Community Cohesion: SEVEN STEPS

A Practitioner's Toolkit

Contents

Introduction

Community cohesion describes the ability of communities to function and grow in harmony together rather than in conflict. It has strong links to concepts of equality and diversity given that community cohesion can only grow when society as a whole recognises that individuals have the right to equality (of treatment, access to services etc) and respects and appreciates the diverse nature of our communities. The Local Government Association defined a cohesive community as one where:

• there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
• the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
• those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
• strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and in neighbourhoods.

The Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme was established to encourage local authorities and other stakeholders to develop new methods of integrating community cohesion into mainstream service delivery. The toolkit draws on the experiences of the 14 Pathfinders and 13 Shadow Pathfinders who took part in the programme (see Appendix for contact details). It provides details on the approach taken by the Pathfinders and Shadow Pathfinders to improve community cohesion in their areas. It contains case studies, practical tips and hints on what works and what doesn't work.

You may have already seen the guidance for local authorities entitled "Community Cohesion – An Action Guide", published by the Local Government Association (LGA) and its partners. This drew on much of the Pathfinders' 18 month programme although it was published prior to the completion of this programme. This toolkit differs from the LGA publication in that although it will be useful for officers and members of local

authorities, it has been specifically designed with practitioners from all agencies in mind - including all those who are charged with developing and improving community cohesion, whether they are based in local authorities, police forces, voluntary or community groups.

The toolkit identifies seven steps to developing community cohesion, these are:
• Leadership and commitment
• Developing a vision and values for community cohesion
• Programme planning and management
• Engaging communities
• Challenging and changing perceptions
• Community cohesion and specialist areas
• Ensuring sustainability of programmes

The toolkit also aims to provide practitioners with more in depth case studies and practical examples of working towards community cohesion. Practitioners may like to use this guidance alongside the Home Office interactive CD ROM Pathfinder Toolkit, which features the seven steps alongside case studies from the Pathfinder projects, some of which are described in this guidance.

Community cohesion lies at the centre of what makes a strong, vibrant and safe community. It is an important issue for all of us, whether we live in the heart of a big city or in a leafy village. Attempts to create sustainable communities by regenerating areas and renewing housing markets need to consider the impact on community cohesion in these areas. Community cohesion is about inclusion, making the effort to find out about others, treating each other with respect and building good relations between different parts of the community. It is not just about race, but is equally about, for example, the relationships between young and old and between residents of different estates or residents within a single estate.

It is not just the Pathfinders and Shadow Pathfinders who have been working on building cohesion. Many local communities have also been working to improve these relationships in their own areas as they too recognise that by not working to build relationships and to develop a sense of community, they would be storing up problems for the future.

The cohesion agenda is equally relevant to a rural district as it is to a city council and so is this toolkit. Many of the case studies are as applicable to the countryside as they are to the inner city. We therefore hope that it will be used across the country in a variety of locations, to good effect.

More information and guidance on community cohesion is available on the Home Office website at www.communitycohesion.gov.uk.

Step 1: Leadership and Commitment

Leadership and commitment are essential to the development of community cohesion. Someone needs to take responsibility for managing and driving through the changes required to build a more cohesive community. However, there is no single leadership model to achieve this as different models ultimately suit different areas. Some areas tend to encourage high profile leadership with its attendant publicity, whilst others find a lower key approach suits them better.

What is clear however, is that someone needs to exercise leadership and demonstrate commitment (whether the local authority, the police, faith groups or the voluntary sector) and that often once this happens, other partners will come on board.

The Role of the Local Strategic Partnership
The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is the obvious place to start, with its responsibility for taking a strategic approach to community planning and links with all local partners. So getting the LSP on board is the first step to developing a community cohesion programme. Getting the involvement of partners on the LSP including the police and voluntary bodies is also crucial.

You may need to spend some time explaining what community cohesion is to the LSP. Some Pathfinders held awareness raising sessions for members of the LSP to help them engage with the concept of community cohesion. An example of a workshop used with Members is included at the end of this section - this could also be used with your LSP.

Where there is a two tier system of LSPs you may need to spend time working with both to encourage them to address community cohesion issues jointly. Widening the traditional membership of the LSP is also important. Many Pathfinders made efforts to include other groups such as faith communities and voluntary and community groups in order to help make the LSP more representative of the community it serves.

For example, the Slough Shadow Pathfinder has set up a faith partnership. One of its roles will be to work with the LSP to advise on community cohesion issues. Many Pathfinders and Shadow Pathfinders have set up sub-groups within the LSP to lead on community cohesion. Others have ensured that community cohesion is made a standing item on the LSP agenda.

An example of the aims and objectives and the terms of reference for the sub group dealing with community cohesion (from the Stoke-on-Trent Pathfinder) is included at the end of this section. Further learning points from Pathfinders are outlined in the quotes below:

"If starting now we would have asked the LSP to initiate the process." Thurrock Shadow Pathfinder

"The LSP would have been more effective if it had set up sub-groups to deal with specific issues" Charnwood Pathfinder

The Role of Elected Members

Members have a very important role to play in championing community cohesion and demonstrating that this is part of how the council goes about its day to day business and not just another initiative. Allocating a Cabinet Member responsibility for championing community cohesion is a good idea. However, members may need support in order to fulfil their role. Some Pathfinders ran member training and awareness sessions to help them.

