will be tailoring our work to ensure it responds to the specific circumstances in Kirklees' diverse communities.

3.4 Improving outcomes for children

There is specific consideration given to young people and their experience of cohesion in the engagement work we've already completed, and this will be reflected in the strategy once developed. However, we know the effect that

living in cohesive communities more broadly has on children and young people and, therefore their outcomes, is significant. This can affect their feelings of safety, and access to wider support networks beyond the family unit.

3.5 Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

N/A

4. Consultees and their opinions

5. Next steps and timelines

Partnership Event	30.01.20
Communities Board	12.02.20
ET:	17.03.20
Portfolio holder brief:	13.04.20
LMT:	20.04.20
Cabinet:	19.05.20

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

The Panel provides feedback and constructive challenge to the Interim Report before it is shared with partners and participants at the event in January.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

N/A

8. Contact officer

Carol Gilchrist, Head of Communities
Ali Amla, Cohesion & Integration Manager

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

N/A

10. Service Director responsible

Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Strategic Director – Corporate Strategy and Public Health

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Cohesion Review Findings Report

Mohammed Ali Amla

Cohesion & Integration Manager

This summary report will present the outline of the findings from the cohesion review, capturing the voice of grassroots communities is an integral part of the co-production process, the next phase will include presenting these findings to communities, partners and stakeholders to create a new vision and strategy.

Co-Production

There is no single model of co-production, the journey taken has been experimental with significant learning for the future. A key component of the co-production process is to include communities, stakeholders, academic research including intelligence/data held by the council and the knowledge and experience of leaders and practitioners. The first phase of the co-production has been to capture the voice of communities through a series of informal meetings and focus groups. This report captures the initial findings from the analysis.

The next stage is to compile the research, evidence base, Intercultural Cities recommendations and findings from the place standard together in order to triangulate the findings from communities. These findings are to be presented at a partnership event in January to communities, partners, academics and elected members. The event will include a series of workshop to develop the vision and strategy. Once the draft vision and strategy is written it will go through the political process to be adopted. Below is the vision for the new governance structure and strategic alignment in meeting all of the shared outcomes whilst focusing on a safe and cohesive Kirklees.

Proposed Governance Structure

This proposed structure fits in with the existing structure within the communities' service, all reporting for the cohesion and integration strategy will lead into the communities' board through the Place Themes group. A cross council working group and stakeholder meeting will feed into the place theme group, a number of sub groups exploring the strategic development of key partners including education, libraries, staff networks, faith strategy and Innovation hub (which will be a collaboration with organisational development & transformation in addressing the needs of the council and developing think spaces for communities). Four advisory groups and action plans, will be established in Huddersfield, Dewsbury & Mirfield, Batley & Spen and Rural will be established to oversee operational management in partnership with stakeholders and communities.

The multi-agency partnership will lead on the strategic development with the advisory boards leading on operational delivery. This is a structure will allows difference sources of intelligence to be taken into consideration to make strategic and operational changed, this will include data from the place standard when it is delivered across the whole of Kirklees, CLIK Survey 2020 and census data in 2021.

Communities Board

Place Theme Group

Cross council working groups

Multi-agency partnership and stakeholders

Education

Libraries

Staff Networks

Innovation hub
(Organisation Development and transformation)

Huddersfield Advisory group and action plan

Dewsbury and Mirfield advisory group and action plan

Batley & Spenningsdale advisory group and action plan

Rural Working group and action plan

The new cohesion vision and strategy will incorporate the three key principles of People, Places and Partnerships.

People – the co-production process has placed Kirklees residents as the heart of developing this new strategy with an emphasis in working with people, developing local solutions, building capacity, empowering communities and leadership development to create positive change.

Places – the new vision will focus on principles and outcomes, which put diversity of place, communities and people at the heart of our work. The new structure incorporates working in place in a way that acknowledges its diversity and individuality, focusing on systemic change, developing action plans for each area which takes an asset based community development approach.

