

AYLESBURY VALE COMMUNITY COHESION AND INTEGRATION STRATEGY - PROGRESS REPORT

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To inform Members about Aylesbury Vale District Council's progress in implementing the Community Cohesion and Integration Strategy for Aylesbury Vale. The strategy was last reviewed by scrutiny in July 2011.

2 Recommendations/for decision

- 2.1 That Members note the report and highlight any points they wish to make regarding progress and future direction of the strategy.

3 Background

- 3.1 In 2008, in partnership with the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust, Thames Valley Police and Buckinghamshire County Council, AVDC commissioned The Institute of Community Cohesion (ICoCo) to establish a baseline assessment of cohesion within Aylesbury Vale from which a strategy could be developed. This was in response to government guidance about community cohesion.

- 3.2 The Aylesbury Vale Community Cohesion and Integration Strategy was developed as a partnership strategy, and adopted by the Aylesbury Vale Local Strategic Partnership in June 2010, and by Aylesbury Vale District Council in July 2010. It identified the following priorities:

Priority 1 Building cohesion within and between new and existing communities to address projected population and housing growth

Priority 2 Tackling deprivation and disadvantage in the district

Priority 3 Activities and facilities for young people and addressing any intergenerational tensions

Priority 4 Empowering and modernising the voluntary and community sector

- 3.3 Community cohesion and integration continue to be important issues nationally, and this is illustrated in a Department of Communities and Local Government report; 'Creating the Conditions for Integration' (2012)¹. This report emphasises the role of councils and other organisations in creating the conditions in which people share similar life opportunities, where there exists a common vision and where bridges are built between diverse communities.

4 Implementing the strategy

- 4.1 Many of the council's activities and initiatives contribute to community cohesion, for example many of the council's leisure services and events. The following paragraphs provide examples of various initiatives and projects which are specifically contributing to the implementation of the strategy in

¹ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/2092103.pdf

support of each of the priorities. It focuses on the contribution of the council, and not all of the partners to the strategy.

Priority 1: Building cohesion within and between existing communities to address projected population and housing growth

- 4.2 AVDC, as the lead agency, has initiated an action plan and brought together local partners to support the new community on the new Berryfields estate, Aylesbury. A partnership group is made up of representatives from the Police, GP practice, registered housing providers, community centre manager, faith groups, and the County Council. The group aims to identify and address issues faced by residents living on this new estate. Emphasis is on sharing resources, responsibilities and good practice to achieve outcomes and work in a collaborative way. The group has been instrumental in ensuring that the temporary community centre was opened with minimum delay; has organised a weekly coffee morning and toddler group, and three events to encourage new residents to meet together. A residents' association and community website² have also recently been established.
- 4.3 We have continued to work with parish and town councils to support the development of Neighbourhood Plans. Ten Neighbourhood Areas have been approved and are working towards Neighbourhood Plans.
- 4.4 Parish and town councils in Aylesbury Vale are now able to apply for New Homes Bonus (NHB) funding under the council's new funding scheme. £491,000 is available in 2013/14 for communities which have been affected by growth.
- 4.5 We have been working with the Police this year to re-launch the Independent Advisory Group, to make sure that it is as representative of the community as possible, and that its members can inform the Police and the council about a range of community related issues.

Priority 2: Tackling deprivation and disadvantage in the district particularly amongst the BME population who appear to be the most disadvantaged in terms of housing, education and employment

- 4.6 Women from minority communities continue to be amongst the most isolated and disadvantaged. A number of projects have evolved from our *Women as Community Leaders of Tomorrow* programme held in 2011/12, for example:
- i. Iqra - this group now provides weekly drop-ins, at a variety of locations in Aylesbury, for advice and advocacy for women who may be facing multiple disadvantage.
 - ii. 'Grey side of the sky' is a documentary by a community filmmaker, which explores the lives of Asian women in the context of migration to the UK. The documentary has been shown extensively throughout Buckinghamshire.
 - iii. Opportunities for diverse groups of women to meet through our annual International Women's Day activities.
 - iv. A women only 'Movers and Shakers' exercise group has been established in Aylesbury specifically to meet an identified gap in provision for Asian women.
- 4.7 Other projects that have been delivered include:
- i. The 'citizen's university' which delivered bite sized training modules intended to increase personal development and skills with wider

