

# CABINET

## COMMUNITY COHESION

17 March 2009

### 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 (ABG).			
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date Included in Forward Plan	N/A		
This report is public.			

#### RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR GILBERT

- 1 That the remaining £16,000 balance of the Community Cohesion Reserve, together with £7,000 from the Project Implementation Reserve, be allocated to support the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership's (LDLSP) Valuing People Thematic Group to develop and implement a district wide Community Cohesion Strategy.
- 2 That the 2009/10 Revenue Budget be updated accordingly.
- 3 That the Head of Corporate Strategy become the Responsible Spending Officer for this £26,000 budget.

#### INTRODUCTION

1.1 Lancaster City Council has received an Area Based Grant for Community Cohesion for the three year period from April 2008 as set out below.

	Area Based Grant Allocation (£)		
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Revenue - Cohesion	26,000	49,000 (see 1.3 below)	75,000 (see 1.3 below)

Note.

Cohesion money was a *new* funding allocation introduced from 2008/09 onwards. It is a 'general' grant, and can therefore be used for any purpose.

- 1.2 Cabinet, at a number of meetings in 2008, has considered how to best take forward community cohesion policy within Lancaster District in the context of this grant. The decisions of Cabinet are set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 In view of those decisions, and following the outcome of budget setting on 04 March, the remaining 2008/09 grant award of £16K is currently unallocated, and it is now held in a Community Cohesion Earmarked Reserve. As such, this funding is available for use in any year. With regard to the ABG funding awards for years 2009/10 and 2010/11, these have already been used to support the Council's 2009/10/11 General Fund Revenue Budget, and they are therefore no longer available to support other new spending.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Development of a Community Cohesion strategy is being taken forward with partners through the LDLSP and in particular the 'Valuing People' Thematic Group. The Cabinet Member nominated to the thematic group is Councillor Gilbert supported by the Head of Corporate Strategy who is also the officer nominated to the County Council's Cohesion Thematic Group.
- 2.2 This group is still at an early stage in its formation and development. It has a wide ranging agenda encompassing cohesion, developing the capacity of voluntary community and faith sectors and the development of strategies around older people and carers.
- 2.3 The group has identified its key stakeholders and developed action plans addressing its high level priorities.
- 2.4 In addition to the 2008/9 Corporate Plan priority 16.1 to develop and implement a Community Cohesion Strategy, the Council 's Corporate Plan for 2009/10 includes under Priority 6 "To Support Our Local Communities" the following key action :-

*"6.1 To Deliver the Council's actions in the LDLSP's Valuing People Thematic Group Action Plan –develop and implement a Community Cohesion Strategy"*

## **3 PROPOSAL DETAILS**

- 3.1 The Valuing People Thematic Group has developed a detailed action plan around cohesion. (See Appendix 2). This plan was submitted to the LDLSP Management Group and subsequently approved by the group on the 12 December 2008.
- 3.2 It is proposed to use the 2008/9 ABG funding for Community Cohesion as a resource to both develop a cohesion strategy and implement it in future years and has identified this proposal in its action plan submission to the LDLSP Management Group. Cabinet is being asked to allocate £23K of its 2008/09 allocation of Area Based Grant to the Valuing People thematic group for this purpose to meet its Corporate Plan action 6.1 identified above.
- 3.3 On a related matter, Cabinet should be aware that Team Lancashire has now developed a support/awareness programme for members and officers which will assist the Council in developing its skills and capacity in this area. The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny and the Head of Corporate Strategy are part of the first cohort of members / officers to take part in the programme.

### 3 DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

Both the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council's 2008/09 Corporate Plan were the subject of extensive consultation during their preparation and both have identified work on community cohesion as a priority.

### 4 OPTIONS AND OPTIONS ANALYSIS (including risk assessment)

#### Option 1

That Cabinet agrees to support the cohesion action plan developed by the Valuing People group and allocates £23K to the group for this purpose

#### Option 2

To defer making any allocations from the ABG for community cohesion at this time

#### Option 3

That Cabinet allocate Area Based Grant for some other purpose.

#### Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

The preferred option is Option 1 - to support the cohesion action plan developed by the Valuing People group and allocate £23K to the group for this purpose. This is in accordance with the earlier decisions of Cabinet to take forward development of a Community Cohesion Strategy through working with the LDLSP and the voluntary sector and ring fence the 2008/9 Area Based Grant awarded for community cohesion for supporting specific actions within Corporate Plan Priority 6.1.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Sustainable Community Strategy has within it a priority to "Improve community cohesion, a sense of belonging and taking part by promoting positive relationships between the diverse and emerging communities and groups in the Lancaster district."