Case Studies

In Bury, the approach was to get ownership and commitment from the top. The Pathfinder held awareness raising sessions for all Elected Members at strategic level and local ward level. This was essential to raise Member knowledge and understanding of community cohesion as part of their leadership role. *Bury Pathfinder*

In Oldham, Councillors have a Community Cohesion Hour at the beginning of each Council meeting. This is an opportunity for councillors to participate in debate about how to improve community cohesion, listen to the views of local people and learn from experience elsewhere. Sessions have included:
• a group of 6th formers who had researched the views of young people;
• a debate on the council's vision and values; and
• presentations from invited guests with experience from elsewhere. *Oldham Pathfinder*

However, in some cases it can be difficult to get full engagement of Members - for example, where there have been no disturbances and members do not perceive there to be a problem. In other cases, where local politics are difficult, it may be better to spend time with different local parties to build coalitions around the cohesion agenda.

"Community cohesion is not likely to be high on the priority list of politicians unless there are high profile problems in the area. The law and order angle is a good route to engage the interest of politicians but the agenda then needs to be rapidly broadened. " *Pathfinder*

"Partners are a key to success. Where politics do not allow for visibility, let projects demonstrate cohesion issues. Once key people and leaders are engaged, ensure that cohesion remains a mainstream issue." *Pathfinder*

Standing Up To Extremists

Although you may not always want to take an up-front approach to community cohesion, it will sometimes be necessary to take a stand on particular issues. For example, in situations where inflammatory racist information is being distributed within your area, it is particularly important for council members to take an active role in cases such as these, as they did in the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Case Study

Representatives from a political party with extremist views were distributing material, containing inaccuracies in Hillingdon. A cross-party group of council members worked together to leaflet commuters at the local tube station, pointing out the inaccuracies and countering the extremist policies.

A racist letter was published in the local paper and provoked a deluge of letters which were printed week after week. The three Party Leaders each have a monthly column in the paper and they agreed to do a combined article. This covered two whole pages and sought to address the myths about asylum seekers and to provide information about their positive contribution to the local community including personal case studies. The article was then reproduced in the Council's magazine "Hillingdon People" and so was distributed to over 100,000 houses in the borough. *West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder*

Involvement of a High Profile Leader

The involvement of a high profile leader, whether the elected Mayor, Chief Executive, Chief of Police or Faith leader, can also be an advantage in demonstrating commitment and encouraging others to come on board.

Case Study

The elected Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent championed a myth busting strategy to reveal the realities that asylum seekers confront during the asylum process. The strategy also highlighted what the Council and its partners were doing to help this community integrate and contribute to making Stoke a better place for all. The approach also provided the local community with accurate information about the welfare system that asylum seekers have. *Stoke-on-Trent Pathfinder*

However, although it is important to engage members, it is not essential to have a high profile leader. Some Pathfinders chose to take a more low key approach, feeling that to be so up front was not appropriate for their area. This was particularly so where tensions between groups were near the surface and it was felt that a high profile exercise might inflame these.

The most important thing is that your leaders are interested, committed and can enthuse others. It will be invaluable that you:

• choose people who already demonstrate a practical interest as your main leaders and champions;
• tie the plan and programme into the mainstream work of those key individuals where possible;
• give leaders a specific role;
• monitor progress; and
• network using events etc. to get cohesion onto other agencies' agendas

Some Pathfinders felt that they needed to embed the concept of community cohesion in people's minds first as the following quotes demonstrate:

"The programme has been built 'bottom up'. A leader will be found once a core of activities is locally identified as community cohesion" *Peterborough Pathfinder*

"Too much emphasis can be put on officially sanctioned 'leaders' – often the most effective people are outside this circle" *Leicester Pathfinder*

Top Tips for Success – dos and Don'ts

✔ Do involve the Local Strategic Partnership if at all possible. They have the influence to make things happen.
✔ Do ensure that leadership and involvement is balanced across the sectors (statutory, voluntary, community etc) and that one sector does not exclude the involvement of others
✔ Do think about widening the representation on the LSP to encompass faith groups and the relevant parts of the voluntary sector.
✔ Do think about your local situation – would a high profile leader work best or a softly-softly, bottom-up approach?
✔ Do support Elected Members in their roles as leaders through awareness training and give them a specific role to play.
✔ Do ensure the Police are fully involved. Many forces have good models of community intelligence and will have a crucial role to play in taking the community cohesion agenda forward.
✔ Do consider using high profile leaders to champion 'myth busting' e.g. around issues such as asylum seekers and Travellers.
✔ Do allocate responsibility to a cabinet member for championing community cohesion within the local authority.
✔ Do consider trying to establish community cohesion 'champions' within each of the partner organisations you work with.

✘ Don't assume that the LSP is clear about its role with regard to community cohesion; spend time explaining what it's all about and why it is important.
✘ Don't concentrate on official leaders to the exclusion of leaders from the community. Be aware that individuals within the voluntary sector, community or faith groups can have just as vital a role to play as official leaders such as local authority chief executives and Members.
✘ Don't ignore racism. Take a stand on important issues.

Practical Examples

Community Cohesion Steering Group Terms of Reference

Stoke-on-Trent Pathfinder set up a sub group of the Local Strategic Partnership to steer through their work on community cohesion. The following is taken from their terms of reference.

Role and Purpose of the Group

Role: To provide leadership in respect of Community Cohesion on behalf of the LSP

Purpose: To develop and deliver an effective Community Cohesion Strategy for Stoke-on-Trent.

Principles and Values: The principles and values underpinning the group's activities will include:
• valuing and promoting diversity;
• establishing effective partnership working through equitable, transparent and accountable processes;
• developing effective consultation processes to deliver effective solutions for local communities;
• outcome focused; and
• working to mainstream cohesion into everybody's agenda.