² <http://berryfieldsaylesbury.wix.com/ourcommunity>

- community benefits, for example: 'Healthy Households', 'Strong Communities', 'Creative Communities' and 'Safer Communities'.
- ii. Loan Shark and benefit reform training for the voluntary and community sector. The purpose of this training was to raise awareness and also to highlight the advice and support that is available to individuals and groups.
 - iii. Engagement with people with learning disabilities and people with visual impairments to understand what they find difficult in accessing services, feedback has been used to inform AVDC services.
 - iv. The Safe Places scheme, which provides a safe place for vulnerable people to go and receive help, if they feel uncomfortable or upset in some way, whilst out in the community.
 - v. The Winter Warmth project has provided shelter and a hot meal to homeless households on a nightly basis during the coldest months of the winter, and have received grant funding from the Homelessness Grant.

Priority 3: Activities and facilities for young people and addressing any intergenerational tensions

- 4.8 Working in partnership with the voluntary and community sector a range of projects have been developed for young people:
 - i. A three day photography and fashion shoot workshop in the Quarrendon area to provide young people with some work related skills to put on their curriculum vitae.
 - ii. A robbery awareness film 'Snatched' was made with young people and shown throughout schools in the Vale.
 - iii. Young people from the Mosque premiered a drug awareness film, made in partnership with Islah and Thames Valley Police.
 - iv. Mock interviews were offered to young people from the Quarrendon area following some work with Connexions, allowing young people not in employment, education or training, the opportunity to experience a formal interview process.
- 4.9 Responding to our changing demographics, we have held 4 information fairs throughout the year addressing the needs of older people in our community and an older people's conference is planned for early next year. We also contributed to establishing a Men in Sheds project in Aylesbury, aimed at reducing social isolation, improving health and wellbeing and also promoting collaborative learning.
- 4.10 We continue to fund Aylesbury Youth Action, who deliver a variety of intergenerational activities in sheltered schemes throughout the year.

Priority 4: Empowering and modernising the voluntary and community

- 4.11 As part of our work in this area, we continue to run advice surgeries and funding fairs throughout the year for voluntary sector organisations.
- 4.12 We continue to provide funding to support a range of voluntary sector providers in the district. During 2012/13 the Community Chest provided funding to 83 projects thereby supporting 2000 volunteering opportunities.
- 4.13 An Ageing Well programme is being developed in Buckingham. The aim is to recognise all the good things about growing older in the town, and consider how to make things even better. The programme began with 2 workshops in the community centre which attracted over 70 local people and colleagues from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The resulting ideas are being worked into an action plan.

- 4.14 In addition to the work in Buckingham we continue to work to support older residents in the Haddenham and Long Crendon local area forum and have also extended into the Winslow LAF area.
- 4.15 We have worked closely with interfaith groups to celebrate National Interfaith week in November. The event last year brought different communities together to share music, food and dance.

5. Measuring

- 5.1 In their original report, ICoCo identified that Aylesbury Vale was generally a cohesive community, based on the levels of deprivation, our history of race and wider community relations and perception measures. In this context there has been little change over the past few years. We remain amongst the most prosperous districts in England and demonstrated community resilience when faced with an English Defence League protest in 2011.
- 5.2 As part of a corporate consultation carried out in 2011/12, 74% of respondents agreed with the statement 'local people pull together'; and 92% of people felt happy living in the Vale. This feeling of 'togetherness' is enhanced by the numerous community events which continue to take place across the district, not least the Olympic celebrations in 2012.
- 5.3 ICoCo also identified some challenges facing our community as our demographic profile changes. Whilst it is not currently possible to replicate all of the data used by ICoCo, the following statistics, from the 2011 Census, show how our community has changed over the past few years, which may impact on the levels of cohesion. We will continue to monitor the impact of these changes.
- i. There has been a 5% increase in population since 2001, which now stands at 174,137.
 - ii. 11% of our residents were born outside the UK, and 44% of those arrived in the last 10 years.
 - iii. 90% of residents are from a white ethnic background, a 4% decrease since 2001. 10% of all households are from non-white ethnic backgrounds, this is an increase of 83% since 2001.
 - iv. In 2001, the number of people who are of no faith was 16%, in 2011 this had risen to 26%.
 - v. There has been a reduction in the number of people who are Christian, from 74% to 62%. There has also been an increase in people who are Muslim, rising from 3 to 4%. All the other faiths, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and 'other', recorded under 1% for each faith group.
 - vi. 20% of the housing register applicants are from Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities (BAME). Indicating an over-reliance on this form of tenure for these communities.
 - vii. Pupils from Asian and Black households are achieving below the national average at GCSE level, with only 50% of young people from Asian background and 52% of young Black people gaining five A-C grades, including English and maths.
 - viii. We have an ageing population - there has been an increase of 4% in the number of households containing people of pensionable age, since 2001. This is currently 19%. The 60 – 64 year age groups showed the biggest increase since the last census in 2001, with a 47% increase.
 - ix. Indices of deprivation 2010 (and the ONS population estimate of the same year) show that 14% of the population live in the 4 most disadvantaged wards in the district. Of those 24% are from non-white ethnic backgrounds.

