

Cabinet – 22 October 2008

Community Cohesion Strategy

Portfolio: Councillor G Perry, Communities and partnerships

Service: Local Neighbourhood Partnerships

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: No

1. Purpose

To seek approval of the Cabinet for the attached (draft) Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan prior to these documents being also submitted to the Walsall Partnership Board for approval.

2. Recommendations

That the Cabinet approve the attached (draft) Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan.

3. Background

3.1 The Commission for Integration and Cohesion define an integrated and cohesive community as one where:

- There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country
- Individuals have rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them and what they can expect in turn
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment
- There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny
- There is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common

- There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods

- 3.2 Walsall Council has done much to improve the cohesion between our communities and, on the whole, we compare well with other authorities in this capacity. However, challenges remain as communities continue to react to ongoing changes in local and national diversity in every sense and also to other factors such as the economy. For example, in recent years the emphasis at national level has shifted from priority concerns being about race and equality and includes faith issues. More locally, tackling anti-social behaviour is a priority for people in Walsall. Walsall Council and its partners must adapt services to meet the needs of diverse communities. There is also a need to communicate and promote opportunities for maintaining and improving cohesion. The attached Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan aims to enable Walsall Council to fulfil its role as a community leader in this respect. It should be noted that our approach to preventing extremism is linked, but is separate to, the proposed Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan.
- 3.3 Following a tendering process, consultants Optimum Interventions were commissioned by Walsall Partnership to assist in developing the strategy. A steering group was established and a wide range of partners were consulted. Various drafts of the strategy have been produced during a Compact-compliant consultation process. The consultation period has now closed and amendments have been made to the documents as appropriate.
- 3.4 The Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan are led by Walsall's Sustainable Community Strategy and the Walsall Council Corporate Plan. Delivery of the strategy and action plan will contribute to CAA assessment and Local Area Agreement performance.

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial:

The proposal will incur costs of staffing and it is anticipated that a dedicated officer will be necessary to take this forward. It is possible that this officer post may also be utilised to deliver the *Preventing Violent Extremism* agenda.

4.2 Legal:

There are no legal implications.

4.3 Staffing:

There will be a requirement for a designated officer to have the responsibility of pulling together the strategic activities within the plan and to monitor the action plan milestones. It is anticipated that this individual will work in Neighbourhood Partnerships and Programmes within Walsall Partnership.

5. Citizen impact

The strategy should have a positive impact upon citizens as belonging to a more cohesive community is desirable.

6. Community safety

The strategy proposed is likely to have a positive impact on community safety by delivering more cohesive communities who get on well with each other and act responsibly in civic society.

7. Environmental impact

There are no direct environmental impacts. However, cohesive and responsible communities tend to behave more responsibly towards their environment and take care of it. There could, therefore, be positive impacts indirectly on issues such as fly-tipping, vandalism and other issues associated with anti-social behaviour.

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 Risk:

The proposals mitigate future risk as an outcome of communities not being cohesive. Such outcomes could include increased anti-social behaviour, increased divisions between communities and people and greater isolation of vulnerable groups, all leading to perceptions of lack of personal safety.

8.2 Performance management:

There are indicators in the national indicator set, some of which have been chosen within the LAA, particularly *people getting on well together*, that will be directly measured. Therefore this proposal is likely to have an extremely positive impact on our performance in the LAA and in future CAA assessments.

9. Equality implications

The proposal will impact positively on equalities as it will promote greater understanding and integration between groups. It also tackles directly some of the barriers of communication and misunderstanding that can arise and cause division, fear and civil unrest in our communities.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 The following have been consulted during the consultation period: elected members, Local Neighbourhood Partnerships and the partners of Walsall Partnership (Walsall's local strategic partnership). A cross-partner steering group has led the consultation and the consultant's report and action plan was commissioned by Walsall Partnership.
- 10.2 A presentation took place at Scrutiny on 4 September 2008. This was well received. The main comments concerned opportunities for cross-boundary working, looking at natural neighbourhoods as opposed to LNP/ward boundaries. Other comments received concerned how businesses are engaged in this agenda.
- 10.3 The draft version has been available on the intranet for all staff to comment.

Background papers

Draft Community Cohesion Strategy
Draft Action Plan

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13 October 2008



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13 October 2008



**Walsall
Partnership**

Community Cohesion Strategy

June 2008



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Foreword – Councillor Garry Perry

Welcome to Walsall's first Community Cohesion Strategy. This strategy has been developed by Walsall Council working together with a wide range of other organisations on behalf of the Borough's Local Strategic Partnership (Walsall Partnership). By building on priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy, this document is closely aligned to that over arching plan for Walsall.

Community cohesion is about everyone and is in all of our interests, it's not just about minority groups. This strategy has the power and potential to deepen the unity of people in Walsall, by recognising that the things we have in common are far greater than those things that seem to keep us apart.

Our diversity in Walsall can be seen in our different ages, the way we are brought up, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientation, our health, wealth, where we live and what we do in our lives each day. Yet, for all of those differences, we all live in the communities of Walsall and all of us want to feel that we belong somehow: that we are part of a community; that we are accepted, treated fairly and with respect; we all expect to feel safe in our homes and the community.

The concept of community cohesion can appear complicated yet at its heart is simple. It is about how people get along together. When we get into the detail of what that means, what can influence or affect people getting along together, our consultation has shown us that there are no single or simple answers to improving community cohesion: engaging with people, listening to and appreciating their experiences and ideas, is our starting point.

We recognise that many of the challenges we face are not unique to Walsall, they are being experienced by many other areas in the UK. We can and will learn from other areas, from our neighbours in the Black Country, in the West Midlands and beyond.

Although the Council has taken the lead in developing this strategy, it is a Walsall Partnership strategy. This is because building and embedding community cohesion requires partnership working and ownership. The Partnership is the "we" mentioned often in this strategy. No single organisation has all the answers; by making community cohesion everyone's business, the successful implementation of the strategy is achievable.

This first strategy represents a starting point for us and we are keen to continue to develop our understanding of what supports community cohesion and the impact of changes in our Borough. The Government's new Community Cohesion Delivery Framework is due to be published later this year and will help us to reshape the strategy when we come to review it. We are committed to communicating the progress on community cohesion each year and will publish an overall picture of progress annually.

Councillor Garry Perry

Portfolio Holder, Communities and Partnerships

Walsall Council

What is community cohesion?

We are using the definition of community cohesion, which the Commission for Integration and Cohesion drew up in 2007.