Partnerships – the co-production of this vision has included grassroots communities and VCFS. The new vision will be a shared vision for all communities, VCFS, businesses and public bodies, with the opportunity for participation, breaking down barriers and nurturing leaders to create social change.

The new vision and strategy will contribute towards the shared outcome of a safe and cohesive Kirklees. A vision and strategy document will be published once the new vision is adopted. This vision will include a new cohesion framework, evaluation matrix, indicators and impact measurements. As part of the new vision, there will be a policy review in order to explore the impact on policies across the council through a process of contextualising policy. The new vision will be aligned to the Kirklees Council commitment to Intercultural Cities, incorporate key recommendations and complement existing action plans.

Safe & Cohesive Kirklees

Vision & Strategy

Cohesion Policy

Intercultural
Cities Working
group Action

Cohesion
Framework -
outcomes

Evaluation
matrix, indicators
and impact

Review of all
policies

Intercultural
Cities Action
Plans

Overview of engagement

The focus groups captured diverse voices from across the whole of Kirklees, the team engaged 650 residents, the aim was to have a sample representative of Kirklees whilst not having the resources to host focus groups in each of the 23 wards, however an effort was made to engage diverse residents.

To ensure the voices we captured were as representative as possible, our approach included:

1. A place-based targeted approach
2. Thematic Focus groups: young people, women, faith communities, teachers, migrants, and new and emerging communities.
3. Other community groups our work currently is not reaching.

We ensured that we had a sample that represented Kirklees, we engaged the following number of residents in each place:

- 235 in Huddersfield
- 187 in Dewsbury
- 178 in Batley & Spen
- 46 in Rural

The team engaged communities through our theme specialism of the staff, whilst the larger sample included these identity markers, these focus group ensured that we captured the voices of:

- 125 women through 10 focus groups
- 25 individuals from different faiths and places of worship, including Christians, Muslims and Sikhs
- 89 Young people
- 44 teachers across primary, secondary and FE

- 58 new and emerging communities
- 25 individuals and groups supporting refugees and asylum seekers

The engagement raised a frequent point that minority communities exist within minority communities; there were a number of groups that mentioned this was their first interaction or engagement with the Council.

Findings

The thematic analysis focused mainly on the responses in order to draw our conclusions, but we did use the focus group questions to provide context to the data we had gathered. Each of the research questions used in the focus groups fell within three main categories, questions that were related to:

- defining community cohesion
- what unites communities – improving cohesion
- concerning barriers to cohesion

The thematic analysis of the findings has revealed the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment, without a sense of belonging, empowerment was not feasible. Language was identified as a key issue, particularly in the need to learn English but also a need to learn the mother tongue as part of identity formation and fostering a greater sense of belonging.

Data taken from faith organisations highlighted that they had some understanding of the meaning of community cohesion, whilst many held scepticism, misinformation and suspicion of national government policy, particularly the conflation of Cohesion & Integration with Counter Extremism and Prevent by central government. This conflation has had a detrimental affect locally, impacting on the perceptions, trust and relationship between the council, places of worship and faith institutions. Whilst this has improved, there is a significant amount of work to do in engaging places of worship, faith leaders and communities as partners to work with.

For young people, the data highlights they are navigating a range of different identity issues that are connected to various social components such as race, gender, religion, LGBT and class. This is compounded by the messages they are consistently bombarded by through social media. Regardless of social background, navigating aspects of social identity played a significant part in how young people would define community cohesion.

Young people are having to navigate their identity and belonging which is becoming increasingly challenging in a rapidly changing environment, particularly with the rise of social media and fake news. Having the skills and knowledge to navigate these challenges has become increasingly challenging, requiring greater cultural literacy, role models and the support of youth workers. Specialist support for young people is required, which extends beyond education and includes parents, families and professionals. Young people have expressed a need to be involved in co-producing solutions and projects.

