

COMMUNITY COHESION THEMATIC GROUP MEETING
2.00pm, 25th September 2009, West Lancashire Investment Centre

Present:

Cllr John Baldock	Chair	Kim Webber	WLBC
Cllr R Pendleton	WLBC	Jeanette Hickey	Lancashire Police
John Miller	NHS Central Lancashire	Clare Pollard	Age Concern
John Buck	Lancashire Fire & Rescue	Dawn Clarke	NHS Central Lancashire
Greg Mitten	West Lancs CVS	Tracey Jardine	LCC
Kath Gresty	Skelmersdale College	Mandy Naylor	Help Direct

In attendance: David Halpin (LCC); Sue Swift (Lancashire Constabulary); Janet (David Halpin's PA); Liz Donnelly (LSP Secretariat)

1. Apologies

Cllr Iain Ashcroft	WLBC	Brian Lussey	WLBC
Chris Hartley	Skelmersdale College	Robert Johnstone	Access Matters

2. Individual Introductions

Those at the meeting briefly introduced themselves.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meetings on 24th April and 5th June 2009 were **Agreed** as accurate records.

4. Matters Arising

With reference to Minute 3 of the meeting held on 24th April 2009, Liz Donnelly clarified that the Preventing Violent Extremism indicator allocated to the Thematic Group was not NI 35 (which focuses on understanding and engagement with Muslim communities- as she had indicated in her presentation) but a broader LAA indicator which also addresses animal rights and environmental protesters.

5. Work Addressing Older People's Issues- Presentation by David Halpin (LCC) and Sue Swift (Lancashire Constabulary)

David Halpin (Lancashire County Council) and Inspector Sue Swift (Lancashire Constabulary) presented an overview of Lancashire Constabulary's Older Persons Strategy and Action Plan.

David outlined the key themes of the Strategy which include older people knowing their views and opinions are valued and that they have the opportunity to influence policing priorities and that older people feel safe and confident in the police service.

Focus group sessions (made up of ordinary residents ie not those from formal organisations) had indicated that fear of crime was a big challenge (even though there

are low levels of actual crime). Residents had indicated that they were mostly frightened of children; they associated crime with children and wanted see a return to a very strong police presence on the streets. However, they also recognised the need for inter-generational work to increase understanding; inter-dependence is important.

David briefly mentioned the action plan that had been drawn up which addressed both external and internal issues eg reducing the fear of crime and disorder and engagement but also looking at the recruitment and retention of older staff at the Constabulary.

Sue then went on to describe the Lancashire Constabulary Southern Division Older Person Action Plan for 2008/09. Quite a lot of work is currently going on but she specifically mentioned the production of leaflets "Keeping you safe" which are to be distributed to older people (an activity linked with the objective of introducing preventative measures for crime categories, specifically those where older people are more likely to be a victim of crime). She also mentioned intergenerational work to mitigate anxiety associated with young people and said Jane Hogarth, a Neighbourhood Officer in Skelmersdale, was currently involved in this. Internal objectives and actions included developing policies for custody, arrests and transfers that are age –proofed (eg custody facilities).

Cllr Baldock thanked both David and Sue for their very informative presentation and a question and answer session then followed.

Clare Pollard asked about the divisional action around conducting mapping exercises to identify the location of older people (and linked with this the action around the distribution of leaflets) and said that older people were often afraid to answer their doors. Cllr Pendleton said there were problems with identifying where older people were (especially those not in sheltered housing) and suggested two potential relevant sources as being council tax records and the census. Kim Webber suggested the MAPs team at Ormskirk Police should have useful contacts and also suggested that Sue Swift speak to herself or Liz Donnelly about potential sources of information about vulnerable people. Tracey Jardine mentioned LCC's Adult & Community Services intelligence .

Dawn Clarke suggested that it may be possible to get the PCT to pass on any leaflets to GPs to hand out to older patients. Greg Mitten mentioned that this could link in with the current engagement around swine flu and emphasised community type activity (such as the one due to start in Ashurst, Skelmersdale).

John Buck mentioned problems around data protection regarding getting out information. Tracey thought this issue had been resolved but John replied that it hadn't. He informed the meeting that the Fire Service use other agencies' information and that the Service was wanting to adopt a "village champion" approach (informal networks). Sgt Jeanette Hickey mentioned partners' information sharing with regard to migrant workers and why this couldn't be extended to older people

David Halpin said that there may be a need to go beyond a leaflets approach. What about behavioural change? (eg stopping smoking to reduce fires). John indicated that individual fire officer talks with older people were more likely to change behaviour than just producing leaflets.

David stressed the importance of identifying who is actually "vulnerable" (to crime etc) ie those with a physical disability are not necessarily vulnerable. He mentioned that it had been suggested that some preventative work could actually undermine the ability

to cope and that there was a need not to spread fear (through leaflets etc). We have to understand what makes people vulnerable and he pointed out that the education service has a major role to play.