An integrated and cohesive community is one where:

- There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country
- Individuals have rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them and what they can expect in turn
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment
- There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny
- There is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common
- There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods.

Taken from "Our Shared Futures", 2007

How we have developed this strategy

We have:

- Looked at a wide range of statistical information about Walsall and the West Midlands region
- Developed a “baseline” position for community cohesion in Walsall. You can view this by clicking onto this link http://www.walsall.gov.uk/wp-index/wbspwp_useful_documents/wp_communitycohesion.htm
- Conducted interviews with representatives from organisations and community groups in Walsall
- Held focus groups and a half day stakeholder consultation event
- Sought examples of innovation and good practice in work that supports community cohesion. There are lots of examples, and to see just a few, click on to this link http://www.walsall.gov.uk/wp-index/wbspwp_useful_documents/wp_communitycohesion.htm
- Taken into account the findings and recommendations from the Commission for Integration and Cohesion’s report, “Our Shared Futures” and national guidance, the work of the Institute for Community Cohesion and good practice elsewhere

From all of this information, we have undertaken analysis of where Walsall is now, and what the projected changes in population and other aspects of life might mean for the Borough. The priorities and actions that have been identified will help Walsall deal with change and plan ahead positively to create communities that get on well together. The actions in the Action Plan document are based on our analysis, combined with people’s ideas, and what is working well already.

We have deliberately chosen not to develop a different vision for community cohesion, as we believe that the overarching 2021 vision for Walsall, as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy is, in essence, about positive community cohesion.

Vision for 2021

“Walsall will be a good place to live, work and invest, where:

- people get on well with each other
- growing up is as good as it can be and young people fulfil their potential
- people are our strength and have the skills and attitude required by employers
- we consider the impact of what we do now on future generations
- we feel proud to live, having high quality distinctive design of buildings and spaces
- there is a wide range of facilities for people to use and enjoy

- everyone has the chance to live in a home fit for their purpose and for the future
- people can get around easily and safely
- there are more and better jobs for local people
- we support and look after each other

There are some significant challenges for Walsall to address and our overall analysis is that there is no room for complacency on the issue of community cohesion. If the vision in the Sustainable Community Strategy is to be realised in 2021 then thinking and considering community cohesion implications needs to become part of what all organisations do.

It is encouraging that there are so many ideas about what would help to improve community cohesion, and because there are so many we have had to prioritise. What we do know is that communication is really important. So, whilst this strategy is deliberately aimed at organisations, we are committed to communicating the main messages to different groups of people, using a wide range of communication methods.

We have set out what is needed and possible to achieve. We have looked at what some of the foundation stones are that we can build on, in order to make real and lasting differences to the quality of people's lives in Walsall. We can learn from all the work supporting community cohesion that already takes place in Walsall and beyond. We also need to make sure we plan for the future and build community cohesion considerations and actions into all the work we plan and deliver in Walsall Council and through the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership.

We have had dilemmas in producing this strategy. People have different, sometimes contradictory perspectives and contrasting views of what is needed. We have analysed our current position and looked to the future, to the 2021 vision for Walsall, to the changes we know are likely to happen and the possible impacts on community cohesion.

A picture of community cohesion in Walsall

Walsall is a Borough of contrasts, in terms of affluence and deprivation. There are particularly deprived areas in the West and central areas of Walsall, whilst generally, the East is more affluent.

Walsall has made significant steps in the last four year to address inequalities, through, for example the quality of housing, health improvements, education standards and crime reduction. Regeneration in neighbourhoods and the town centre has the potential to improve the quality of life of Walsall residents and to bring more skilled employment opportunities to the Borough.

The population and age structures will change significantly over the next 15 years and will present new challenges to services and communities. People are living longer, family structures continue to change and the population is increasingly diverse, with the impact of globalisation, for example, meaning migrant workers from Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia are now living in Walsall. Planning ahead for changing needs will be an essential feature for the local authority, health services, housing providers, West Midlands Police and other organisations.

There is a widely held but not unanimous view amongst professionals who work in Walsall, that people in Walsall get along reasonably together well. These judgments are often made in relative terms, as people compare Walsall to other places they are familiar with, especially Birmingham and other areas of the Black County.

This view however is contradicted by some of the data and anecdotal stories from professionals and people working and living in local communities, which together indicate that there are both some tensions which are not highly visible, but do exist and issues on the horizon which need to be addressed.

The general public's perception of cohesion varies considerably across Walsall. Perhaps paradoxically, people living in more affluent areas, with a relatively high concentration of white British residents, are more likely to believe cohesion to be weak, than those living in more diverse, but more deprived areas.

Many people identify and have a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood or town in which they live, rather than the Borough of Walsall. This is viewed by some as positive to internal cohesion within neighbourhoods, whilst others take the view that being too closed and inward looking can result in low aspirations, particularly for young people. High levels of inward cohesion in an area might also run the risk of hostility to potential in-comers. There is some evidence that there are areas in the Borough that do not welcome people from other backgrounds and cultures.

It is well understood by professionals and local people that different areas of Walsall have different issues to address and that a v localised approach to managing community cohesion is needed in order to pin point and deliver what will make the most positive difference. Schools for instance, as part of local communities, have the potential to play a pivotal role in promoting community cohesion.

Whilst there is much hard data available through the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, which gives an overall picture of community cohesion, some data needs to be disaggregated by age, local area and ethnicity more routinely. This will help with targeting the delivery of work.

It is well understood in Walsall that the local and particularly national media can fuel disquiet, by promoting perceptions of special or unequal treatment and thus increase tensions. Working purposefully with the media to communicate positive new stories, challenge myths and highlight the common and shared aspects of people's lives is an area which requires some focussed work. This strategy offers the opportunity for statutory agencies to review how they engage with the local media to influence this agenda.

The voluntary and community sectors, or Third Sector, have experience and a wealth of information relating to different aspects of community cohesion and can play a vital role in delivering objectives. However, overall, the Third Sector is fragmented, relationships with the local authority and other partners are variable and as a result the contribution it makes to current work and potential for the future is not fully understood or appreciated.

The potentially divisive nature of funding to the Third Sector and the possible negative impact on working relationships is a key concern. Improved communication between the public sector and Third Sector about the basis for commissioning for community cohesion is needed. This means better articulating the rationale for moving from the more traditional, often short term funding processes to a commissioning model that emphasises funding as an investment to secure the well being of the whole community, rather than single interest groups.