6. Next steps

- 6.1 Our aim in 2010 was to promote cohesive communities, strengthening intergenerational, interfaith and cultural understanding against the key challenges identified by ICoCo.
- 6.2 Our current strategy has been in place for the past three years and we are proposing to review this in 2014, as part of the Aylesbury Vale Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

7. Resource implication

- 7.1 There are no new resource implications arising directly from the Community Cohesion and Integration Strategy. The cost of activities is currently met through officer time and existing budgets.

8. Response to Key Aims and Objectives

- 8.1 The cohesion and Integration strategy aims to improve the living experience in the Vale by increasing inclusivity, building the capacity of the voluntary and community sector, and increasing community resilience by encouraging active participation.

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Background Documents	Community Cohesion and Integration Strategy

**Community Cohesion and Integration Strategy
for Aylesbury Vale**

June 2010

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1. Introduction

The overall aim of this strategy is to foster a community in which people feel they belong to the area; where the diversity of our community is valued, difference is appreciated and understood, and where people share a sense of fairness in the delivery of local services.

It is only by listening to our communities and also sharing our collective resources, skills and experience, that these aspirations can be achieved.

This is Aylesbury Vale's first cohesion strategy, therefore a starting place, intended to encourage discussion and debate about how we can all work together to achieve our vision for the whole of the Vale. This strategy is for the whole of the district and the priorities identified within it result from research. This shows that there are many factors which influence feelings of cohesion in our different communities and when considering priorities, focus should not be given to one at the expense of another.

This Strategy has been informed by a review of cohesion and integration within Aylesbury Vale, conducted by the Institute of Community Cohesion (ICoCo)³. The review was commissioned by the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust, Thames Valley Police, Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council.

The report identified good practice in relation to cohesion and provided a baseline from which future work could be progressed, priorities identified, and a greater understanding of our communities gained.

The strategy begins with a brief overview of the national and local context in relation to cohesion. The key challenges and priorities facing the Vale are then summarised, and proposed actions and intended outcomes to address these identified.

Much good work is already being done through the work of agencies such as Connexions, Housing Associations, Bucks County Council, Thames Valley Police, Aylesbury Vale District Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector, to name but a few. Agreeing a delivery plan with these and other organisations, will draw this work together, and help us to identify other opportunities to deliver Aylesbury Vale's Cohesion Strategy.

³ A Review of Integration and Community Cohesion in Aylesbury Vale; Institute of Community Cohesion (2009)

2. Our vision for Community Cohesion

*'That the communities of Aylesbury Vale come together to share their interests, life experiences, cultures and beliefs, to develop a common sense of belonging and respect for one another, and to develop strong and positive relationships which fully acknowledge the value of diversity.'*⁴

Community Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new and existing residents to develop a sense of belonging to Aylesbury Vale.

Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on three foundations:

- 1 People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities.
- 2 People knowing their rights and responsibilities.
- 3 People trusting one another and institutions to act fairly.

And three ways of living together:

- 1 A shared vision and sense of belonging.
- 2 A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside valuing diversity.
- 3 Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

Community cohesion is not about 'making' people get on well together, but about removing barriers which may prohibit inclusion and interaction. These barriers include poor life, health, economic, educational, housing and recreational opportunities⁵. Such issues are complex, inter-related and long term in nature and can only be addressed by the local public, private and voluntary sector partners working together with the local community.