Main Aims and Objectives
• develop through consultation a comprehensive strategy to deliver community cohesion for Stoke-on-Trent;
• identify and manage a programme of projects which will ensure effective and co-ordinated action through partner agencies to deliver community cohesion across the city;
• establish and manage resources to deliver identified cohesion projects; and
• establish and maintain a number of sub-groups to provide leadership under specific themes.

Councillor Training

The West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder wanted to ensure that members were equipped to carry out their leadership role in building community cohesion. The IDeA was commissioned to carry out workshops for members which were designed to be a mixture of information exchange and honest and open discussion.

The aim was to give members:
• an agreed understanding of the term community cohesion;
• the national and local picture on community cohesion;
• a clear outline of the specific role of members in helping to build cohesion and an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to this; and
• an opportunity to build community cohesion into plans for addressing local priorities.

The involvement in the workshops and the commitment shown by members was impressive. Though numbers varied from borough to borough, 90 councillors were directly involved through the workshops. The workshops successfully contributed to new instances of effective cross-party working on community cohesion – a major achievement in an area where party differences have traditionally been strongly asserted.

The workshops also led to recognition of the detailed knowledge councillors have of their constituencies and provided a way for councillors to channel this knowledge and their enthusiasm into efforts to build community cohesion.

Step 2: Developing a Vision and Values for Cohesion

Developing a common vision is an essential first step in working towards a cohesive society. Community cohesion as a concept and as a reality will mean different things to different people and as a consequence it can become a misunderstood term.

Uncertainty invariably exists around the subtle distinctions between cohesion and other terms or concepts such as diversity, equalities, equality of opportunity, sustainable communities, community development and civic renewal. As leaders and practitioners, you are best placed to generate conversations within your community around these distinctions and then draw together what you have heard into an inspirational, challenging and inclusive vision for cohesion in your community.

Why is a vision important?

A vision can create a written or visual image that describes a community or a place which people can identify with. Creating and then communicating this vision sends a clear message to the community that cohesion is in the forefront of your local agenda.

A vision that clearly articulates and focuses on the challenges faced and opportunities available to your community is vital. Being up front about what your community will and will not tolerate and having this championed by your community leaders sets a powerful base from which to work from.

Pathfinders who created and publicised visionary statements about their intentions and aspirations at the early stages of their programme, reported that it helped them to get a message across to their community of interest, as the following quote demonstrates:

"We have felt it important to have a clear statement of values, to promote this wherever possible (e.g. in the local press, on banners and publicity material) and to use this as the basis for getting agencies to sign up to support our work through the East Lancs Together Network. We think this approach has been very successful in that it has helped people to understand what we stand for and to decide whether they want to work with us". East Lancs Together

What should a vision look like?

Ideally, your vision should be clear and succinct and make a challenging and bold statement about your aspirations for your community of interest. Your vision should desirably be focused on outcomes and be in line with your own corporate agendas.

Example Pathfinder visions are outlined below as case studies. The first two examples demonstrate an approach where a statement of intent is made by the Pathfinder.

Case Studies

Thurrock will be a place where people feel included and where our diverse communities can build a safe, healthy, vibrant area in which they are proud to live, work, play and learn. *Thurrock Shadow Pathfinder*

We want a cohesive community, where there are strong and positive relationships between people from all backgrounds and cultures, in the workplace, schools and neighbourhoods, and where all people have similar life opportunities. *Tameside Shadow Pathfinder*

The case studies below provide a more narrative approach to what community cohesion will look like in Peterborough and Southwark.

Case Studies

One Community, Many Cultures, Many Individuals. The Greater Peterborough will be a truly harmonious community with a sense of pride and identity. The region will be famous for its levels of community engagement and for its two-way communication. People will feel involved and engaged. People will understand and value the contribution that Peterborough's different communities make to the life of Peterborough. They will feel free to celebrate their own cultural identity: whether that is as a rural, ethnic or faith community. *Peterborough Pathfinder*

Building community cohesion can be described as working towards a set of social relationships where:
- there is an absence of tension and harassment between people of different cultures, races, ages, faiths and lifestyles;
- there is mutual understanding and respect between people of different cultures, races, ages, faiths and lifestyles;
- there is positive inter-personal contact and engagement within daily life between different groups;
- while respecting diversity, there are some shared values between different groups about acceptable/unacceptable behaviours and attitudes. *Southwark Pathfinder*

Other variations on making visionary or value based statements are outlined in this section of the toolkit. In the context of all of the examples provided it is important to remember that there is no singular or right way of stating a vision. What is important however is that your vision is locally relevant. Furthermore, your vision can be developed to be community-wide based or project based, develop a statement that reflects your aspiration and intent.

Building a Partnership around the Vision

Creating and promoting community cohesion is a shared responsibility. It should therefore be the case that your vision is developed in consultation with your key stakeholders.

Full involvement from elected members and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) will be essential. LSP members need to own the vision and be a champion for it.

Of equal importance in the development of a common vision will be the extent to which you can involve a range of different ethnic, gender, cultural, faith, disabled, younger people and older people's groups. Don't forget the valuable contribution that the voluntary sector and business community, including the press and media can make to creatively shaping and communicating your vision.

Pathfinders generally found a direct correlation with the progress of their vision and the level of corroboration with leaders, decision makers, staff and the voluntary and community sector. However, despite best intentions, the collaborative development of a vision may not always run smoothly. The extent to which collaboration can occur also depends on the maturity and capacity of your partner relationships.

