



LATE REPORTS, URGENT BUSINESS and SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Cabinet

Tuesday, 8 July 2008

The following report was received too late to be included on the main agenda for this meeting and is to be considered as Urgent Business:

Agenda Item Number	Page	Title	Reason for Late Report	Officer Responsible For Report
3	1 - 15	COMMUNITY COHESION	Referral from Overview and Scrutiny	Head of Democratic Services

CABINET

**Referral to Cabinet - Community Cohesion
8th July 2008**

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To request Cabinet to consider the referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a result of the Call-in of Cabinet's decision with regard to Community Cohesion – Minute 12.			
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Referral from Overview & Scrutiny	X
Date Included in Forward Plan			
This report is public			

RECOMMENDATIONS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- (1) That Cabinet do not appoint a Community Cohesion officer at the present time.
- (2) That Cabinet consider alternative ways of achieving the aims of the Corporate Plan on cohesive communities, including working with the universities. Overview and Scrutiny draws the attention of Cabinet to priority outcome 16 and highlights that:
 - ❑ The Community Cohesion Strategy could be achieved through working with the LSP and voluntary sector. A future programme of spending on Community Cohesion should be based upon this strategy.
 - ❑ Area Based Grant (ABG) money could be used to implement the Children and Young People Strategic Plan.
 - ❑ Area Based Grant money could be used to achieve the aim of a civic programme that celebrates our heritage and benefits our communities.
- (3) That Cabinet reconsiders the issue of achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard as an issue separate from the spending of the Community Cohesion Area Based Grant monies.

1.0 Introduction

The Chief Executive agreed to a request by Councillor Bray, Langhorn, Towers, Brown and Rogerson to Call-in the decision made by Cabinet at its meeting on 3rd June 2008 with regard to Community Cohesion.

At the Call-in held on 25th June 2008 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made three recommendations which have been referred to Cabinet for consideration.

2.0 Details

The recommendations agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are detailed below:

- (1) That Cabinet do not appoint a Community Cohesion officer at the present time.
- (2) That Cabinet consider alternative ways of achieving the aims of the Corporate Plan on cohesive communities, including working with the universities. Overview and Scrutiny draws the attention of Cabinet to priority outcome 16 and highlights that:
 - The Community Cohesion Strategy could be achieved through working with the LSP and voluntary sector. A future programme of spending on Community Cohesion should be based upon this strategy.
 - Area Based Grant money could be used to implement the Children and Young People Strategic Plan.
 - Area Based Grant money could be used to achieve the aim of a civic programme that celebrates our heritage and benefits our communities.
- (3) That Cabinet reconsiders the issue of achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard as an issue separate from the spending of the Community Cohesion Area Based Grant monies.

3.0 OFFICER COMMENTS WITH REGARD TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Recommendation 2

“That Cabinet consider alternative ways of achieving the aims of the Corporate Plan on cohesive communities, including working with the universities. Overview and Scrutiny draws the attention of Cabinet to priority outcome 16.”

- **Area Based Grant money could be used to achieve the aim of a civic programme that celebrates our heritage and benefits our communities.**

The main events contained within the current Civic Programme are set out below.

May

Annual Council.
Mayor's Sunday.

November

Remembrance Day

June

Community Festival.

January

Holocaust Memorial Day

July

Freeman's Court.
Youth Games.

March

Mayoral At Homes

September

Possible Overseas Students

The Mayor also supports a number of local charitable organisations by the granting of up to 13 free lettings in any year. These have included the support of events such as Chinese New Year and Hindu festivals and the Holocaust Memorial Day celebrations are also held with the benefit of a free letting.

With regard to the Civic Programme for the Centenary Celebrations for 2009 Cabinet is advised that a Heritage Partners meeting consisting of Officers has been formed in order to, amongst other things, consider proposals and make arrangements for the celebrations. Representatives include the NWDA, Museum, Williamson Park and the City Council. No firm proposals are available at the time of writing this report, however, proposals could include extending the duration of the Heritage Open Days concept, which is already arranged on an annual basis in the District on 1 day in the year, to a weekend event for 2009. Buildings that could be opened to the public include public buildings, such as the Town Halls, the monument at Williamson Park, the Museum, Lancaster Castle, stately homes and other buildings that could be of interest. However, negotiations would need to be undertaken with the owners of the buildings to ensure that they would be willing to participate.

ABG could be used to make arrangements for the event, pay any costs that may arise such as booking arrangements, opening and staffing costs, together with promotional literature/press releases and signage that maybe required.