⁴ The vision reflects the definition set out by Government in Strong and Prosperous Communities: The Local Government White Paper (2006) published by the Department for Communities and Local Government

⁵ This reflects the principles of equalities legislation in terms of race, disability, age, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, religion or belief and their relationship with life chances and socio-economic status. Race Relations Act (1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act) 2000, Disability Discrimination Act (1995 & 2005), Equality Act (2006), Equality Act 2010.

3. National Context

Community cohesion is a theme running throughout central government policy following disturbances in some northern UK towns in 2001 and the subsequent research into possible causes. The findings indicated that communities were living 'parallel lives' divided by geography, schools, income, religion, ethnicity, culture, housing and employment.⁶

A report prepared in 2005 for the Department of Communities and Local Government provided some insights on predicting and measuring community cohesion.⁷ The report found that:

- Once other factors are accounted for ethnic diversity is, in most cases, positively associated with community cohesion. However, this relationship will depend on an area having a broad mix of residents from different ethnic groups.
- An increasing percentage of in-migration of people born outside the UK could have a negative influence on cohesion.
- Having friends from ethnic groups other than one's own was a strong predictor of cohesion.
- Disadvantage and deprivation consistently undermined cohesion, though not all deprived areas are low on cohesion.
- Increasing levels of crime and fear of crime are both strong negative predictors of cohesion.
- Feeling able to influence local decisions is a positive indicator of cohesion. However, individuals feeling that they are unfairly treated because of their race has a strong negative impact on cohesion.
- Levels of volunteering is a positive predictor on cohesion.

The Government White Paper, **Strong and Prosperous Communities (2006)** emphasised the 'place shaping' role of local government in promoting local democracy and cohesion. This is based upon the following guiding principles:

- Strong leadership and engagement
- Developing shared values
- Preventing the problems of tomorrow through conflict resolution
- Good information to base service delivery on
- Visible work on tackling inequalities
- Involving young people
- Interfaith work
- Partnership and the third sector

The **Education and Inspections Act (2006)** introduced a new duty for schools to promote community cohesion. This came in to force in September 2007. The Act also requires Ofsted to inspect and report on the contribution and progress that schools are making.

⁶ State of English Cities- a research study. Independent report to the Department of Communities and Local Government (2006)

⁷ Predictors of Community Cohesion: Multi-Level Modelling of the 2005 Citizenship Survey DCLG (2008)

In 2009, these themes were brought together when the government introduced targets for local authorities aimed at building cohesive, active and empowered communities.⁸

At a local level this is monitored by three new **national indicators**:

National Indicator 1 – Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.

National Indicator 2 – Percentage of people who believe that they belong to their neighbourhood.

National Indicator 4 – The percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality

4. Local Context

The **Sustainable Community Strategy for Aylesbury Vale District: (2009-26)**, is an over-arching, long term plan for Aylesbury Vale produced by Aylesbury Vale Local Strategic Partnership⁹. It provides a framework allowing organisations to take collective responsibility for delivering the vision for our area which is:

In 2026 Aylesbury Vale will be a place in which:

- Growth is planned to ensure the best outcomes for existing and future residents and businesses, whilst protecting and enhancing the individuality and natural environment of our rural areas.
- Infrastructure and services are delivered at the right time, in the right place and in the right way
- New developments are exemplars of excellent design, bringing benefits to existing communities and help us adapt to climate change
- The Vale is an attractive and desirable location for residents and visitors, with Aylesbury town centre providing high quality retail, leisure and employment for the district.
- Everyone has access to excellent education, training and life-long learning opportunities.
- Everyone works together to minimise their impact on the environment.
- The Vale is well connected by road, rail and electronically within the area and beyond.