A number of teachers highlighted that they feel their role is crucial when working with children and parents, but often felt that they lacked the capacity, specialist knowledge and resources. Much of what young people said in the cohesion review stems from issues outside the school, college, or education institution, but can sometimes manifest inside school or college. Historically the youth worker would support young people through this navigation process on a weekly basis, but with the

removal of the youth service this type of support is no longer as accessible. Models of civic youth work, empowering parents and professionals to support young people to navigate processes have been shown to produce positive outcomes.

Creating a shared vision for cohesion was a recurring theme, this includes creating a shared narrative, demystifying cohesion and challenging scepticism. This is closely linked to creating opportunities to participate, active citizenship, building capacity, nurturing leaders and equipping communities to create solutions. A significant challenge facing young people is navigating social identity and equipping teachers with skills and knowledge to better support young people.

Thematic Analysis of key questions

1. Defining community cohesion



When analysing the themes, the first pattern that emerged was how the definition of community cohesion contrasted with the lived experiences of cohesion among residents, and how this diverges from our current outcomes and emphasis. Many participants' responses highlighted divisions within their local community and broader Kirklees.

Themes which appeared frequently includes:

- Getting to know people
- Unity
- Creating a bond
- Accepting differences
- Friendship
- Being connected
- Together
- Respect
- Non-judgemental
- Learning
- Helping

- Sense of pride in your history and traditions

2. What Unites communities



Shared experiences

A range of responses highlighted how everyday experiences would forge a connection with different people and build bridges. What looks to be the issue is that there is either a lack of opportunities being created to help facilitate the sharing of experiences. These shared experiences can contribute to fostering a sense of belonging and purpose, sharing of culture, getting to know people, finding common ground, creating empathy by understanding the issues that people face and working towards a shared goal or vision. These shared experiences can be in the form of arts and culture, music, food, festivals and sports, whereas the encounter and interaction is important further work needs to take place to break down barriers, dispels myths, tackle prejudice and foster friendship.

These shared experiences and interactions takes place in neighbourhoods, however they take place more specifically in public places, community spaces, the work place, at parks and green spaces, at libraries and during education be that primary, secondary, Further Education and Higher Education.

Young children

The importance of engaging young children as a way to bring different communities together appeared on numerous occasions. Some of the responses that came from those focus groups with young people in colleges supported this, many felt that the racial division experienced in Further Education stems from their time in primary and secondary education. Attending a school which lacked racial diversity and at the same time growing up in a community that also lacked racial diversity, either predominantly White British or predominantly South Asian, contributed to the social divisions. Then going into college meant subconsciously filtering into the same social pattern.

Events: Bringing different people together through community events frequently appeared across the entire data set and a recommendation on how to improve community cohesion particularly emphasising art, music, food, culture, social gatherings and celebrations.

Opportunities: Such as enabling people to meet different people, share culture, to learn new skills such as language, cultural literacy, religious literacy, opportunities to develop an understanding of different social groups.

Safe Spaces: linking with opportunities, this is to have the opportunity for difficult dialogue.

Innovation: A significant number of people emphasised empowerment, leadership and developing local solutions by local people.

Public spaces can either allow interaction or be a barrier, many emphasised the need for better urban planning, parks, green spaces, play areas, libraries and the need to create opportunity to meet those who are different.

3. What divides communities?

The factors causing social division are very broad, our findings suggest three key areas, politics, negative experiences & perceptions and lack of interaction.

Politics



Politics is a broad category of social division, with the failure of national government policy, local practice, funding cuts, austerity, removal of public services, reduction in youth services and unnecessary bureaucracy or red tape being mentioned frequently as a cause of social division. Austerity has had a major impact on how the community feels in an emotional and psychological way and that there is a feeling of anger and frustration towards the government, due to people feeling in low spirits, the feeling of being left behind and apathy among communities has increased over time. Anger and frustration within communities is linked to a sense of failure and being let down by local and national government.

schools for the rich and comprehensive for the average person. Many young people and students felt that through class judgement is made about them on money, appearance and what clothing they wear, leading to a feeling of being a failure.