The lives and experience of children and young people now is crucial both in terms of improving the lives being lived at the moment and as an investment for the future of the borough. Negative views about young people, often perpetuated by national media, relate largely to anti social behaviour and risk. This is impacting negatively on the fear of crime in Walsall.

There is no simple answer to improving cohesion. The issues to address are far reaching and cross cutting. The challenge for Walsall is to have a community cohesion mind set and framework in the mainstream thinking and decision making of all organisations and groups. And in order to work together effectively, all partners will need to demonstrate behaviours that support community cohesion and show a real understanding of the increasing diversity, in its broadest sense. This requires a pro-active willingness to learn continually about diversity by really listening to the different communities and then having the drive and flexibility to develop services accordingly.

Our priorities

The areas identified for priority attention relate to the 3 areas of the Sustainable Community Strategy and within these areas, there are a series of the priorities:

- **People**

- Building mutual respect by understanding what we have in common, as well as our differences
- Developing community leadership
- Understanding communities and planning for change
- Communicating community cohesion
- Planning for and coping with the unexpected

- **Places**

- Developing a neighbourhood approach
- Planning for where people live
- Working with regional and national partners

- **Prosperity**

- Maximising cohesion improvements through regeneration in Walsall
- Long term workforce planning

1 PEOPLE

1.1 Building mutual respect by understanding what we have in common, as well as our differences

A view expressed in consultation was that it is more helpful to emphasise what we have in common than to focus on difference. There is a risk that by focussing on difference, we perpetuate separation and division. This will impact on the possibilities for interaction between people.

Any understanding and celebrating of diversity should, therefore, be set in a framework of human commonality of what we share: in our values, in our family lives, our children, our work and leisure, our faith and our hopes for the future.

Promoting interaction between groups needs to become a mainstream activity within the work of different organisations and bodies. Learning from other areas of the country is that coming together with a sense of purpose, in particular through sport, the arts or community celebration is highly successful in promoting interaction and learning, but explicitly labelling the activity as a piece of community cohesion work is not always necessary or helpful. There are some excellent examples of this sort of work happening in Walsall already and we have provided just a few examples in an associated paper; there are many more (see [hyperlink xxxx](#)),

It is at a neighbourhood level where most interaction takes place between people, which is good for community cohesion on one level, but if based purely on geography, will mean that some groups of people living Walsall do not ever mix with each other.

Schools can play a major role in local communities. There is a new legal duty to promote community cohesion and working actively with schools on this agenda will support them to fulfil their new responsibilities. This can link to the citizenship work that schools already undertake, but be more mainstreamed into projects and events that schools undertake within and across communities.

Single group funding can potentially have a negative impact on community cohesion, if there is no expectation from commissioners that interaction with others will be a part of the work. Umbrella organisations that are tasked with bringing together the many different community interest groups can help to promote interaction, as is the sharing of buildings and other facilities.

Actions are:

- **Engage with schools on community cohesion and the role they can play in promoting interaction through education, and test out with Education Walsall what is already happening and what more might be delivered**
- **Invest in long term activity which brings people together to work on shared interests and concerns:**

- Twinning work between different schools, schools from different faiths and youth groups
- Multi Faith Forum activities which challenge the status quo and form a programme of directed activity rather than ad-hoc work
- Inter generational work within geographical areas
- Review investment of resources into single group organisations and ensure commissioning requirements include interaction as a priority objective
- Plan a cross-Borough “We are Walsall” event, which is underpinned by a framework of common, shared values and lives

1.2 Developing community leadership

Community leadership plays a significant role in promoting respect and understanding. Community leaders are not only the Elected Members in the local authority, but other people in key positions of representation and responsibility in local communities and organisations.

Community leadership of a different dimension is required for the future, one that encourages a sense of working together for real, sustainable, quality of life benefits to all citizens of Walsall.

Community leaders need to represent and reflect the population of the Borough. Leaders need to understand the needs and concerns of people they represent and to see the bigger picture, and take part in promoting bridging activities between different groups.

At critical times, community leaders need to unite and stand together, giving clear and reassuring messages to local communities. A strong network of community leadership in Walsall is required, which includes Elected Members but also other community leaders.

In order to do this there needs to be a better understanding of those people who play a community leadership role and what that actually means. There is a view that some community leaders do not represent the people or communities they purport to serve. Some groups are under represented, in particular, young people and women from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The Third Sector can play a helpful role in advising, giving information to, and supporting community leaders. This requires that senior officers within the local authority and other public sector organisations invest time in visiting community-based organisations, listening and engaging in the spirit of genuine curiosity with a desire to learn. For community leaders and decision makers, this investment of time will enhance their understanding of the work undertaken, its value and contribution to community cohesion, as well as identifying opportunities for joining together and improvement.

Actions are:

- **Identify and develop known community leaders in Walsall, and reach into communities to identify other people who play leadership roles but are not currently recognised to work directly with them to create a stronger leadership network**
- **Highlight gaps in representation of the population and plan how to address these gaps**
- **Hold briefing events to outline the community cohesion strategy to community leaders**
- **Implement and support the Network of Trust in Walsall, creating young community leaders of the future through the Intercultural Communication and Leadership School**
- **Third Sector agencies and the public sector decision makers agree a series of listening and learning events, to enhance the knowledge of senior officers and other community leaders**

1.3 Understanding communities and planning for change

As communities change, so too do community dynamics and inequalities and at the moment there are significant changes taking place in Walsall, as shown by the data collected about who is currently living in our neighbourhoods. Understanding these changes and their implications for the future will mean that potential inequalities and tensions can be prevented and addressed. In Walsall we need more detailed mapping of communities, using the analysis and projections of change to inform long term planning, and resource allocation.

It is important to take action where inequalities exist and a more sophisticated understanding of inequality helps promote community cohesion. For example, there are white British children, especially boys, living in areas of high deprivation in Walsall who are just as much at risk of under-achieving as Pakistani and Bangladeshi boys. But only by digging underneath the overall data and analysing what is happening, can such issues come to light and be addressed.

A key issue for partners to address is the long term trajectory for households of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, who are predominantly Muslim. Current indications suggest that these communities are more at risk of deprivation and inequality than any other group. They are also the communities in Walsall projected to increase most significantly in the next 12 years. However, there are other groups at high risk of deprivation as well and some analysis of current and projected inequalities will assist in determining the best use of targeted investment.