⁸ Public Service Agreement 21 (2009) visit:
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/about_the_cabinet_office/publicserviceagreements.aspx

⁹ The Local Strategic Partnership includes representatives from the following agencies; Aylesbury Vale Advantage, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Bucks County Council, Bucks Fire & Rescue, NHS Buckinghamshire, Thames Valley Police, the Local Housing sector, the local voluntary and community sector, the local skills/learning sector, the local rural/environmental sector, the local business sector, Town Councils, Parish Councils

- There is a well managed network of green infrastructure conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the area, supporting a range recreational activities and reducing risk of flooding.
 - A thriving voluntary and community sector is maintained and residents of new and established communities get on well and have a strong sense of belonging.
 - Residents feel safe and live healthier, happier and longer lives, with smaller gaps between the most affluent and less well off communities.
 - There is a common vision for the Vale across the whole population.
- In order to deliver the vision for the Vale, five key themes have been identified within the Sustainable Community Strategy:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thriving Economy</i> • <i>Sustainable Environment</i> • <i>Safe Communities</i> • <i>Health and Wellbeing</i> • <i>Cohesive and Strong Communities</i> |
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The following objectives have been identified as priorities within the Cohesive and Strong Communities theme:

Sustain and grow a thriving community sector

- Provide support for community participation and engagement.

Increase the confidence of communities

- Support communities to find local solutions to local problems.
- Support elected representatives in their community leadership role.

Help all communities get on well together

- Improve community cohesion, particularly between new and existing communities
- Provide facilities in new and existing communities, especially for young people.

Reduce levels of disadvantage

- Reduce social isolation.

The Aylesbury Vale Sustainable Community Strategy is part of the family of Sustainable Community Strategies in Buckinghamshire. One way in which these strategies are delivered is via the Local Area Agreement for Buckinghamshire. This is a contract between central government and local partners to achieve agreed targets to improve the quality of life for our residents, measured by national and local indicators. The current Agreement includes National Indicator 1, mentioned in section 2 above.

The Community Cohesion Strategy will contribute to achieving the objectives identified in the Cohesive and Strong Communities theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) as well as supporting the other themes in the SCS which impact on cohesion.

5. Key Challenges

It is within the context of the Sustainable Communities Strategy that the Institute of Community Cohesion provided an independent assessment of the steps we need to take collectively to build a more cohesive Aylesbury Vale. The review identified key challenges as well as priorities for action.

Aylesbury Vale shares few of the characteristics of northern UK towns where the issue of community cohesion first emerged. The district is amongst the most prosperous in England and has a relatively good history of race and wider community relations. The district scores well on public perception measures of cohesion from which comparative data is available. Broadly, residents feel that people of different backgrounds get on well together, and that they belong to and are satisfied with their area as a place to live. Numerous community events such as Charter Day, the Roald Dahl Festival, and Hobble on the Cobbles in Aylesbury, Buckingham Festival Fortnight, and the many village fetes enhance this feeling of 'togetherness'. Residents also consider that their local council is trustworthy, treats all people fairly, and that they can influence decisions in their local area.¹⁰

These scores are consistent with similar districts where there are relatively low levels of deprivation, small ethnic minority communities, low levels of foreign migration, refugees and asylum seekers, and low levels of crime.

Nevertheless, as with most areas of the UK, local conditions in Aylesbury Vale are changing, for example, the ethnic composition of the area and age characteristics. New housing growth will also provide challenges and opportunities for new and existing communities.

Our challenge is to promote cohesive communities, strengthening intergenerational, interfaith and cultural understanding, and to promote equality of opportunity for all residents, ensuring that communities have the capacity to help themselves.

Based on their national and local research, the Institute of Community Cohesion identified the following key challenges facing our communities:

- The population of Aylesbury Vale is projected to grow by 28.5% by 2026 which will impact on cohesion.
- Investment in local communities should not be focused solely on new incoming populations.
- Building cohesion within and between new communities, and also our existing communities.
- The age profile of the district is changing, with less young people in the under 19 age groups and an increase in those aged above 65 (from the current figure of 13% to 19% by 2026).

¹⁰ Taken from the national Place Survey (2009) which collects information about people's perceptions of the place they live.