Cabinet is also advised that the Williamson Park Board has created a Centenary Working Group, which has met to discuss proposals for the centenary celebrations. The following has been agreed by the Board:

- A Centenary Dinner/Reception on the 24th October 2009, with Prince Charles being invited to attend.
- Creation of an Illuminated Woodland Walk, with funding being sought.
- That the opening of the Illuminated Woodland Walk coincide with the Centenary Dinner/Reception.

The Group proposed that the Memorial be lit temporarily for the centenary celebrations by a local firm who had lit the Memorial some years ago. They additionally suggested that the Arboretum Walk be lit as a permanent feature by accent lighting under the trees, in order to create a winter woodland walk.

The lighting of the Arboretum Walk would serve several purposes, namely:

- creating a winter activity in the park, possibly with guided tours;
 - increasing security;
 - promoting Green technology with solar powered L.E.D. lighting;
 - using the scheme for match funding for any Lottery bids in future.
- **The Community Cohesion Strategy could be achieved through working with the LSP and voluntary sector. A future programme of spending on Community Cohesion should be based upon this strategy.**
 - **Area Based Grant money could be used to implement the Children and Young People Strategic Plan.**

Cabinet work with the LSP to develop a Community Cohesion Strategy

Development of a Community Cohesion strategy would need to be developed with partners through the LSP and in particular the newly formed Valuing People Thematic Group. The first meeting of this group is scheduled for the 8th July. The nominated officer to support the Cabinet Member nominated to the thematic group is the Head of Corporate Strategy who is also the Officer nominated to the relevant County LSP Thematic Group. The LSP Manager currently supports all of the thematic groups in developing their action plans and is supporting the establishment of new LSP structures following the recent peer review of the LSP.

Working with the LSP to take this work forward is the correct way but this is a very early stage in the formation of the LSP group. It has not yet at this stage identified its membership apart from a small core membership. It has yet to begin action planning as to how best to deliver its identified priorities, what targets and milestones it will set itself before it begins to consider resources required to deliver an action plan. Those resources could be both in house amongst relevant agencies and externally commissioned – both have their place but this will take time.

The allocation of Area Based Grant provides a significant opportunity to provide a resource to both support this activity both internally and with partners. It also provides an opportunity for us to begin to significantly address some the equality and diversity issues the Council itself faces. In providing leadership to our partners we are also being given the opportunity to offer a resource to co-ordinate all of this work.

The Service (and the Head of Service) does not have the current capacity to take all of this activity forward without additional resources or revising priorities in this year's Business Plan.

Use of cohesion Area Based Grant to fund Children and Young People Strategy

Lancaster City Council's Children and Young People Strategic Plan has identified priority areas of work to be developed over the next three years.

For 2008/09 the main priorities are 'to develop a Youth Engagement Strategy' and to 'improve access and take up of positive activities, including sports, cultural and leisure activities', both of which contribute positively to community cohesion.

Currently Cultural Services already have funding bids in through the SPAS (Sport and Physical Activity Strategy) to enable staff work with a range of partners on delivering 'diversionary activities', expanding on a similar scheme that ran successfully for a 12 week period in 2007.

The use of Area Based Grant funding could enable more young people to be able to access positive activities, developing both practical and social skills and help to dispel misconceived ideas about the majority of young people who want to be able to build positive relationships within their communities.

A decision to use area based grant funding for this purpose will need to be considered alongside the comments made in the first section.

Recommendation 3

"That Cabinet reconsiders the issue of achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard as an issue separate from the spending of the Community Cohesion Area Based Grant monies."

As set out in Appendix B to the original Cabinet report, the Human Resources staffing budget includes £10,000 towards equality work. However, from August 2008 there will be a part time (two days a week) vacancy within Human Resources, equating to £10,550 in salary. The Service does not currently have the capacity to lead the work on achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard, and, from past experience, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to fill a vacancy of this nature in order to provide such capacity.

It would be possible to appoint an external body to work with the Council to achieve Level 2 of the Equality Standard. A quotation was obtained in November 2007, when this option was being considered in order to meet Level 2 in 2007/08. The quotation has recently been updated and is in the region of £22,000.

If Cabinet were to reaffirm its decision to establish a new post of Community Cohesion Officer, it is envisaged that that officer would take on the role of leading the Equality Standard work. However, if Cabinet does not reaffirm that decision, it would need to consider whether it wishes to pursue the Equality Standard. If so, given the lack of capacity within Human Resources, Cabinet may wish to consider using the Human Resources salary saving identified above, supplemented by an amount of ABG grant, in order to buy in the work from an external provider.