One of the most recent changes in Walsall is the arrival of migrant workers from A8 countries. Understanding their needs, barriers to integration and any impact on local, settled communities and services is currently a gap in our knowledge.

Actions are:

- **Ensure all data collection undertaken across the Walsall Strategic Partnership is able to be disaggregated by age, ward, gender, ethnicity, disability and where possible, faith and sexual orientation**
- **Undertake a piece of detailed work identifying with the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities their issues relating to matters such as health, employment and educational attainment**
- **Undertake a piece of mapping work on access to health services for hard to reach communities who are not accessing these services at present**
- **Forge improved links with region and community leaders on health issues**

1.4 Communicating community cohesion

In our consultation, the need for clear and straightforward communication was seen as vital. Information about what is happening in Walsall, in terms of community cohesion and changes in the community needs to be factual and clear. Without this, perceptions of unequal or special treatment for particular groups can develop unchallenged.

Communicating with different groups of people will mean thinking through the best ways to get key messages across. Leaflets and newsletters are just one method, and in consultation people urged that time and attention was given to reaching people using highly a creative and varied range of mediums.

Communicating with people who are newly arrived to the UK is also an area which a communications plan should address.

Walsall Partnership will develop a communications plan that runs alongside this strategy. This will cover the follow areas:

- **Engage with the local media to work as a stakeholder on community cohesion**
- **Develop myth busting campaigns on: young people; Muslim people; migrant workers; older people; people with disabilities**
- **Planning for communicating positive activities/events relating to community cohesion over the calendar year**
- **Planning how to respond as partners and with community leaders to any unexpected local, regional or national events that may impact negatively on community cohesion.**
- **Creating welcome packs of information for migrant workers, which give essential information on responsibilities, rights and cultural expectations**

Actions are:

- **Develop a Communications Plan for the Strategy and Action Plan, including reflecting what's happening in detail already, that has a forward programme**

of campaigns and set-pieces to keep our successes and cohesion issues to the fore

- **Learn from other local areas in England regarding effective ways to communicate key messages on community cohesion**

1.5 Safeguarding communities against tensions and unrest

Walsall aims to prevent tensions and unrest within our communities. To this end, a community tension monitoring system is in place which is managed through West Midlands Police, as part of their work within the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership. Information is gathered on a monthly basis, analysed by West Midlands Police and the local authority then shared with the Government Office West Midlands.

Further work on developing community tensions reporting and monitoring is underway. Other organisations, particularly Third Sector and public sector agencies working in communities at a grass roots level are being asked to take part in reporting, as the Police recognise the current set of reporting systems do not pick up many early warning indicators of tension.

In addition, existing sets of data could be brought together for improved analysis on tensions, as this should give a better overall picture of tensions. The types of data are: racist incident reporting to the Police, tension monitoring, recording of racist incidents in schools and the information the local authority collects about racist incidents.

The numbers of racist incidents reported to West Midlands Police in Walsall have risen over the last three years. This may be positive, in that it could indicate more community confidence in the Police. Conversely, it could be that there are more numbers of incidents overall. Analysis of why levels of reporting have risen is needed across all agencies.

There is always a risk of the unexpected happening in any area. Emergency planning is one way that local authorities and the emergency services prepare for such situations. Within Walsall's Emergency Plan several contingencies which could impact on community cohesion are covered, such as community or civil unrest and dealing with the threat of terrorism.

In times of anxiety and tension within communities, community leaders need to work together to provide shared messages, containing both information and reassurance. Having positive and strong networks between community leaders, including faith leaders, most effectively does this.

One area that may require some specific prevention work is with different peer groups of young men, where ethnicity is the determining factor of belonging. There are anecdotal reports that there is low-level animosity between groups of young men in some parts of the Borough, although the Police do not regard these as problematic. However, in order to minimise the risk of tensions developing, gangs forming and violence developing, early intervention is needed.

Actions are:

- Enhance the current set of reporting arrangements for community tensions monitoring, to include the Third Sector and front line service delivery organisations
- Bring together relevant data routinely that can help to build a more detailed picture of tensions
- Work with schools on ensuring their racist incident monitoring and reporting is consistent
- Undertake analysis of racist incident reporting to West Midlands Police and explore the actions taken by the Police and all partner organisations to ensure they are cogent, cohesive and appropriate to the incidents reported. Publicise the reporting centres across the Borough that communities can go to and report a racist incident.
- Ensure the Communication Plan includes how community leaders will respond to unexpected local, regional or national events which may impact negatively on community cohesion
- Bring together schools, youth workers, community workers and other stakeholders to collectively gather evidence and discuss the need for and possibility of early intervention work with groups of young men
- Carry out a short survey to explore what race equality schemes are in place, how consistent they are with good practice and how they can be coordinated to ensure coherent, partnership-wide action

2 PLACES

2.1 Developing a neighbourhood approach

Walsall is a borough of contrasts. Different neighbourhoods have different issues and needs. The Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNPs) are the vehicle for planning and overseeing the delivery of local actions to improve the quality of life of local residents, and community cohesion is one aspect of this.

Individual LNP boundaries do not always reflect natural communities. The diversity within an LNP area means that flexibility in planning and delivery must be built in.

LNPs are already working on community cohesion related activities. There are examples of school twinning projects, community celebration events and Skip Days, in which local communities work together with the local authority to clear up an area. LNP officers are well briefed on community cohesion issues. LNPs are central to improving community cohesion in their areas. The Neighbourhood Agreements, which outline overall plans for each LNP area, will be used to highlight the community cohesion actions needed for each area.

Actions are:

- **LNPs to continually consider the priority concerns for their areas and maintain a focus building cohesion actions into future Neighbourhood Agreements**
- **To build an ever more local focus via the LNPs to the partners' main programmes of housing management and refurbishment, economic regeneration, local governance and other place making activities**
- **Explore the potential for more cohesive and joined-up policy making at a local level relating to the creation and maintenance of community cohesion**
- **More effectively coordinate current and future local identity activities to ensure a cohesive approach to presenting the image of neighbourhoods, e.g. signage and 'branding'**
 - **Celebrate community diversity in the local areas through community events.**

2.2 Planning for where people live

Walsall is already well underway regenerating areas through new housing developments. Within this, it is recognised that mixed tenure housing and a variety of types and sizes of property will support community cohesion. However, there is no standard process by which community cohesion implications are considered. Using community cohesion impact assessments on housing regeneration planning is an opportunity to apply considerations consistently across the Borough. The local

authority on all housing developments should use the se at the early planning stage.