Jeanette said that it would be useful to have a representative from West Lancashire Older People's Partnership Board represented on the Southern Division's Older Persons Working Group and Dr Alex McMinn (OPP Chair) was suggested. David Halpin mentioned also the Beth Johnson Foundation who were specialists in intergenerational activity.

Closing the discussion, Cllr Baldock asked about the way forward regarding what had been discussed. Sue and Jeanette said that the Southern Division was working towards March 2010 in terms of engagement and contact. David mentioned the need to prioritise the action plan ie pick some "aged related wins".

In terms of the West Lancashire dimension, Greg Mitten and Kim Webber suggested that the Community Cohesion Thematic Group (CCTG) be a strategic group with the new People and Communities Thematic Group (PCTG) as a practical task and finish group (ie overseeing any actions and reporting back to the CCTG).

6. **Draft Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan**

Liz Donnelly referred the meeting to her report and appendix setting out suggestions for practical projects to be incorporated into the Community Cohesion Thematic Group's Strategy and Action Plan 2009/10. The meeting discussed each of the suggestions in turn.

a) Support the growth of community based and managed timebanks

Mandy Naylor indicated that timebanks provide a way for people to come together to help others and help themselves at the same time by sharing skills. As such they are very effective in terms of intergenerational activity and can increase community cohesion.

Greg Mitten indicated that this was an action which the PCTG could support and asked if the CCTG could influence the provision of resources for this suggested action. Kim Webber replied that there could be potential funding from the forthcoming Performance Reward Grant and that any projects the CCTG wants to support would help in getting access to such resources. Kim asked Mandy what assistance from the CCTG this project would require or was it just a case of needing the endorsement of the Group (to ensure funding etc)? Mandy requested CCTG involvement in stimulating local communities, keeping it "on the agenda", sharing of knowledge etc ie. as and when needed. Mandy would report back to future CCTG meetings on progress.

It was **Agreed** that :

- i. *"Promote through the Community Cohesion Thematic Group, the growth of community based and managed timebanks"* be included on the CCTG action plan
- ii. Mandy Naylor provide Liz Donnelly with the appropriate wording for any specific tasks.
- iii. Help Direct to be the lead partner on this activity.

b) Production of an advice note on community cohesion

Kim stressed the need to spread through the LSP what the CCTG thinks will help with community cohesion in the Borough. An Advice Note would capture all the very good work going on in the Borough (eg intergenerational work such as timebanks, transport work, improving the image of West Lancashire).

Both Mandy and Greg Mitten indicated how valuable this would be and it will also help inform other thematic groups' action plans

It was **Agreed** that :

- i. " *Produce an Advice Note on community cohesion*" be included on the CCTG action plan
- ii. A specific task of "*audit of partners' community cohesion work/policies*" be included
- iii. Partner organisations to provide Liz Donnelly with details of their community cohesion initiatives /work.
- iv. WLBC to be the lead partner on this activity
- v. A target date of end of December 2009 has been set for completion of this activity.

c) Provide assistance to the Community Food Growing Strategy

Mandy reported that the Community Food Growing Strategy could facilitate increased community cohesion. It can be in the form of small local projects or bigger ones (such as the Red Apple in Newburgh) and provides opportunities for using the skills of migrant workers and intergenerational activity.

Mandy thought that the CCTG could drive the community cohesion aspect of this project and suggested that the CCTG work with the Community Food Steering Group (part of the Health & Well Being Thematic Group who has included this activity in their action plan) by assisting with publicising the initiative across the Borough. Tracey Jardine asked who this initiative would be publicised to and Mandy indicated that broad publicity would be required. Tracey indicated that council newspapers could be important.

Clare Pollard indicated it was a very worthwhile project and mentioned the planned community orchard in Ashurst. Jeanette Hickey pointed out the link between this suggested activity and other proposed actions such as that around engagement with disabled communities.

Greg was very keen that the CCTG take on this project- it goes across all themes and contributes to NI 1 (community cohesion indicator)- but stressed that the Health & Well Being Group was the appropriate task group. However, the project needs the endorsement and support of the CCTG (to keep it alive through funding). Kim suggested that the CCTG should be specifically championing and promoting the initiative (eg through mayoral visits which bring publicity) and that perhaps the CVS should be lead partner. Greg indicated that the CVS could not do specific work but could publicise it.

It was **Agreed** that :

- i. "*Provide assistance to the Community Food Growing Strategy*" be included on the CCTG action plan
- ii. A specific amended task of "*championing and promoting the initiative* " be included
- iii. CVS to be the lead partner on this activity.

d) Support the development of a LGBT youth group in West Lancashire

John Miller informed the meeting that the Lancashire Young People's Service was currently looking for partners to help fund the development of a LGBT youth Group in West Lancashire. John indicated that although LCC was keen on a partnership approach to this proposal they couldn't provide a lead.