Perceptions of unfairness is a theme that was spoken on in a number of focus groups, this particularly focused on decisions made by statutory agencies with a perception that some communities are given preference and services are more easily accessible in Huddersfield compared to North Kirklees whereas residents in Huddersfield also perceived that North Kirklees received more resources, funding and services. There is therefore a need to explain the decision making process and demystify how resources, grants, services and facilitates are allocated across the borough.

The perceptions of the other was a theme that frequently came up in during the focus groups, there was a regular theme of wealth, poverty, stereotyping and judgement based on class, wealth, poverty, appearance, race, faith, culture, and educational level. These perceptions are found in communities and education setting, often being cited as a cause of bullying. Perceptions about the other have been cited to be reinforced through the discourse on crime, criminality, safety and anti-social behaviour

There is a perception that language and cultural differences creates barriers to communication which leads to division, this is particularly emphasised by those who are observing changes in a geographical area and connects to the next section on lack of interaction. These differences in language when coupled with a lack of interaction causes fear and perceptions that individuals are unwilling or not wanting to integrate. Language can be an indication to diversity, in some part of the country there are projects on mother tongue which creates opportunities to learn the language of parents and grandparents, which is an important aspect of identity formation and belonging. Some parents expressed a grievance that children did not have the opportunity to learn languages relevant to their communities.

Lack of interaction

anger
Stereotypes
Jealousy
Resentment
conflict
Them & Us
Intergenerational misunderstandings
Prejudice
Lack of mixing
Fear
Unfairness
Misunderstandings
Ignorance

Some respondents said the fear of the unknown, nervousness created divisions this suggest that confidence levels in communities are low, whilst in this case this is an indication that these are

barriers to interaction and therefore a consequence. To overcome this single community based work is required to take place first, in order to build confidence in meeting the perceived other. There needs to be a facilitated process whereby initial engagement is within an informal social setting, working towards to better understand what individuals and communities have in common before delving into differences and creating safe spaces for dialogue. Creating opportunities for individuals and communities to meet the perceived other, explore identity, belonging and key pertinent issues is essential in fostering a more cohesive community. Contact Theory has been integral in shaping policy and practice, however it is key to beyond contact to working together, fostering shared belonging and nurturing leadership skills to counter the growth in anger, hate, prejudice, ignorance, stereotypes resentment, fear, jealousy and narrative of us & them however this should come with a warning that interaction and contact can reinforce negativity if it is not facilitated effectively over a gradual process. Tackling unfairness requires more than contact, relationship building and demystifying decision making.

Further Analysis

The data is very rich and requires further in-depth analysis, one option to achieve could be a collaboration with universities and students, which would allow a deeper dive and extract key findings to shape policy and practice. Whilst the areas of analysis could be very broad, the analysis should firstly focus on:

- Interaction – barriers and facilitators
- Attitudes about self & others, and perceptions of how they see you
- Reality vs Perceptions of togetherness
- Links between poverty and cohesion
- The role of education in cohesion
- Links between community safety and cohesion

Next Steps

The next step in the co-production process is a partnership event branded as a 'Picture of Kirklees', bringing together key stakeholders, civil society leaders, elected members, MHCLG, members of communities, council staff and academics to consider the initial findings from the focus groups. The workshop will focus on the development of a shared vision, how to encourage and enable participation and how best to develop networks with civil society to work towards a safe and cohesive Kirklees.

Date: Thursday 30th January

Key Dates

Scrutiny:	13th January 2020
Partnership event:	30th January 2020
Communities Board:	12th February 2020
Executive Team:	17th March 2020 (report deadline 11.03.20)

Portfolio holder brief: **13th April 2020** (report deadline 08.04.20)

Leadership Management Team: **20th April 2020** (report deadline 14.04.20)

Cabinet: 19th May 2020 (report deadline 07.05.20)

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