Some areas of Walsall are perceived to be unwelcoming to black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. Evidence of this is in part anecdotal, in terms of verbal reports of racist abuse and intimidation when BME people visit or work in some areas. These are areas where there are low concentrations of BME people opting to live in social housing. Addressing this requires a number of actions, which together will give a better understanding of the actual and perceived barriers, as well as ways to work with people in communities around prejudices and myths.

Actions are:

- **To use cohesion impact assessments to assess the degree to which housing and other regeneration plans will have a positive impact on community cohesion**
- **Walsall Council, RSLs and private landlords to conduct a piece of research into any perceived and real barriers of housing choice to BME and other special interest communities. This should link to LNP-led action research, so other aspects, such as access to community facilities, are also covered**
- **Explore ways of widening and deepening the current opportunities for all groups to participate in the design elements of changes to their communities, e.g. housing, economic and health**
- **Initiate a piece of research into how schools can provide greater prominence to social cohesion, bring young people together from different communities and to understand the part played by allocations policy in helping or hindering the diversity of annual intakes**

2.3 Working with regional and national partners

We recognise that Walsall is not an isolated borough and that people travel across boundaries to work and visit, as part of the Black Country and West Midlands.

Walsall is keen to learn from and work with other local authority areas around community cohesion. Due to the cross cutting nature of community cohesion, there are opportunities to engage with and address issues through consortia and forums that we are already part of. These cover housing, policing, economic regeneration and spatial planning on a regional basis. Within the Black Country we are playing our part in the Black Country study and the Joint Core Strategy. In addition, we are working on preventing violent extremism with other Black Country local authority authorities and working with Government Office West Midlands on tensions reporting and monitoring.

Walsall will seek to learn from local authorities in other parts of England and will seek a twinning opportunity when the Department for Communities and Local Government is in a position to facilitate this.

Actions are:

- To seek a cohesion twinning opportunity with at least one other local authority area, once DCLG are able to facilitate this and to consider the international twinning dimensions of learning about cohesion.
- Create a broader base of understanding around the specific and successful work being carried out on tensions monitoring and capacity development underway in the Black Country, and the potential for greater across sub-regional and regional activity

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3 PROSPERITY

3.1 Maximising cohesion improvements through regeneration in Walsall

Walsall is at an exciting time, in terms of its regeneration. There are many opportunities to impact on the quality of life for citizens and the well being of communities. Regeneration can be seen in Walsall through for example, improved business opportunities; better job prospects; new housing developments; iconic buildings, upgraded transport infrastructure, the plans for a gigaport and better leisure choices in the town centre.

The rationale for decisions to regenerate a neighbourhood needs to be transparent and fair. Communicating such decisions openly and clearly will reduce the risk of perceptions of special treatment of one community over another.

However, we need to ensure there is no split between the “bricks and mortar” planning and the assessment of possible impacts on local, existing communities and groups.

The benefits of regeneration will only be fully realised if community cohesion implications are taken into account and the regeneration opportunities felt at the level of the individual as well as wider communities. The risk is that regeneration can undermine or marginalise existing communities. Regeneration work planned for the Birchills area is an opportunity to test out what works well and learn in real time how to manage and best deliver regeneration with associated community cohesion benefits.

Using cohesion impact assessments will help to assess regeneration planning and embed community cohesion considerations into decision-making.

Actions are:

- **To use cohesion impact assessments in order to assess the degree to which regeneration plans will have a positive impact on community cohesion**
- **Use the LNPs and other community structures to communicate plans for and progress on regeneration initiatives and to encourage maximum consultation at each stage, with the communities effected.**

3.2 Planning the workforce for the future

In Walsall we know that the root cause of deprivation and inequality is income. All other inequalities stem from this. Job creation and opportunity are essential to address these.

We have already determined the sorts of skills we need for the future. Much of the work to prepare young people and those returning to work is underway and the range of planning in this area can be seen in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Walsall Regeneration Company has led on some innovative ways to recruit, notably the Retail Academy experience in partnership with Asda. Lessons can be drawn from this, in terms of what worked well and what can be replicated more widely. In addition, the exciting approaches to opening up employment markets and equipping people to enter markets needs to be rapidly developed and given more profile.

In order to make sure that the workforce of the future represents and benefits from the broad diversity of the Borough, Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership needs to consider the long term opportunities of workforce planning, across employers, across sectors and across the Borough. By working together, it is more likely that we can reach those groups who have traditionally not been part of the skilled labour market and open up access to the economy.

Actions are:

- To undertake some action research into workforce planning models which reach traditionally “hard to reach” groups
- Make strong connections between this Strategy and Action Plan and the innovative work of the Regeneration Company around opening up access to the SME market; differently skilling people through the virtual academy; identifying appropriate technologies; developing individual enterprise and social capital specifically
- Further work by the Strategic Partnership’s Economic Theme Group (Power) in action planning under the local area agreement and targeting hard to reach groups in priority wards linked the City Region Strategy.
- whg VIEW have aligned £300,000 of its fund to the Working Neighbourhoods Fund with a requirement to embed community cohesion as an out put for this investment

Delivering improvements in community cohesion

The implementation of the action plan that accompanies this strategy will be monitored by the Board of Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership.

Delivering against priorities may require additional resources, although it is expected that the majority of the actions will be delivered through mainstream programme 'bending' and embedding community cohesion actions into mainstream planning and delivery mechanisms.

Commissioning will be on the basis of long term investment for sustainable change, rather than short term, one-off projects or pilots. We will undertake needs analysis prior to commissioning and commit to being transparent in decision-making.

In order to understand the progress being made and how effective the work on community cohesion is, Walsall is selecting some performance indicators and setting targets against these.

Walsall already has an integrated performance management framework in place for all the partner organisations to oversee and contribute to, through the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Some of the indicators in the table below are aligned to the LAA.

The performance framework for community cohesion has been developed through identifying national indicators that closely match the aspirations and priorities of the strategy and measure factors that contribute to community cohesion. Where needed, local indicators can be developed. Baseline positions are not available for some of the indicators and these will have to be established in the coming year.

Data for each indicator will be collected at least annually. Some of the data needed is already being collected systematically. Other data can be obtained through the annual Place Survey, which asks people in Walsall different questions about the quality of their lives.

All reporting of progress will be to the Board of the Local Strategic Partnership.