"Partners need to be committed to the Vision rather than just get involved for their own benefit. There was a sense that some partners got involved with the expectation of receiving funding". *Pathfinder*

"All partners have now signed up to the vision. Although it has been an incremental process, once we got beyond partners seeking to position their own service and interests, agreement has been easy to achieve. Persistence is the main key to success". *Peterborough Pathfinder*

The following points were particularly important in building the partnership in Plymouth:
- clear information from the start;
- transparency of decision making;
- acknowledge that work is risky and allow mistakes to act as learning;
- celebrate successes; and
- say thank you.

Plymouth Pathfinder

Although full involvement of a range of stakeholders at the visioning stage may not always be achievable, it will be important that you send a message that you wish to create a forum for open and honest discussion. Doing so will help you to pave the way for clearer understanding of local perceptions and issues around cohesion. It will also send a signal that you are serious about building a cohesive community.

Stimulating Discussion

Again, there is no set way to go about this, you can use a variety of techniques to aid in the promotion of discussion and gathering ideas from a range of sectors. Pathfinders tended to use established channels for exploring ideas around the vision. For example, they:
- put community cohesion issues on the agendas of the Local Strategic Partnership and community forums;
- used case studies and scenarios to stimulate discussion and gather local experiences from Members, senior management to front line staff;
- used existing and planned events such as community events to showcase various local initiatives that demonstrate cohesion; and
- used the arts, particularly music and drama, as tools to explore local attitudes and provide a safe and fun forum for discussion.

Communicating the Vision

Once your vision has been developed, you will need to spread the message widely. Pathfinders found a variety of methods to assist them in getting their message out. This included:
- using formal processes, such as reports and presentations;
- posting messages on council and partner websites;
- holding leisure events and engaging community groups; and
- using the local press as a vehicle for delivering the message through newspapers, radio and television.

Some Pathfinders invested a significant amount of time communicating their vision and encouraging their communities to sign up to it. Another key feature of these case studies is the commitment that was secured from their council and community leaders to communicate the vision widely.

Case Studies

In Oldham, the whole community was encouraged to sign up to a new vision 'One Borough, Forward Together.' This was a campaign which celebrated Oldham's diversity and set out a commitment to a future for the borough. Key organisations signed up to the vision and pledged their commitment to:
- Integration: a borough in which we all belong and share a sense of identity. A borough in which we respect each other at school, home, work and play.
- Choice: a borough which gives everyone a chance to live, work, study and enjoy life together when and where we choose.
- Challenging prejudice and racism: a borough in which we stand up against anyone who seeks to divide our community. A borough in which we do not treat others unfairly.
- Fairness: a borough in which we try to create a society that is fairer for all.
- Security: a borough in which people feel safe in their community. *Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council*

In Hounslow, one of the six London boroughs in the West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder, creating a vision was seen as an important first step for the authority. Key executive members, together with leaders of opposition groups and committed independents demonstrated their commitment to community cohesion by signing up to a published statement. This statement commits political leaders to a 'code' of behaviour and sets some boundaries within which representatives will work when celebrating diversity and promoting cohesion. As well as a signed statement, Hounslow has shown commitment to the community cohesion agenda by developing a comprehensive plan demonstrating how the council and its partners will be addressing community cohesion and incorporating cohesion into all mainstream services.

West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder

It may not always be easy convincing other parts of your organisation to commit to this vision. If this is the case you will need to help others to make it relevant to them. Providing practical examples of how a vision could translate into practice within a

certain service area can help other sectors understand the importance of the vision and buy into it. For example you could talk to:

- regeneration colleagues about how the changes in 'one off programmes' can cause resentment between neighbouring communities;
- colleagues in the housing sector to explain that cohesion can be promoted through the use of more creative strategies to create mixed housing areas with appropriate community infrastructure;
- town planners about the impact that the physical environment has on a community's perception of safety and sense of belonging;
- youth workers to demonstrate that community cohesion is an agenda inextricably linked with that of engaging with children and young people; and
- sports and leisure representatives to explain how these pursuits can be a useful tool towards encouraging interaction between different sections of the community.

It will also be important that your colleagues are encouraged to ensure that their policies and service plans echo the vision for community cohesion. This will aid you in mainstreaming community cohesion across your organisation.

Actioning the Vision

Making a clear and inspirational vision statement may be an important first step, however, to ensure this vision has an impact, you must integrate it into your own and your partners key documents. This will include, but not be restricted to, your corporate documents, such as your:

- Strategic or Community Plans;
- Business Plan;
- Race Equality Strategy;
- Equal Opportunities Policy; and
- Community Safety Strategy.

Further, to ensure that the vision and its principles are duly and consistently considered at key stages it will be important to:

- make it a regular item on meeting agendas;
- ensure that the vision is filtered through to other documents, including service plans or performance plans;
- ensure that it informs your targets and indicators; and
- include it in your equalities and action planning checklists.

Once established, your vision should be allowed to evolve as the community or specific project itself develops and evolves. It will therefore be necessary to revisit your vision over time to make sure that it is still relevant to the needs and issues both locally and nationally.

Your 'visioning checklist'

To help you get started, it may help to ask yourself and others the following questions:

- What does it mean to people to live in this area?
- What are the perceived and actual disparities within the community?
- What are people's aspirations for how the physical environment should look and feel?
- What could be the best way of getting people to work together to prevent discrimination that is based on race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, disability and age?
- What types of interaction do you want to promote in your community?