Furthermore, the meeting was informed by Greg Mitten that LCC had recently announced more than £400k of funding for the voluntary sector – monies that West Lancashire should be making use of.

However, John and Greg suggested that they liaise with Grant Murdoch at the YPS in terms of setting up a steering group meeting and to discuss a potential bid for monies. Both John and Greg would report back to the next CCTG meeting (in January) as to the feasibility of this proposed activity. This was **Agreed**.

e) Develop community engagement with disability organisations and groups

Jeanette Hickey stated that there was a lack of reporting of hate crimes against disabled people. This was often a result of the lack of understanding as to what constitutes a hate crime (people often thinking it is anti social behaviour). Much work is already being done on this by Jeanette but any support from the CCTG would be useful.

It was **Agreed** that :

- i. “Develop community engagement with disability organisations and groups” be included on the CCTG action plan
- ii. A specific task of “establish a baseline for disability hate incidents/crimes” be included
- iii. Lancashire Contabulary to be the lead partner (with the CCTG) on this activity.

f) Tension Monitoring- “How Communities Feel”

Jeanette said that this suggested project would feed into the project on community engagement with disability organisations. The overall aim of this activity is to have an intelligence led ability to provide reassurance where necessary.

Jeanette described how hate crimes against specific groups or communities can impact on the overall population. She also mentioned that the county-wide Hate Crime Group has indicated the need to increase hate crime reporting and that she is already carrying out much work on this.

It was **Agreed** that :

- i. “Tension Monitoring- How Communities Feel” be included on the CCTG action plan
- ii. Two specific tasks of “increase reports of hate incidents/ crimes” and “ provide training to partners to recognise incidents/crimes and potential for disorder” be included
- iii. Lancashire Contabulary to be the lead partner (with the CCTG) on this activity
- iv. Add the “PVE” indicator to relevant indicators

g) Work towards embedding these Community Cohesion Action Points in the community via the People and Communities Thematic Group and/or reference to other LSP thematic groups

Greg Mitten suggested this further project to those set out in Liz Donnelly's report-one that brings the other suggested projects together.

It was **Agreed** that :

- i. *“Work towards embedding these Community Cohesion Action Points in the community via the People and Communities Thematic Group and/or reference to other LSP thematic groups”* be included in the CCTG action plan

Jeanette Hickey stressed that the action plan was a “living document” and things do change so that the action plan could be added to.

It was **Agreed** that Liz Donnelly circulate the amended action plan to the relevant members on the CCTG for them to add in tasks, timescales, leads etc. This would then be presented to the next meeting in January 2010.

7. Borough Representation on LAA People and Communities Thematic Partnership

Liz Donnelly referred the meeting to her report seeking a decision on Borough representation on the LAA People and Communities Thematic Partnership. She described the remit of the People and Communities Thematic Partnership which focuses on community cohesion, community engagement, volunteering, the third sector and equality and diversity. Kim Webber currently represents WLBC on it but the meeting was being asked to decide whether the representative should be from the Borough Council or LSP.

Greg Mitten indicated that WL CVS had previously requested representation on the Thematic Partnership and that they had been informed that this would have to be done through the LSP. Greg pointed out that the new West Lancashire LSP People and Communities Thematic Group (of which he was Chair) saw itself as a working group of the CCTG and that it was therefore appropriate that he be the Borough representative on the LAA People and Communities Thematic Partnership.

It was **Agreed** that Greg Mitten (CVS) represent the Borough on the LAA People and Communities Thematic Partnership and that he feeds back any information from the Thematic Partnership to the CCTG.

8. Request for membership of Community Cohesion Thematic Group- Action for Blind People

Liz Donnelly referred the meeting to her report outlining a request from Action for Blind People for membership of the Community Cohesion Thematic Group.

Greg Mitten suggested that it would be more appropriate for Action for Blind People, as an action-based group to join the People and Communities Thematic Group (due to meet end October). This was **Agreed** and Liz Donnelly is to contact Action for Blind People advising them of this.

9. Exchange of Information

Greg Mitten informed the meeting of a West Lancashire Volunteering Forum event on 29th September at the Ecumenical Centre in Skelmersdale. He also mentioned that from December a monthly training programme for the Third Sector was to start.

Greg also said he would feed through the People and Communities Thematic Group minutes to the CCTG.

10. Date of Next Meeting and Proposed Agenda Item

There was a short discussion regarding the future frequency of Community Cohesion Thematic Group meetings. Tracey Jardine indicated that the frequency was somewhat dependent on the progress of the action plan whilst Greg Mitten stressed that the CCTG was a key thematic group in the LSP.

It was **Agreed** that the next meeting of the Community Cohesion Thematic Group be held on 15th January 2010 at 2pm at the Investment Centre

It was also **Agreed** not to invite the Lancashire Forum of Faiths to the next meeting as the West Lancashire Faith Network (currently still under devilment) may be more appropriate for another meeting.