- Aylesbury Vale's black and minority ethnic (BME) population has also increased from 6% recorded in 2001 census to 8% in 2006.
- 16.1% of the district's primary school pupils were from BME communities which may indicate that these communities will continue to expand.
- 55% of families from these communities live within 6 of the district's 36 wards.
- The concentration of our BME populations in a small number of wards is reflected in 75% of children attending less integrated schools.
- Our BME population faces significant disadvantage in education, housing, employment and income levels.
- International migration has seen people, primarily from Poland and Pakistan, choosing to settle mainly within Aylesbury town.
- Knowledge about our BME groups requires development, particularly the diversity within our growing Muslim population.
- Challenges to cohesion were identified as being centred in and around the town of Aylesbury due to current and future levels of in migration to the area expected through housing growth.
- Although Aylesbury Vale has a strong voluntary and community sector, this would appear to be stronger in rural areas.
- 10% of people within Aylesbury Vale fear attack because of their ethnicity, colour or religion.
- Relationships between young people from different ethnic groups and/or geographical locations was an emerging theme indicating the potential for conflict.
- There exists a potential for intergenerational tension.
- Concern was raised over a lack of facilities for our young people.

To tackle the identified challenges, the report suggested the following priorities for the Cohesion Strategy:

Key Priorities

- 1 Building cohesion within and between new and existing communities to address projected population and housing growth.***
- 2 Tackling deprivation and disadvantage in the district..***
- 3 Activities and facilities for young people and addressing any intergenerational tensions***
- 4 Empowering and modernising the voluntary and community sector***

To address these priorities organisations need to continue to work closely together, linking key policies and strategies, and adopting a multi-agency, targeted approach whilst also working collaboratively with communities. Working this way we have the potential to address the structural causes of disadvantage and ensure equality of opportunity and outcome.

6. Priorities

Priority 1: Building cohesion within and between new and existing communities to address projected population and housing growth

Community cohesion is relevant to all communities within the Vale. However, Aylesbury town is experiencing the largest amount of housing and population growth, accompanied by international migration. Our area's most deprived communities are concentrated within the town and it also has a more ethnically diverse population.

Skill levels, general crime figures and levels of deprivation indicate that those living in rural communities generally have a better quality of life. This is not to suggest that there are no identified challenges facing these communities.

Out-migration, dormitory settlements, transport links, perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour; in addition to a reduction in local services, all impact on levels of cohesion. Likewise, the closure of post offices, shops and pubs, which once provided a community focus. These changes within rural communities impact upon younger and older people, potentially leading to an increase in isolation. It is recognised that small housing developments can have an impact on rural communities.

ICoCo held a series of focus groups which have informed this strategy. Participants expressed their concerns regarding the impact of the housing growth and the accompanying changes it would bring within communities. There was also a fear of being 'left behind' should resources be targeted solely at new communities.

This strategy will need to focus on the priorities identified as unique to our urban centre whilst recognising the need to respond to the concerns of our rural communities.

Key challenges:

- *Ensure that investment is not solely focused on new incoming populations.*
- *Build cohesion between and within new and exiting communities, in particular in Aylesbury town, as the centre of housing growth.*
- *Support rural communities effected by growth or rural isolation.*
- *Identify and support new communities developing through international migration*
- *Develop greater awareness and knowledge of our minority populations including; race, age, sexuality, disability, religion*

Proposed actions to address key challenges:

- 1 Examine the potential to 're-brand / re-scope' activities which seek to bring communities together, for example 'Play in the Park' and 'Proms in the Park', to give a sense of belonging to Aylesbury Vale.
- 2 Determine the size, location and potential difficulties which may be experienced by the Vale's new and emerging international migrant communities.
- 3 Support increased community empowerment through Town and Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Action Groups, Residents Associations and Local Area Forums, to encourage communities to find local solutions to local problems, and look for ways to bring different communities together.

- 4 Encourage engagement in local governance processes.
- 5 Make all parts of the Vale attractive and clean. Monitor graffiti - particularly any increase in racist graffiti which indicates a negative effect on cohesion – ensure removal is a priority.
- 6 Develop a joint approach with our registered social landlords and developers to encourage a sense of belonging for new residents in major development areas. Also, to develop an understanding of how relationships between new and existing communities can be fostered and a coherent approach to cohesion can be developed.
- 7 Review consultation and engagement structures to reflect the changing demographics within our communities.
- 8 Undertake regular consultation through the Place Survey and local surveys to monitor what local people think about new developments, whether they feel part of their community, any discernable changes in people's perceptions of living in Aylesbury Vale to inform service planning and delivery.
- 9 Gather feedback from town and parish councils and Registered Social Landlords about the impact of new developments to inform planning and service delivery to ensure resources are not focused on new communities at the expense of existing communities.
- 10 Examine how cohesion outcomes are being achieved through for example, the Local Development Framework, mixed tenure housing and Bucks Home Choice.

