

MAJOR REVIEW – COMMUNITY COHESION

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REASON FOR ITEM

To hear from witnesses to enable the Committee to gather evidence as part of their major review into Community Cohesion.

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

1. Question the witnesses.
2. To consider the scoping report (appendix 1) and to make amendments if necessary
3. To make a note of possible recommendations for the review

INFORMATION

1. At the last meeting of the Committee held on 18 September 2012 Members began their review into Community Cohesion. The Committee was provided with a presentation from the Council's Stronger Communities Officer and from the Chair of the Strong and Active Communities Partnerships. Details of the presentation are included in the Minutes of the meeting which are attached to this agenda.
2. Initially the Committee decided that the aim of the review should be centred on how Council services are working in order to mitigate against the potential risk factors that can impact on community cohesion. Particular emphasis was going to be around building upon the many positives that underpin resilience in communities within the Borough.
3. After hearing the evidence from the Chair of the Strong and Active Communities Partnership and the Council's Stronger Communities Officer, the Committee discussed the scope of the review and agreed that the review should look at how the Council's services were accessed by all individuals of all backgrounds and groups and sections of the community. Included in this would be looking at how Council services communicated services to the community, beyond the promotion of its services. What steps were taken by service areas to break down barriers to engage with groups which would enable them to interact and integrate with the rest of the community? The Committee welcomed the work which had been carried out in the Borough's schools but felt that the review should concentrate on adults and whether there was an equality of access to services, particularly around community services.

Witnesses

4. Officers have invited representatives from Adult Education, Library services and Sports and Leisure services to help Members with their review.

Possible Lines of Enquiry

How are Council services engaging individuals from all backgrounds and demographics within our local areas?

How does the Council work with residents to promote a sense of pride and belonging, promotes equality of opportunity and sense of community?

Beyond the initial promotion and marketing of a service, what other ways have been used to engage and interact with groups?

If there has been resistance by certain individuals and groups to becoming involved in services provided by the Council, how have barriers been broken down to overcome this?

What examples are there of good practice, which could be used in other areas of the Council, in relation to enabling community groups and individuals of all backgrounds to access Council services?

How does the Council run services so that it can counter risks and potential tensions and perceived inequalities?

PAPERS WITH THE REPORT

Scoping Report (Appendix 1)