Top Tips for Success – dos and Don'ts

✔ **Do consult widely, ensure that as much as possible all partners are involved and understand the agenda.**

✔ **Do ensure that your leaders are fully involved and make a public commitment to your vision.**

✔ **Do create a vision that is inspirational, challenging and inclusive.**

✔ **Do keep the vision, aims and objectives, manageable in scale and achievable with a timescale.**

✔ **Do turn your vision into action.**

✔ **Do revisit your vision over time to ensure it still meets the aspirations of your community.**

✘ **Don't be tempted to go through this phase alone.**

✘ **Don't hurry through the visioning phase as it will form the essential building blocks for all of your future work.**

Practical Examples

Developing a Vision for a Partnership

East Lancs Together is an initiative committed to finding positive ways of bringing together different communities throughout Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle & Rossendale. The members of the East Lancs Together Executive adopted a statement of values in 2003 which was developed in consultation with the range of partners concerning the quality of community life in all parts of the area. The partners affirmed their belief that:

- having a diversity of groups, faiths, cultures and ages is a key strength of our society and a major source of civic and community wealth;
- mutual respect and equality of opportunity between different groups, faiths, cultures and ages should be fundamental tenets of civic and social behaviour and that working to achieve this is one of the hallmarks of an enlightened and mature society;
- community cohesion is best achieved through continuous dialogue, mutual understanding and frequent social interaction between different groups, faiths, cultures and ages encouraged and facilitated by strong community leadership;
- disadvantage in all its forms represents the principal barrier to community cohesion, especially where it is experienced more by one group than another, and that overcoming disadvantage in all its forms is therefore a fundamental goal of the network and its members; and
- racism and prejudice will not be tolerated and will be confronted.

Developing a District-wide Vision

In 1999 Bradford District undertook the biggest public consultation exercise in its history.
The aim was to develop a shared long-term vision for the whole of the District and to provide a clear sense of direction for its businesses, agencies and communities.
The 2020 Vision is intentionally economy led and reads as follows:

- a high-wage, high-skill, knowledge-based economy, which will provide appropriate jobs for everyone, creating a wealthier population with greater spending power;
- a diversified economy, with particular strengths in cutting edge e-commerce and communications; financial service provision that meets the needs of consumers and cultural industries;
- an economy which uses resources efficiently and effectively and minimises waste and utilises recycling and renewable energy sources;
- an economy which is fully integrated into the wider economy of the Yorkshire & Humber region;
- a place where people will be well educated, skilled, healthy and capable of providing business with the human resource to compete in highly competitive global markets;
- a Connected District, using e-commerce and digital technology to improve people's lifestyles and create business opportunities;
- a District with a modern transport infrastructure which makes every part of it easily accessible to those who live within it and those who want to visit;
- A District whose people respect and celebrate differences in sex, race, culture, and religion;
- a Place, which ensures people with disabilities, can fully participate in a better future for the District;
- a District that is a great place to live and is universally accepted as a major destination for tourists;
- a District which is clean, healthy, safe and has excellent public services; and
- a Place where people are justifiably proud of where they live, learn, work and play.

Step 3: Programme Planning and Management

What does Programme Planning and Management cover?

Programme planning and management includes:

- planning your programme of activities, your milestones and your arrangements for management and decision making;
- establishing a baseline and determining relevant indicators; and
- establishing mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing success.

Planning your Programme of Activities

After you have established your vision and values, identified and approached your potential partners, your next focus for consideration will need to be around:

- Ensuring that you have a clear understanding of what your programme will look like and will achieve, and that this is passed on to all those involved.
- Determining arrangements for management and accountability - who will play what role in driving through the community cohesion agenda?
- Where will the responsibility for driving through community cohesion sit within the local authority structure? It may sit within a number of different departments – regeneration, community safety, housing etc. However, many Pathfinders have chosen to locate it in the Chief Executive's office so that community cohesion can be driven corporately;
- Developing working relationships with partners - establishing what each others expectations are and what capacity can be made available to your programme.
- Building networks in your community and establishing need - do you have a clear understanding about local priorities and issues? What information exists that you can draw on?
- Resourcing your activities - through finding

funding from external sources or from within and establishing who in your organisation can contribute;
- Thinking about the sustainability of your programme or project – by asking the question how long will funding be available? Will secured funding mean you can build in sustainability from day one or will you have to rely on one-off projects? Which partners can carry on the projects if funding runs out?
- Researching and then considering in detail how you are going to connect with and build on existing cohesion related programmes such as Local Area Agreements, Safer and Stronger Communities and the new requirements under the Comprehensive Performance Assessments.

You may find it helpful to address these issues by developing an implementation plan that covers:

- a list of your actions and targets for each project;
- a list of targets for each project and the programme overall;
- individual responsibilities for actions or projects;
- resource allocation per partner or project;
- your key milestones and a timeline for completion; and
- how each action/target/project relates back to your vision.

Pathfinders particularly emphasised the importance of finding ways to recruit and resource individuals to be dedicated to community cohesion activities. Pathfinders noted that like 'champions' these 'experts' are essential to build the confidence of staff in statutory and voluntary sector agencies, to generate ideas, to facilitate problem-solving cohesion issues on the ground, and to maintain focus on cohesion principles and practice. However, whilst the recruitment of a dedicated community cohesion co-ordinator often provided

the necessary impetus to develop and take the programme forward, it is easy to underestimate the time it takes to recruit people to these new, and fairly specialist posts. Whilst many Pathfinders did eventually have co-ordinators in place this needs to be weighed up against the time taken for the recruitment exercise to be completed and the resultant slippage in programme delivery.