Intended outcome: To understand our changing communities and promote a common sense of belonging and vision for our local communities and district as a whole

Priority 2: Tackling deprivation and disadvantage in the district¹¹

Overall, the socio-economic profile of the Vale indicates a relatively affluent population which is the 45th least deprived out of 354 local authority areas in England. Our most deprived areas are predominately situated within the town of Aylesbury. People living in these areas are more likely to be disadvantaged in education, employment, income and housing.

Of the district's primary school pupils 16.1% were from BME communities, which may indicate that these communities will continue to expand. 55% of families from these communities live in 6 of the district's 36 wards.

Although Aylesbury Vale does not exhibit the same geographical segregation as northern UK towns, our BME population is concentrated in a few of our most deprived wards. Geographical segregation between different ethnic groups may act as an indicator of low levels of cohesion.

Key challenges:

- *Our BME communities are the most likely to be disadvantaged in terms of education, the labour market, unemployment and also live in lower income households.*

¹¹ This priority also reflects the principles of the Equality Act (2010) and the Child Poverty Act (2010) which introduce a public sector duty to consider reducing socio-economic disadvantage.

- *10% of people within Aylesbury Vale fear attack because of their ethnicity, colour or religion.*
- *There are pockets of relative deprivation within our area. 14.6% of Aylesbury's white population live within these areas, and 36.4% of our BME communities.*
- *Gain a clearer understanding of the factors which lead to economic disadvantage in rural locations*

Proposed actions to address key challenges:

- 1 Understand who is accessing services and how representative they are of our community as a whole. Determine which groups, if any, are underrepresented in terms of accessing services. Identify why groups are unrepresented and develop appropriate actions to increase participation and inclusion.
- 2 Ensure that cohesion is mainstreamed into our multi-agency approach to tackle deprivation and disadvantage within our district, using available data and community feedback to prioritise activities.
- 3 Further develop our understanding of Aylesbury Vale's minority communities, to inform engagement, service planning and delivery.
- 4 Develop 3rd party reporting centres where people who have experienced hate crime may go for assistance. This includes crime related to a persons disability, sexuality, ethnicity and faith.
- 5 Maintain properties to Government's decent homes standard.
- 6 Work together to ensure that any BME residential concentrations have links to and with the wider community.
- 7 Explore the potential for a 'communities of interest' approach to engagement which would also act as an aid to cohesion. This would allow people from different and diverse backgrounds to work together towards a common interest or goal, or develop solutions to local problems¹².
- 8 Examine the support networks available to disadvantaged groups, for example homeless households, and explore how these may be improved.
- 9 Gain a clearer understanding of the factors which contribute to economic disadvantage in rural communities.

Intended outcome: To tackle deprivation and disadvantage in the district by removing barriers which may prohibit inclusion and interaction.

¹² ICoCo use the example of an environmental project: Support Aylesbury Vale's Environment to illustrate how this approach can be used to good effect.

Priority 3: Activities and facilities for young people also addressing any intergenerational tensions

School census statistics for primary schools in the Vale show that in 2008, 16% of pupils belonged to BME groups. However, 75% of the Vale's children attend schools which are less ethnically diverse, limiting opportunities for social contact and interactions between different ethnic groups. The projected age profile for the Vale indicates an ageing population with a decline in the numbers of young people.

Focus groups which informed the ICoCo review identified relationships between young people as one of the most important issues affecting cohesion. Participants highlighted incidents of name calling, and tensions and conflicts between different groups which had sometimes spilled over into schools. Older people expressed the wish to engage with young people and to teach them about their culture and history.

Key Challenges:

- *Building positive relationships between young people from different ethnicities and geographical locations within the Vale to avoid the potential for conflict.*
- *Creating opportunities for older people and young people to establish relationships with each other to challenge stereotypes and myths.*

Proposed actions to address key challenges:

1. Create further opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to interact.
2. Prioritise activities which offer the opportunity for different generations to engage with each other.
3. Monitor and review the number of racist incidents recorded in schools and ensure that schools are supported to address all forms of bullying, racism, homophobia and religious harassment.
4. Identify potential areas of tension or conflict and develop mechanisms for resolving conflict.
5. Ensure youth forums actively encourage and engage with young people from diverse backgrounds.
6. Review procedures for gathering and sharing information on tension monitoring between communities to ensure that this information can be used to prevent incidents.