4.0 Options

1. Reaffirm the decision of Cabinet on 3rd June 2008.
The original report to Cabinet on Community Cohesion with appendices and relevant minute are attached to this report.
2. Accept the recommendations either wholly or in part made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the Call-in on 25th June 2008, and make resolutions in line with those recommendations.
3. Decide to spend the ABG in some other way or defer consideration to a later meeting.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Sustainable Community Strategy (currently under development) will have within it a Valuing People theme which will have within it outcomes and targets relating to Community Cohesion.

The Corporate Plan 2008/09 has relevant targets within it:

“Improve score against Equality Standard for Local Government – Level 2 March 2009 and Level 3 March 2011” and “Develop and implement a Community Cohesion Strategy”

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Such an approach would have a positive impact and support the Council’s community leadership role in terms of positive action in respect of equality, celebrating diversity and working to promote safe and cohesive communities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The implications of the original Cabinet report are set out in the appendices attached.

If the recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny are preferred either wholly or in part, and/or Cabinet wish to take forward issues highlighted under the Officer comments, Members will need to decide how they should be funded and how the ABG is to be allocated.

In the event that Cabinet decides not to support Options 1 or 2 there will still be a need to consider how ABG for community cohesion is allocated.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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CABINET

COMMUNITY COHESION

3rd June 2008

Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To consider how to take forward community cohesion within Lancaster District in the context of the Area Based Grant.			
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision	
			Referral from Cabinet Member
Date Included in Forward Plan	08 May 2008		
This report is public.			

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 That the Community Cohesion element of the Area Based Grant (ABG) be used to support the establishment of a new post of a Community Cohesion Officer, initially for a period of 3 years, and to commission community cohesion activities as set out in the report.
- 2 That the Revenue Budget be updated accordingly.

1 INTRODUCTION

Lancaster City Council has received an Area Based Grant for Community Cohesion for the three year period from April 2008. Cabinet, at its meeting on 18 March 2008, resolved at Minute 137:

- (1) That for April 2008 Area Based Grant be used to continue existing arrangements for Neighbourhood Management in Poulton and the West End of Morecambe and a report on future options be brought back to Cabinet in April 2008.
- (2) That work on options to develop Neighbourhood Management arrangements for the District be considered and brought back to Cabinet.
- (3) That allocation of the remaining Grant in 2008/09 be subject to a further report to Cabinet.
- (4) That the General Fund Revenue Budget be updated accordingly.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Community cohesion can mean different things to different people. Within the Lancashire sub-region we have settled on a definition (attached as **Appendix A**).
- 2.2 The City Council has been engaged on equality and diversity work programmes over a number of years, most recently through working on the Equality Standard and in partnership with other organisations on the equality and diversity “building block” of the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Lancaster City Council has achieved Equality Standard Level 1. The Corporate Plan for 2007/08 identified Level 2 as a target, but this has been deferred to 2008/09 due to capacity problems and the need to prioritise the Fair Pay programme. Nevertheless, the City Council initiated and has contributed to the development of a local forum with community leaders, has continued to work within the LSP and has been active within the Lancashire sub-region.
- 2.3 There has previously been in place an agreed allocation by way of Service Level Agreement (SLA) to the value of £2,200 per annum with Preston & West Lancs Racial Equality Council for advice and support on equality and diversity matters. However, it had been proposed by Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Resolved, amongst other things, by Cabinet, at its meeting on the 22 January 2008, Minute No 94(1):

“That Officers explore the opportunity to offer a three year SLA for £2,000 per annum with no inflation for the provision of equality and diversity assistance and advice in the district.”

This amount has been included in the 2008/09 Revenue Budget.

The proposals in this report enable the capacity of the Council to be enhanced and for services over and above £2,000 to be procured by one or more SLAs, should that be appropriate.

- 2.4 It is acknowledged that capacity needs to be provided if the Council is to provide leadership to the equalities and diversity/cohesion agenda to ensure that these issues are addressed as set out in the Corporate Plan and a consistent approach is taken in relation to all the Council's business.

3 PROPOSAL DETAILS

Funding

- 3.1 Cabinet, at its meeting on the 18 April, agreed the allocation of Area Based Grant (ABG) in respect of Neighbourhood Management and asked for a further report regarding the allocation of a new element which is paid directly to the Council in respect of Community Cohesion (see below)

Area Based Grant Allocation (£)			
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Revenue - Cohesion	26,000	49,000	75,000

Attached at **Appendix B** is a note of previous arrangements.