Description of indicator	Type of indicator	Baseline at 2007/08	Target for 2008/09	Target for 2009/10	Responsible agency/body for overseeing indicator
Number of people from different backgrounds who get on well together in their local area	National indicator set: Stronger Communities	74%	76%	77%	Walsall Council
% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality	National indicator set: Stronger Communities	To be determined			Walsall Council
Overall/ general satisfaction with local area	National Indicator set: Creating Opportunity	To be determined			Walsall Council
Percentage of adult population that participate in sport	National Indicator set: Creating Opportunity	16.40%	18.40%	19.40%	Walsall Council
Young people's participation in positive activities	National Indicator set: Education and Skills	To be determined			Walsall Council
Proportion of children in poverty	National indicator set: Children and Young People, Economic well being	25.7%	24.5%	23.5%	Walsall Council
16 – 18 year olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)	National indicator set: Children and Young People, Economic well being	9.1%	9.0%	8.9%	Walsall Council

Description of indicator	Type of indicator	Baseline at 2007/08	Target for 2008/09	Target for 2009/10	Responsible agency/body for overseeing indicator
Working age people on out of work benefits	National indicator set: Tackling exclusion and promoting equality	16.5%	16.2%	15.7%	Walsall Economic Partnership
Tackling fuel poverty	National indicator set: Improving Housing Choice	To be determined			Walsall Council
Perceptions of anti social behaviour	National indicator set: Safer Communities	To be determined			Safer Walsall Partnership

Our commitment to building community cohesion

We believe that 'Every place has its time and it's now Walsall's time.' As a Borough, we can see the changes around us and we are working hard to maximise all the opportunities which will improve the lives of everyone who lives here.

We know that to achieve our collective potential, we need a shared commitment to community cohesion. This is no easy or straight forward commitment, because building and sustaining good community cohesion is complex. But without strong, inclusive and cohesive communities in our Borough, the gains we all want will not be realised.

There are some challenges ahead for us. We look to the future and see the possible impacts - both positive and negative - of our changing population and community dynamics. We know there are some underlying tensions; that some groups are marginalised and experience multiple deprivation. There are dangers of resentments building and of already highly-disadvantaged groups of people becoming more marginalised. There is the real possibility that people start to believe extremist rhetoric, which is based on hate and prejudice.

All organisations who work together in partnership through Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership are committed to playing their part to improving community cohesion. Community leaders and people in influential positions play a significant role in bringing community cohesion to the forefront of what we consider essential for improving people's quality of life.

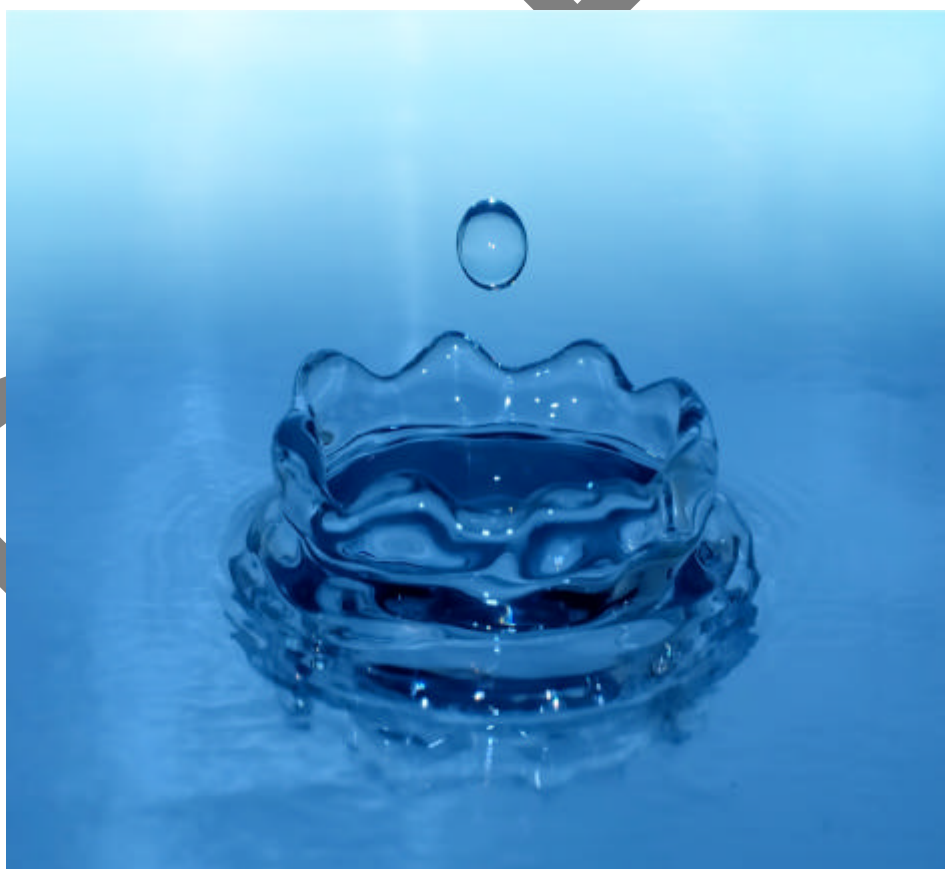
Doing nothing is not an option. This strategy is our starting point on a journey that involves everyone.



**Walsall
Partnership**

Community Cohesion Action Plan

June 2008



1. People...

1.1 Building mutual respect by understanding what we have in common, as well as our differences

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
1.1.1	Engage with schools on community cohesion and the role they can play in promoting interaction through education, and test out with Education Walsall what is already happening and what more might be delivered	All schools attend meeting with Education Walsall and LNP officers to discuss community cohesion objectives and planning November 2008	Education Walsall Walsall College	Schools play pro active role in promoting community cohesion within and between local communities
1.1.2	Invest in long term activity which brings people together to work on shared interests and concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Twinning work between different schools, schools from different faiths and youth groups ○ Multi Faith Forum activities which challenge the status quo and form a programme of directed activity rather than ad-hoc work ○ Inter generational work within geographical areas 	<p>Specifications will be drawn up based on local needs analysis. Evaluation of work is a key requirement July 2008</p> <p>Work commissioned on 3 year basis from September 2008</p>	Walsall Partnership Walsall College	<p>Increased interaction between groups enhances community cohesion</p> <p>Learning from work can be shared across the Borough</p>
1.1.3	Review investment of resources into single group organisations and ensure commissioning requirements include interaction as a priority objective View Regeneration Fund and its commitment to Capacity building over	<p>Review undertaken and finding shared with stakeholders December 2008</p> <p>Amended service specifications drawn up for April 2009</p>	Walsall Council Walsall Partnership	<p>Increased interaction between groups enhances community cohesion</p> <p>Improved value for money for commissioners</p>

	the next 5 years (3600k) Test out the ability of the Voluntary Sector support to address community cohesion.			
1.1.4	Plan a cross-Borough "We are Walsall" event, which is underpinned by a framework of common, shared values and lives	Event held by August 2009	Walsall Partnership Walsall College	Improved sense of belonging and people getting on well together