In programme planning and management, the principles of good project management are particularly relevant, e.g. it will be important that you:

• set clear project parameters;
• construct a realistic plan that sets out your targets and prioritises your activities;
• communicate relevant updates widely and frequently; and
• build in 'reality checks' on progress.

Risk management is also a very important phase in your early planning phases. There are risks that you can not plan for, such as the conflict in Iraq, however anticipation of what might represent a risk internally or locally such as elections or recruitment delays should be factored into your programme planning process.

Once you have developed your plan of action, it will be necessary and valuable to test this with your partners to make sure that the projects delivered really do have a community cohesion element. It may be tempting to launch in to your programme and get things up and running quickly, however not undertaking a robust planning exercise in the early stages of your programme may be a cause of regret in the medium to longer term.

Finally, it will be equally important that you consider how you are going to brief providers at the 'delivery end' of your programme. Those individuals and groups who have the skills to implement your programme will need fair and adequate warning of what will be expected of them and when.

The following quotes from Pathfinders, illustrate their learning points around programme planning:

"We should have carried out a full project management exercise with a full risk assessment that would have identified resources, gaps and how to resolve those issues." Bury Pathfinder

"Limiting the programme area through targeting specific areas helped us – we went for focused, intensive work in small areas". Kirklees Pathfinder

Building and Understanding a Picture of Cohesion

A well planned programme sets you up for a good start. However, if you do not have a full understanding of the nature of your community of interest then you risk running your well planned programme down the wrong path. This is why it is important to have an up-to-date understanding of your local context as this will enable improved delivery of services and the effective monitoring of trends.

So, how do you go about building up this picture or profile of who is in your community and what the level of cohesion is? You should look firstly at available Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and where possible collect information on ethnicity and faith. This will help you to identify trends and equality gaps. It will also be desirable to have information at Ward and Super Output Area level to help build a detailed picture of cohesion locally.

Pathfinders adopted a number of approaches in their attempts to understand cohesion locally, these included:

• mapping social, economic and demographic characteristics, such as ethnicity, age, culture and faith over an area;
• mapping the range of organisations involved in community cohesion and the operational links between them;
• drawing on existing sources of work such as citizen panel surveys, police statistics and reports, voluntary and community sector studies; and
• using established indicators or developing locally relevant indicators.

It is important to remember that you should make use of both qualitative and quantitative results, however sound judgement is needed when deciding on the weighting between these different types of information. It is also important to ensure that you have the necessary resources in place to establish your baseline.

Establishing your Baseline

Identifying an appropriate baseline from which to measure your success in community cohesion is a resource intensive and complex task. It is a further challenge to measure and link the impact of your initiatives with the level of cohesion in your area. Despite these challenges it will be important to draw together information that can help you establish the basis from which progress will be measured.

Possible BVPIs and survey questions are provided in a Home Office guidance document (Building a Picture of Community Cohesion, 2003). The broad areas of performance information that are relevant to cohesion are:
- user satisfaction with council, with key services and community engagement and decision making facilities;
- access to services;
- hate crime reporting and figures;
- number of consultations, area forums, representation on decision making bodies of black and minority ethnic and faith communities;
- perceptions of community cohesion using survey questions; and
- community tensions information.

In addition, you should consider how to measure the impact upon community cohesion within existing programmes, e.g. Local Area Agreements and the Safer Stronger Communities Fund and include targets within these agreements. Many authorities are now including community cohesion targets within their second generation Local Public Service Agreements.

Pathfinders went about establishing their baseline in a number of ways, either around a singular issue, such as racial tension, or getting a view on how geared up or effective an organisation is in managing issues around cohesion. The following case studies demonstrate how:

Case studies
Research was carried out in Peterborough to help provide baseline and identify priority projects. The basis of research targeted five wards where the most racial incidents took place. Outcomes were

monitored regarding the impact and style of reporting in media, crime data, hate crimes and behaviour in schools. *Peterborough Pathfinder*

In Kirklees, they were conscious that they needed to take into account the existing structures and interventions already in existence before they forged ahead with new community cohesion programmes. They therefore undertook a 'Learning Lessons Mapping' exercise which established what was out on the ground and what they could learn from it. This information also aided in enhancing their own programmes and bringing other partners on board. *Kirklees Pathfinder*

In Mansfield, the Pathfinder has established its baseline in two ways.
- first, they sought to map existing cohesion initiatives across the local voluntary and community sector. The intention of this exercise was to prevent duplication and ensure that the most is made of the available resources. Profiling and analysis later showed that many schemes that were running contributed to the cohesion agenda even if they are not specifically 'tagged' as community cohesion;
- second, an external company was commissioned to conduct a community cohesion survey. The survey was designed to compare attitudes towards community cohesion between new residents (of under three years) and longer-term residents (who have lived in Mansfield for 15 years or more). The survey also sought to compare the views of people living in new residential areas and those living in older, more established neighbourhoods. Through this survey the Pathfinder tested whether these new arrivals were likely to:
  - contribute in the community;
  - be more satisfied with services and education than the long established communities; and
  - want to stay in the area in the long term.
Mansfield Pathfinder

In Southwark they recognised that initially there was very little baseline information. As a consequence, two questions on community cohesion are now included in the borough's annual MORI poll, as follows:
- to what extent is this a place where people from different backgrounds can get on?
- to what extent do you think ethnic differences are respected locally?

However, the Pathfinder acknowledges that these

Developing your indicators

Developing a suite of relevant performance indicators also forms part of establishing a baseline. You will need to set aside time to research the range of potential indicators before forming a judgement of what your baseline should consist of. Don't include too many indicators and be realistic. You may find it helpful to ask project deliverers to devise their own, working back from expected outcomes.