Note. Cohesion money is a *new* ABG funding allocation not yet allocated to any specific expenditure heading within the 2008/09 Draft GF Revenue Budget.

Capacity

- 3.5 It is recommended that a new post of Community Cohesion Officer be established to become Lancaster City Council's lead officer in respect of Community Cohesion/Equality and Diversity issues. It is further recommended that the excess ABG over and above that required to cover the salary costs of this proposed new post, be retained as a working budget for the postholder to allow for appropriate commissioning of activities, meeting training needs, positive promotion etc.
- 3.6 It is anticipated that the role of the Community Cohesion officer (and the range of activities commissioned) would be wide ranging and varied in terms of developing policy, co-ordinating activities and representing the Council on District and County Officer Working Groups.

4 DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

The Council's Corporate Plan was the subject of extensive consultation during its preparation and it has within it a specific outcome - "Work to maintain a cohesive community where respect for all is valued and celebrated" and a specific action - "to develop and implement a Community Cohesion Strategy." Additional capacity will be provided by the establishment of this post to take this work forward.

5 OPTIONS AND OPTIONS ANALYSIS (including risk assessment)

Option 1 To pull together the existing employee resource allocated to equality and diversity issues within HR, combine with resources from the ABG to create a whole time equivalent officer and a commissioning budget.

The officer will be located in the most appropriate City Council Service (Corporate Strategy) or the work programme to be procured from another organisation.

Option 2 That the ABG be used in some other way to be determined by Cabinet. Should Cabinet resolve to use the ABG for different purposes, there will be a resourcing issue in respect of the Corporate Plan action to achieve Levels 2 and 3 of the Equality Standard.

The preferred option is Option 1. The allocation of ABG to the City Council offers a timely opportunity for the Council to address the issues it faces in terms of community cohesion, equality and diversity.

CONCLUSION

Community Cohesion has been moving up the agenda nationally, regionally and locally over the last year or so. The ABG enables the City Council to take further actions in relation to community cohesion and integrate those actions with existing work programmes and plans in relation to equality and diversity.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Sustainable Community Strategy (currently under development) will have within it a Valuing People theme which will have within it outcomes and targets relating to Community Cohesion.

The Corporate Plan 2008/09 has relevant targets within it:

“Improve score against Equality Standard for Local Government – Level 2 March 2009 and Level 3 March 2011” and “Develop and implement a Community Cohesion Strategy”

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Such an approach would have a positive impact and support the Council's community leadership role in terms of positive action in respect of equality, celebrating diversity and working to promote safe and cohesive communities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

For Option 1 the proposed salary range for the new post is SCP 34-37 currently estimated at £27,594 -£29,728, which will be subject to the outcome of Fair Pay. Assuming a start date of no sooner than 1st September 2008, the maximum costs of £22,150 can be funded by the ABG of £26,000 together with the saving of £10,550 generated by the Senior HRO returning to work on 3 days a week. A balance of £14,400 would be remaining for commissioning work before any recruitment costs have been allowed for, estimated at in the region of £1,600. However if the start date is later then this figure would increase and the budget would need to be updated once the appointment has been made and a start date known.

The maximum staff costs of £39,250 and £40,570 in 2009/10 and 2010/11 could be funded from the indicative ABG of £49,000 and £75,000 respectively with the remainder being allocated to commissioning work, subject to annual review as part of the budget process. However, as funding has so far only been agreed for 3 years, a provision will need to be made in 2010/11 for redundancy costs.

If the work programme is procured from another organisation, the costs cannot yet be identified but would need to be contained within the budget available above.

If Option 2 is preferred Cabinet members may recommend (or decide) other uses of the allocation, but If any amounts of the ABG remained unallocated, initially these would go towards supporting the revenue budget generally, together with any staff savings from the Senior HRO. (If there was an overall underspend at the end of the year this would fall into balances). If this was the case, it may be necessary for HR to fill the remaining two days of the Senior HR Officer post and the saving of £10,550 would, therefore, not be generated.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

ABG Guidance

Government's response to the Commission
on Integration and Cohesion

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APPENDIX A

A definition of Community Cohesion

A 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 the boroughs, cities and county of Lancashire
- There is a strong sense of an individual's 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 sense that people feel they are listened to and that they influence local decisions
- 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 is shared ownership of community problems and possible outcomes and solutions
- There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds
- There are visibly strong and positive relationships between the agencies that work in the boroughs, cities and county of Lancashire