1. People...

1.2 Developing community leadership

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
1.2.1	Identify and develop known community leaders in Walsall, and reach into communities to identify other people who play leadership roles but are not currently recognised to work directly with them to create a stronger leadership network	Mapping work undertaken November 2008	Walsall Partnership Walsall Council Walsall Voluntary Action Walsall College	Understanding of range of community leaders and the interest groups/communities they represent
1.2.2	Highlight gaps in representation of the population and plan how to address these gaps	Analysis of mapping work undertaken January 2009	Walsall Partnership Walsall Council Walsall Voluntary Action	Improved representation from marginalised groups
1.2.3	Hold briefing events to outline the community cohesion strategy to community leaders	A series of briefings held between July 2008 and February 2009	Walsall Partnership Walsall Council Walsall Voluntary Action	Community leaders begin to add to and /or form networks with each other to support community cohesion

1.2.4	Implement and support the Network of Trust in Walsall, creating young community leaders of the future through the Intercultural Communication and Leadership School	Review current work on Network of Trust and develop leadership recruitment and training plan with schools' involvement, for the next year July 2008	Walsall Partnership Education Walsall Council Youth Service Walsall Voluntary Action Walsall College	Improved representation from young people
1.2.5	Third Sector agencies and the public sector decision makers hold a series of 'Listening and Learning' events, to enhance the knowledge of senior officers and other community leaders	Briefing to all senior officers and community leaders taking part re: the purpose of the programme and a programme of informal visits drawn up September 2008	Walsall Council Walsall Partnership Walsall Voluntary Action Walsall College	Improved understanding of work in the Third Sector which promotes community cohesion Improved communication between the public and Third Sectors

1. People...

1.3 Understanding communities and planning for change

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
1.3.1	Ensure all data collection undertaken across the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership is able to be disaggregated by age, ward, gender, ethnicity, disability and where possible, faith and sexual orientation	Key data identified for disaggregating June 2008 Data needs fed into the Place Survey July 2008	Walsall Partnership West Midlands Police Walsall Council Walsall PCT whg Education Walsall	Improved decision making, planning and targeting of resources to improve community cohesion
1.3.2	Undertake a piece of detailed work identifying with the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities their issues relating to matters such as health, employment and educational attainment	Learn from methodology of similar studies September 2008 Mapping work finished by December 2008	Walsall Partnership Walsall Council Walsall College	Improved understanding of communities will assist in decision making, planning and targeting of resources to improve community cohesion
1.3.3	Undertake a piece of mapping work on the location and needs of migrant workers, barriers to integration and their impact on local settled communities	Learn from methodology of similar studies July 2008 Commission study September 2008	Walsall Partnership	Improved understanding of communities will assist in decision making, planning and targeting of resources to improve community cohesion
1.3.4	Undertake a piece of mapping work on access to health services for hard to reach communities	Agree scope of review July 2008 Develop plans to feed into next planning round November 2008	tPCT	Improved understanding of barriers to access to services and action to address these
1.3.5	Forge improved links with region and community leaders on health issues Utilise whg and tPCT Big Lottery Health Capacity Building Bid (if successful) to promote health with very hard to reach groups. If unsuccessful VIEW will support its integration into the general capacity building project.	Produce plan for priority action and health issues to be tackled. June 2008	tPCT whg	Involvement of religious community leaders in improving access to services and better understanding by tPCT of needs of communities

1. People...

1.4 Communicating community cohesion

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
1.4.1	Develop a Communications Plan for the Strategy and Action Plan, including reflecting what's happening in detail already, that has a forward programme of campaigns and set-pieces to keep our successes and cohesion issues to the fore	Plan in place by July 2008	Walsall Partnership Walsall Council	A framework for communicating systematically is in place Monitorable shifts in the understanding of cohesion in everyday terms
1.4.2	Learn from other local areas in England, and potentially internationally, regarding effective ways to communicate key messages on community cohesion	Examples obtained by July 2008	Walsall Partnership Walsall Council	Increased effectiveness of communication of the key cohesion messages

1. People...

1.5 Safeguarding communities against tensions and unrest

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
1.5.1	Enhance the current set of reporting arrangements for community tensions monitoring, to include receiving information from the Third Sector and front line service delivery organisations Link to whg Capacity Building Project for an early warning system.	New reporting system and training launched November 2008	Tension Monitoring Group	Improved likelihood of tensions being identified at early stages and resolved
1.5.2	Bring together relevant data routinely that can help to build a picture of tensions and take appropriate action	Trial run of data analysis August 2008	Safer Walsall Partnership	Improved likelihood of tensions being identified at early stages and resolved
1.5.3	Work with schools on ensuring their racist incident monitoring and reporting is consistent	Briefings with schools held on racist incident reporting – good practice examples shared October 2008	Education Walsall	Improved picture of community cohesion in schools will assist with planning and targeting of resources/actions
1.5.4	Undertake analysis of racist incident reporting to West Midlands Police and explore the actions taken by the Police and all partner organisations to ensure they are cogent, cohesive and appropriate to the incidents reported Publicise the reporting centres across the Borough that communities can go to and report a racist incident.	Methodology agreed, and analysis undertaken by December 2008	West Midlands Police Walsall Council	Improved understanding of reasons why racist incident reporting has increased
1.5.5	Ensure the Communication Plan includes how community leaders will respond to unexpected local, regional or national	Communications plan drawn up by July 2008 (See action 1.4.1)	Walsall Partnership Walsall Council	Community leadership networks area able to respond effectively to any unexpected event

	events which may impact negatively on community cohesion			
1.5.6	<p>Bring together schools, youth workers, community workers and other stakeholders to collectively gather evidence and discuss the need for and possibility of early intervention work with groups of young men</p> <p>Analysis of Community Safety issues on whg estates by estate management team.</p>	<p>Fact finding undertaken following a meeting of stakeholders November 2008</p> <p>December 2008</p>	<p>Walsall Council Youth Service Walsall Voluntary Action Education Walsall LNP officers Walsall College</p> <p>whg</p>	<p>Early intervention and prevention work undertaken to improve interaction and understanding between different groups of young people</p>
1.5.7	<p>Carry out a short survey to explore what race equality schemes are in place, how consistent they are with good practice and how they can be coordinated to ensure coherent, partnership-wide action</p>	<p>Assess all Race Equality Schemes in public sector using community cohesion impact assessment tool and prepare report for LSP Board</p> <p>November 2008</p>	<p>Walsall Partnership with support from Diversity Team from Walsall Council</p>	<p>Ensure there is a shared understanding across partner agencies about race equality issues and priorities.</p>