Given the nature of community cohesion, it is unlikely that a definitive common or national measurement will ever be determined. It is therefore important to have a local framework to work within. Pathfinders have found it helpful to work with their neighbours to share ideas and resources in the development of indicators and measures that are locally relevant to them.

In starting this process it will be important to keep the following things in mind:
- identify activities that are changing people's behaviour, these can act as a basis for developing local indicators;
- consider a 'pick and mix' approach of hard and soft indicators and prioritise them under relevant titles such as sustainability (e.g. economic and social issues), safety (e.g. anti-social behaviour issues) and the strength of communities (e.g. the extent of social investment);
- if you can't identify what success looks like then you won't be able to measure it. That is why it will be important to link performance indicators to your vision; and
- the more measurable your indicators are, the more likely you can build them into other documents and set the scene for tracking changes and trends.

Findings from the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey showed that respondents valued:
- a sense of community, e.g. having pride in the neighbourhood and trust in their neighbours;
- similar life opportunities, where people are treated equally by a range of organisations;
- a sense of belonging to a neighbourhood or local area and knowing others in that area;
- perceptions of diversity, e.g. where ethnic differences are respected and agreeing that having a mix of different people makes their area a better place to live; and
- political trust, e.g. how far Members represent the views of local people and how much they are trusted.

Each of these factors has been shown to have a link to community cohesion as measured by the degree to which local people feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

Monitoring your Progress and Success

You will need to set up suitable monitoring arrangements to ensure that your progress is in line with your planning. Some Pathfinders achieved this through:
- building progress updates into monthly agenda meetings of steering groups;
- building in meetings with project sponsors;
- developing strict commissioning processes that specify regular reporting through written reports and presentations; and
- bringing in external parties to monitor and evaluate independently.

"Whatever the arrangements, it is entirely necessary to involve the wider community, through either carrying out the review and/or recording what has or has not worked". *Bury Pathfinder*

Through the Pathfinder process, monitoring was achieved through a variety of channels, as the following quotes and case studies demonstrate:

Case Studies
"Monitoring arrangements were put in place and the University of Teesside was commissioned to evaluate the programme. This was successful, however a small number of projects found it difficult to return effective evaluations back on time. Better training of all those involved prior to commencing would have been useful." *Middlesbrough Pathfinder*

In Southwark, the voluntary sector partners and the Council developed a monitoring form that was used by all those developing voluntary sector cohesion projects. Completed forms were used as the basis for regular partners' meetings where organisations came together to share progress, challenges and learning in delivering cohesion projects.
Southwark Pathfinder

Top tips for success - Dos and Don'ts

✔ Do adopt the basic principles of project and risk management.

✔ Do you know enough about your community? Consider undertaking a mapping exercise to identify areas of deprivation which may also lack cohesion drawing in a number of factors including housing, health and transportation.

✔ Do ensure there is enough time to plan and support activities.

✔ Do think carefully about the shape and size of your project at the outset.

✔ Do ensure you have enough resources so you can build in sustainability from the start.

✔ Do revisit your targets throughout your programme as circumstances may change.

✔ Do have a clear picture at a micro and macro level of what success looks like for you.

✘ Don't forget about the other community cohesion related programmes that are relevant to your agenda. Try to connect with these to help you gather knowledge and momentum.

✘ Don't short change yourself on time or be tempted to rush through your planning phase.

✘ Don't rely solely on one picture of success.

Practical Examples

Finding a Dedicated Community Cohesion Officer

The Stoke Pathfinder recognised the importance of hiring a specific community cohesion officer to see through the progress of their Pathfinder and beyond. They recruited a dedicated community cohesion officer, to

• provide corporate leadership and support to the development of community cohesion within the City;

• lead the Pathfinder and develop a programme, commissioning and overseeing projects supporting Pathfinder objectives;

• work closely with colleagues and partners to ensure maximum benefit is achieved through the community cohesion project and it is aligned with other local and corporate initiatives.

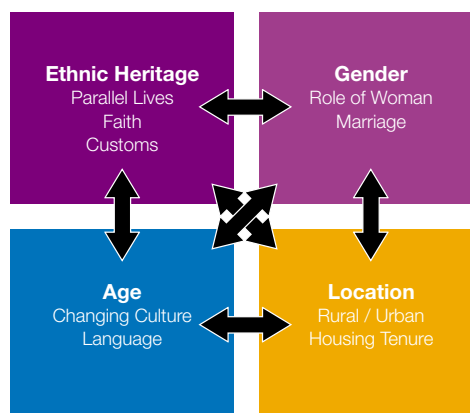The job specification set out a number of key accountabilities, including:

• Operational management and the requirement to

– establish good practice in respect of community cohesion through knowledge sharing locally and across the Pathfinder programme;

– undertake research to establish local intelligence regarding cohesion;

– develop a programme which will deliver the Community Cohesion Pathfinder;

– to work with colleagues across the City Council and partner agencies in effectively planning and developing the cohesion agenda

• Manage Pathfinder resources and budget;

• Build effective relationships and communications with partners and community groups, which support community cohesion objectives and ensure that community cohesion is aligned effectively with other complementary local programmes through effective networking.

Establishing the Parameters of a Project

For the purposes of a community cohesion study in Pendle, a partner in East Lancs Together, four initial "dimensions" were selected and used in order to establish possible fault lines within the community. These are outlined in the matrix:

In the course of their work, Pendle Partnership ensured that these themes were built into everything they did, so as to keep their work focused and balanced. This avoided the tendency to talk about singular issues such as ethnicity.