Appendix B

An equal opportunities budget has for some time been held in Human Resources. This dates back to 2003, when the Council employed a Personnel Officer (Equalities and Improvement). Because of difficulties in recruiting to the post, the Personnel Committee on the 20th April 2004 deleted it from the Council's establishment, resulting in a saving of £12,000 in 2004/05. Of that saving, £4000 was used to regrade the then Policy Officer post in Corporate Strategy. The remaining £8000 was transferred to the equal opportunities budget which then stood at £11,000. In March 2005, the Personnel Committee approved the transfer of £10,000 from that budget to fund a restructure of Human Resources, and the balance was merged into the HR Management and Administration Sundry Expenses budget. In 2006/07 an Equality and Diversity Budget of £1000 was created, and this was increased to £4,000 in 2007/08. The 2006/07 sum was unspent and was carried forward into 2007/08. There is likely to be a further carry forward request to 2008/09, but there is nothing in this budget for any future years.

The effect of the Personnel Committee decision in 2005 was that the HR staffing budget includes £10,000 towards equality work.

The Senior Human Resources Officer is due to return from maternity leave in August 2008, and has requested that, on her return, she be permitted to work three days a week rather than full time. This would give a saving of £10,550 in 2008/09. Whilst she has indicated that this would be a permanent arrangement, under council policy she would have the option to revert to full time working, so this saving cannot be guaranteed on a permanent basis. However, the saving could be used for the time being to contribute towards the funding of a Community Cohesion Officer as proposed below. This would consolidate the staffing resource for the wider aspects of equality and diversity in that post, although clearly Human Resources would retain responsibility for equality issues relating to the Council's employees.

CABINET MINUTE EXTRACT – COMMUNITY COHESION – MINUTE 16

The Chief Executive submitted a report that requested Cabinet to consider how to take forward community cohesion within Lancaster District in the context of the Area Based Grant.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment were set out in the report as follows:

Option 1 To pull together the existing employee resource allocated to equality and diversity issues within HR, combine with resources from the ABG to create a whole time equivalent officer and a commissioning budget.

The officer will be located in the most appropriate City Council Service (Corporate Strategy) or the work programme to be procured from another organisation.

Option 2 That the ABG be used in some other way to be determined by Cabinet. Should Cabinet resolve to use the ABG for different purposes, there will be a resourcing issue in respect of the Corporate Plan action to achieve Levels 2 and 3 of the Equality Standard.

The Officer preferred option was Option 1. The allocation of ABG to the City Council offers a timely opportunity for the Council to address the issues it faces in terms of community cohesion, equality and diversity.

It was moved by Councillor Eileen Blamire and seconded by Councillor Jane Fletcher: -

“That a decision on the recommendations, as set out in the report, be deferred for six months to enable a detailed action plan to be produced and considered.”

By way of amendment it was then moved by Councillor Jon Barry and seconded by Councillor John Gilbert:-

“That option 1, as set out in the report, be approved, subject to the addition of:-

That a detailed implementation report be produced in consultation with the LSP thematic group and forwarded for consideration by Cabinet once an officer has been appointed.”

On considering the above, Councillor Eileen Blamire, with the agreement of her seconder and the meeting withdrew her proposition.

Members then voted as follows.

Resolved

(5 Members (Councillors Eileen Blamire, Abbott Bryning, Jon Barry, John Gilbert and Jane Fletcher) voted for the motion, 3 Members (Councillors Shirley Burns, David Kerr and Roger Mace) voted against and 1 Member (Councillor Evelyn Archer) abstained from voting).

- (1) That the Community Cohesion element of the Area Based Grant (ABG) be used to support the establishment of a new post of a Community Cohesion Officer, initially for a period of 3 years, and to commission community cohesion activities as set out in the report.
- (2) That a detailed implementation report be produced in consultation with the LSP thematic group and forwarded for consideration by Cabinet once an officer has been appointed.
- (3) That the Revenue Budget be updated accordingly.

Officers responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Executive.
Head of Financial Services.

Reason for making the decision:

The decision for the allocation of ABG to the City Council offers a timely opportunity for the City Council to address the issues it faces in terms of community cohesion, equality and diversity.

Community Cohesion has been moving up the agenda nationally, regionally and locally over the last year or so. The ABG enables the City Council to take further actions in relation to community cohesion and integrate those actions with existing work programmes and plans in relation to equality and diversity.