Intended outcome: To encourage communities to come together to share and celebrate their interests, their experiences, their culture and their beliefs. To foster strong and positive relationships at work, at school and in our neighbourhoods.

Priority 4: Empowering and modernising the voluntary and community sector

Aylesbury Vale has a vibrant voluntary and community sector, though this has traditionally been stronger in the rural areas.

Voluntary, community and faith sectors are the building blocks for cohesion through promoting meaningful interaction at a local level. This sector has the potential to

develop cohesion by bringing together different generations, different ethnic groups or those working within the equality and diversity agenda , as well as rural and urban communities. This would promote an environment whereby understanding and co-operation between diverse groups, who share similar interests or objectives, could be fostered.

Interfaith groups appear to be active in Aylesbury Vale, encouraging understanding and dialogue between people from different ethnic and social groups, and faiths.

Key challenges:

- *Avoiding the risk of ‘parallel structures’ arising when groups establish organisations for their particular community which mirror existing ‘mainstream’ voluntary or community groups and leads to competition for funding.*
- *Supporting the voluntary and community sector in promoting integration and cohesion.*
- *Ensuring engagement and representation from the faith sectors within Aylesbury Vale.*
- *Monitor the success of the county wide Compact¹³ in achieving its intended outcomes and negotiate any required changes.*

Proposed actions to address key challenges:

1. Further develop opportunities for joint working between voluntary and community sector organisations, to avoid competition over resources and duplication of work.
2. Support and encourage the interfaith forums active within Aylesbury Vale, and explore the potential for faith representation on the Aylesbury Vale Local Strategic Partnership.
3. Raise awareness of community cohesion opportunities within the voluntary and community sector through existing forums and training opportunities.
4. Monitor engagement of voluntary / community sector on strategic forums, giving that sector a voice in important forums and improve what is communicated to and from communities.
5. Develop opportunities for the voluntary, community and inter-faith sectors to contribute towards building community cohesion.
6. Promote volunteering and local funding opportunities for community based projects.
7. Ensure grants criteria reflect community cohesion objectives.

Intended outcome: To sustain and grow a thriving community sector, encouraging community participation and engagement.

¹³ The countywide ‘Compact’ is a way of working together across public bodies and voluntary groups. It aims to boost service quality, relationships, partnership effectiveness and involvement in achieving priorities

7. Delivering the vision

To address the priorities identified in this strategy all partners need to continue to work closely together and with local communities. Promoting cohesion must become a core responsibility when planning and delivering services. This does not mean that service areas will need to develop new activities but rather adjust existing practices to aid cohesion.

To be successful the following actions are proposed:

1. *The Community Cohesion Strategy will be adopted by the Aylesbury Vale Local Strategic Partnership.*
2. *A delivery group will be established to develop and monitor a delivery plan.*
3. *A detailed programme development/ delivery plan agreed and implemented.*
4. *Partners to be encouraged to include the local shared vision for community cohesion in their corporate documents and plans.*
5. *Ensure that partner service areas have a positive impact on cohesion.*
6. *Community cohesion progress measurement and management agreed*
7. *Community cohesion will be regularly monitored using a range of indicators. The information gathered will be used to update and report upon the success of the delivery plan.*

8. Measuring Community Cohesion

There are three sets of indicators that will help set a benchmark for current levels of community cohesion and enable us to measure change and improvement.

Community feedback - survey data which identifies people's perceptions of community harmony, safety and decision making.

Deprivation measures – national statistics which indicate the extent to which people experience economic and social inequality.

Crime and other incident tracking – which includes hate crime, graffiti, dumping of waste, abandoned cars, noisy neighbours, indicate the level of anti-social or intolerant behaviour.

To improve the usefulness of data collection and monitoring the following actions are proposed:

- Review the way data is collated and whether there is a need to extend or adjust data collection and analysis.
- Improve accessibility of statistical information amongst partners to inform service planning and delivery.
- Understand the different routes through which anti-social or intolerant behaviour is reported, examine any indications of under-reporting.