The Corporate Plan 2008/09 has a priority outcome to "work to maintain a cohesive community where respect for all is valued and celebrated" and a supporting action to "develop and implement a Community Cohesion Strategy"

The Council 's Corporate Plan for 2009/10 includes under Priority 6 "-To Support Our Local Communities" the following key action :-

*"6.1 To Deliver the Council's actions in the LDLSP's Valuing People Thematic Group Action Plan –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

Whilst future years funding of ABG has been used to support the 2009/10/11 General Fund Revenue Budget, following Budget Council there is £16K is available to support the request of £23K to develop and implement a community cohesion strategy in line with its corporate priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plans for 2008/09 and 2009/10 (subject to the outcome of the 2009/10 budget).

The Council's 2008/09 Corporate Plan priority 16 is to :

- Develop and implement a Community Cohesion Strategy
- Implement the Children and Young People Strategic Plan.
- Deliver a Civic Programme which celebrates our local heritage and benefits our communities

This report addresses the first of those actions. Cabinet has agreed to keep a limited sum in the Every Child Matters reserve to progress the C&YP strategic action plan and have determined their preferred approach to the Civic Programme which does not rely on any contributions from this fund.

Given the decisions taken at Budget Council, the timing of this report and in view of the fact that a report elsewhere on the agenda (regarding worklessness) identifies a reduced call on the Project Implementation Reserve, it is proposed that £7K be taken from this, in order to support the cohesion action plan. Any future requirements (for either cohesion, or project implementation generally) will be reassessed in due course, following the outcome of Budget Council.

Should Members approve the recommendations, then the spending plans will be updated into the 2009/10 revenue budget, based on the action plan as set out in Appendix 2. It should be noted that this would allow only a one year subscription to the 'Hate Crime Initiative'.

## SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has no further comments.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising as a result of this report

## MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has nothing further to add

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

ABG Guidance  
Government's response to the Commission  
on Integration and Cohesion

**Contact Officer:** Richard Tulej  
**Telephone:** 01524 582079  
**E-mail:** rtulej@lancaster.gov.uk  
**Ref:**

## **APPENDIX 1**

**Cabinet, at its meeting on 3 June 2008**, resolved at Minute 12:

- (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.*

This decision was subsequently 'called in' and considered by the

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 25 June 2008**. It resolved (Minute 10)

- (1) *That Cabinet do not appoint a Community Cohesion officer at the present time.*
- (2) *That Cabinet considers 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.*

This referral from Overview and Scrutiny Committee was considered by

**Cabinet at its meeting on the 8 July 2008** resolved in Minute 19:

- (1) *That Cabinet does not appoint a Community Cohesion officer at the present time.*
- (2) *That recommendation 2 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted:*
- (3) *That Cabinet reconsiders the way the ABG be spent in November 2008, by which time the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) should have options ready for consideration.*

**Cabinet, at its meeting on the 11 November 2008** considered a further update report on taking forward cohesion through the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP). It resolved in Minute 91:

*(1) That Cabinet notes how community cohesion is being taken forward within the Lancaster District in the context of Area Based Grant*

*(2) That Cabinet defers making any allocations from the Area Based Grant for community cohesion at this time pending a further progress report to Cabinet later in the financial year*

*(3) That Cabinet notes the priority outcome to “work to maintain a cohesive community where respect for all is valued and celebrated” and agrees to ring fence the 2008/9 Area Based Grant awarded for community cohesion for supporting specific actions within Corporate Plan Priority 16.*

#### **Note**

Supporting Actions within Corporate Plan priority 16 are:

- Develop and implement a Community Cohesion Strategy
- Implement the Children and Young People Strategic Plan.
- Deliver a Civic Programme which celebrates our local heritage and benefits our communities

## APPENDIX 2

LANCASTER DISTRICT LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

### DELIVERING THE PRIORITIES OF THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

#### VALUING PEOPLE THEMATIC GROUP - STAGE 2 ACTION PLAN

Action Plan Owner Cllr John Gilbert

**PRIORITY:** Improve community cohesion, a sense of belonging and taking part by promoting positive relationships between the diverse and emerging communities and groups in the Lancaster district

**OBJECTIVE:** Improve Lancaster district as a place that celebrates diversity, welcomes newcomers and promotes positive relationships between the districts diverse communities and groups.