2. Places...

2.1 Developing a neighbourhood approach

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
2.1.1	LNPs to continually consider the priority concerns for their areas and maintain a focus building cohesion actions into future Neighbourhood Agreements	All LNPs have tabled community cohesion on their agendas and agreed key priorities for their areas July 2008	Walsall Council	Local neighbourhoods are able to determine and take action on the specific cohesion issues in their areas
2.1.2	<p>To build an ever more local focus via the LNPs to the partners' main programmes of housing management and refurbishment, economic regeneration, local governance and other place making activities</p> <p>The Strategy and Action Plan will dovetail with the Priority Strategic Regeneration Framework Master Plan areas. Work to be integrated into it as part of the regeneration process supported by whg Capacity Building Projects funded through VIEW.</p>	<p>All LNPs to build local plans which evidence local needs and local aspirations. Community cohesion impact assessments are undertaken on all LNP plans.</p> <p>December 2008</p> <p>March 2009</p>	<p>Walsall Partnership and Walsall Council</p> <p>whg</p>	Local neighbourhoods are shaped according to locally determined priorities and local needs
2.1.3	Explore the potential for more cohesive and joined-up policy making at a local level relating to the creation and maintenance of community cohesion	<p>As series events held in each LNP to look at cohesion priorities and what works well. Events to draw together members of the public, community leaders, community activists, local service providers, schools and places of worship, and LNP officers.</p> <p>November 2008</p>	Walsall Partnership and Walsall Council with support from WVA	Ownership and understanding in local neighbourhoods of the community cohesion issues which need addressing and the actions which will support cohesion

2.1.4	More effectively coordinate current and future local identity activities to ensure a cohesive approach to presenting the image of neighbourhoods, e.g. signage and 'branding'	<p>All LNPs to create an annual rolling plan of local events and the ways in which these are to be communicated. Links between these and the overall communications plan for community cohesion to be established.</p> <p>November 2008</p>	Walsall Partnership and Walsall Council	Improved profiling and communication of local events and activities increases local sense of pride and belonging
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2. Places...

2.2 Planning for where people live

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
2.2.1	To use cohesion impact assessments to assess the degree to which housing and other regeneration plans will have a positive impact on community cohesion	Examples of cohesion impact tests from other local authority areas are obtained and a bespoke tool created for Walsall July 2008	Walsall Council Walsall Regeneration Company WBSP whg	Improved quality of life for Walsall residents and increased community benefits from regeneration investment
2.2.2	Walsall Council and RSLs review collective understanding of any perceived and real barriers of housing choice to BME and other special interest communities, to ensure that this understanding influences future improvement action plans	Research proposal agreed Jan 2009 Research commissioned Feb 2009 Findings presented to stakeholders July 2009	Walsall Council whg other RSLs Private landlords Housing Partnership	Understanding of any barriers will result in specific actions to address any inequality or discrimination
2.2.3	Explore ways of widening and deepening the current opportunities for all groups to participate in the design elements of changes to their communities, e.g. housing, economic and health	Identify creative and innovative practice in other local authority areas, which seek to involve groups that are perceived to be hard to reach. October 2008	Walsall Partnership Whg Walsall Council	Improved levels of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o sense of belonging o Ability to influence decision making in local areas.
2.2.4	Initiate a piece of research into how schools can provide greater prominence to social cohesion, bring young people together from different communities and to understand the part played by allocations policy in helping or hindering the diversity of annual intakes	Scope the research brief and commission research October 2008	Education Walsall	Schools supported to deliver community cohesion outcomes based on evidence of what works well

2. Places...

2.3 Working with regional and national partners

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
2.3.1	To seek a cohesion twinning opportunity with at least one other local authority area, once DCLG are able to facilitate this and to consider the international twinning dimensions of learning about cohesion. Explore the possibility of twinning with a College in the area.	Twinning partner identified through CLG /Government Office West Midlands December 2008	Walsall Council on behalf of Walsall Partnership with Walsall College	Shared learning will assist Walsall in continually improving work on community cohesion
2.3.2	Create a broader base of understanding around the specific and successful work being carried out on tensions monitoring and capacity development underway in the Black Country, and the potential for greater across sub-regional and regional activity	Hold a series of briefings for stakeholders locally on tensions monitoring and prevention work , linking the work to the broader sub regional and regional activity October 2008	Tension Monitoring Group	Wider understanding of and participation in early tension reporting reduces risks of tensions escalating.

3. Prosperity...

3.1 Maximising cohesion improvements through regeneration in Walsall

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
3.1.1	To use cohesion impact assessments in order to assess the degree to which regeneration plans will have a positive impact on community cohesion	Undertake cohesion impact tests July 2008	Walsall Council Walsall Regeneration Company	Improved understanding of the impact of regeneration on community cohesion

3. Prosperity....

3.2 Planning the workforce for the future

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
3.2.1	To undertake some action research into workforce planning models which reach traditionally "hard to reach" groups	Examples of workforce planning models obtained from other areas and a presentation given to the Walsall Partnership Board February 2009	Walsall Partnership Walsall PCT Walsall College	Long term workforce planning includes considerations of the benefits of diversity in the workplace, reaching "hard to reach" groups and benefits to community cohesion
3.2.2	Make strong connections between this Strategy and Action Plan and the innovative work of the Regeneration Company around opening up access to the SME market; differently skilling people through the virtual academy; identifying appropriate technologies; developing individual enterprise and social capital specifically Health	Workshops that bring together role models, likely new entrants with interested investors September 2008	Walsall Partnership Walsall Regeneration Company Walsall College	Wider appreciation of the entrepreneurial experience in Walsall and how individuals and loose networks of SME's can benefit

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