#### MEASURE(S):

**Local Area Agreement;** NI 1 People from different backgrounds getting on well together; NI 4 % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality

This document details the milestones the Valuing People Thematic Group has put in place to deliver the following agreed action

REF:		
<b>TOP LEVEL ACTION (1)</b>	<b>RATIONALE</b>	<b>TARGET DATE</b>
Write and implement a targeted action plan aimed at maintaining and improving community cohesion within the district.	A strategic partnership approach is necessary if district wide cohesion issues are to be addressed.	April 2009 – April 2012
<b>TOP LEVEL ACTION (2)</b>	<b>RATIONALE</b>	<b>TARGET DATE</b>
Reduce the harm caused by prejudice and discrimination	In order to increase community cohesion we need to address issues of prejudice and misinformation, discrimination and hate crime	April 2009 – April 2010

No	TASK	Lead partner with The Thematic Group	Resources required	In Place already Y/N/P	Partner/body providing resource	Resource Gap	Start date	End date
1	Commission a research project and understand the diverse and differing communities within Lancaster district	Lancaster City Council	Yes £15K	(Subject to Cabinet decision)	Lancaster City Council through the use of Area Based Grant	None if ABG is available	April 09	July 09
2	Draft and publish a district Community Cohesion Strategy	Lancaster city Council	Yes (staffing resources to be considered)	N	Lancaster City Council (any resources yet to be identified)	Potentially – to be determined	August 09	
3	Implement and monitor delivery of the Strategy	Lancaster City Council	Yes(staffing resources to be considered)	N	Lancaster City Council (any resources yet to be identified)	Potentially – to be determined	Sept 09	ongoing
4	Increase the number of opportunities available to celebrate the district's heritage and its diverse communities.	Not yet identified	Yes (resources to be considered)	N	Any resources yet to be identified	Potentially – to be determined	April 09	ongoing
5	Monitor implementation of a Cohesion Strategy by establishing baseline national indicators that track community cohesion	Lancaster City Council	£9000 to carry out the national Place Survey	Y	Lancaster City Council	None	April 2009	
	TASK	Lead partner with The Thematic Group	Resources required	In Place already? Y/N/P	Partner/body providing resource	Resource Gap	Start date	End date
1	Join up with Wyre's 'Hate Crime Initiative'	Lancaster City Council	Yes £8K per annum	(One year only, subject to Cabinet decision)	Lancaster City Council through the use of Area Based Grant	None if ABG is available	April 09	April 10



## **Additional Comments**

Lancaster City council has been awarded a three year cohesion 'Area Based Grant' in the sum of £26K, £45K and £65K. The City Council's Cabinet is to be asked to make a decision on allocation of ABG for 2008/09 upon receipt of detailed proposals from the LDLSP.

This work is also being carried out at a county level through the LAA Thematic Group "People and Communities" The LDLSP has representation on this group to ensure that County / district is co-ordinated and supported.

The Hate Crime Initiative is a nationally recognised project which aims to address issues surrounding prejudice, hate crime and develops strategies for dealing with myths and misinformation. There is currently an opportunity to join up with this initiative if a bid to the Big Lottery Fund by Wyre to expand the range of the project is successful. See next page for further details.

## **Hate Crime Initiative**

The initial aim of the Wyre Hate Crime Project was to increase the number of reported hate crimes within the Wyre Borough district, this would also be one of the aims within the Lancaster District but the project is about much more than increasing the number of reported hate crimes.

The project will also deliver training to staff in agencies and organisations within the district in relation to raising the awareness of hate crime (what it actually means, its effects on individuals, their families and communities). This will create a greater understanding of hate crime enabling staff to advocate the benefits of reporting incidents to the project worker and or the police resulting in improved satisfaction within communities with perpetrators hopefully brought to justice.

- The project worker will also carry out out-reach work within the community linking in with community, voluntary, statutory and faith groups looking at any issues or problems that they may have or wish to report.
- The project officer will also run hate crime awareness activities at local events and school as well as organising an annual hate crime conference for both community members and practitioners.
- The project worker will identify 'hate crime' hotspots within the district and working in partnership with other organisations formulate action plans to prevent further incidents and make the area feel safer.
- The project officer will also provide a 'signposting' service to victims of hate crime for further support from agencies and local community groups.
- It would bring continuity throughout Northern Police Division – assisting the Police's Diversity Officer to provide a consistent service regarding Hate Crime.
- The boundaries of the project would be co-terminous with PCTs and other authorities/organisations – for example Victim Support and the Race Equality Council.
- The project officer would conduct training within the council on equality and diversity and provide assistance to the Council in its efforts to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.
- The provision of this project across the Lancaster district is intended to impact in a positive way in improving community cohesion and well being felt by residents, visitors and persons working within the district.