Ethnic Heritage — Parallel Lives, Faith, Customs

Gender — Role of Woman, Marriage

Age — Changing Culture, Language

Location — Rural / Urban, Housing Tenure

Establishing Your Baseline: An Alternative Method of Identifying Local Perceptions

In Pendle, the method of storytelling was used to understand local perceptions. This involved workshops where groups of people told stories of local life. This was done through the creation of fictitious characters that typify community members and their problems, experiences, life chances and their relation to their own and other communities. Participants were encouraged to use their own experience to create the characters. This process allowed participants to "hide" behind the character in expressing unpopular or unacceptable views and bring out subjects for discussion that are not normally aired and describe the environments in which the characters act and the daily influences on their lives.

Step 4: Engaging Communities

Promoting community cohesion involves addressing fractures, removing barriers and encouraging positive interaction between groups. It aims to build communities where people feel confident they belong and are comfortable mixing and interacting with others.

Engaging and involving communities in this process can be very difficult but it is what community cohesion is all about – reaching out to different groups and communities and bringing them closer together. Which groups and communities you engage with will depend on the composition of your own area and the priorities within these.

For some areas, the priority may be to bring people from different faiths or ethnic background together, for others, it may be about enabling people from different estates or areas to mix, whilst for others, it may be about helping young people and old people to get to know and understand each other.

Some Pathfinders have made the point that for them it was important not to focus on race since this can sometimes create a perception amongst the majority community that they are excluded. The following gives some examples of different approaches to engaging communities.

Engaging with Young People from Different Backgrounds

Pathfinders have found a variety of ways to bring young people (who would not normally mix) together. These include:
- inter-territorial football matches;
- art and drama programmes;
- music;
- sailing adventures; and
- school twinning.

The Role of Schools

In some Pathfinder areas, schools played a major part in developing cohesive communities, for example in:
- opening access to education and employment;
- developing skills to overcome poverty and social inequalities;
- promoting social and cultural diversity;
- providing access to ICT;
- facilitating the integration of new communities (e.g. refugees and Travellers);
- providing premises or facilities for use by a wide range of users, for instance people from various ethnic groups and of different ages; and
- providing a meeting place for the community.

Schools have used a number of activities to bring people together including:
- twinning with other schools that have a different cultural profile;
- involvement of pupils from different backgrounds in decision-making processes;

- working together in out of school hours learning (OSHL) activities, especially sports and arts; and
- intergenerational activities.

More information on the Extended Schools Programme is available at:
www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools

Case Studies
East Lancs Together supported a primary school twinning project, which allowed children who had previously had little opportunity of interacting with children of other faiths and cultures, the chance to meet, play and get to know each other.
East Lancs Together

South Bermondsey primary schools took children and their families from different backgrounds and different schools on days out of London. The families shared food, took part in activities and got to know people from different cultures. In this project the children were a route to also enable the adults to get to know each other.
Southwark Pathfinder

Football and other sports provide an obvious arena in which to bring communities together (particularly young people).

Case Studies
West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder established a football programme and festival which brought together young people from widely different community backgrounds that played together for the first time. It operated in traditional regeneration areas but also in areas such as Hayes and Greenford where access to sports opportunities had been limited. It drew in communities, particularly the Somali community, but also Hillingdon's Traveller community, which had not previously been linked into mainstream football. The publicity leaflet produced by Queens Park Rangers F.C. is a model for this kind of activity: on one side it is in English, but when reversed, it is in Somali.
West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder

Gateshead Pathfinder organised a series of one day multi-cultural football tournaments for both adults and young people in the community using a technique where each registered player was given a number and then numbers picked randomly to create mixed teams.

In the adult tournament over 250 people played and in the junior tournament 80 players participated.

After each tournament, there was a social event including food from the many different cultures. Parents also attended as spectators and took part in the social at the end.
Gateshead Shadow Pathfinder

Important elements which have proved successful in developing programmes for young people include:
- involving young people in the development of programmes;
- using peer role models and mentors; and
- training youth leaders to work in this area.

Bringing the Generations Together
Often there is an even wider gulf between the generations than between different communities. Projects such as working together on a video project of the area can bring young and old together and foster greater respect and understanding.

Case Studies
Gateshead Shadow Pathfinder developed a project which brought young people and elderly people from the Jewish community together. They worked on building a fish tank at the local day centre. They will continue to work together on the maintenance of the fish tank. *Gateshead Shadow Pathfinder*

Part of Southwark's strategy involved working with young and older people to explore inter-generational issues. 'George' is a play which looks at identity across the generations and races and was performed by youngsters and older people from two theatre groups with membership from these two age groups.

A diverse cast performed the play at different venues across the borough and performers have stayed behind afterwards to join in informal discussions with the audiences. The performers were very positive about their experiences and will come together again for further productions.
Southwark Pathfinder

Bringing Communities Together
Gulfs between communities are caused by a variety of factors i.e. those created by the rich and poor, living on different estates, believing in different faiths or coming from different ethnic groups.

Pathfinders have used a variety of methods to bring communities together. These include:
- melas and festivals;

- sport;
- craft and arts programmes; and
- holding community conventions.

Rural Areas
Community cohesion is not just about deprived inner city areas. It is also about rural areas and suburban areas, which may equally suffer from divisions between communities, rich and poor, young and old. Some rural areas also suffer from issues associated with isolation, a lack of facilities, inadequate transportation and rural unemployment. You may find that rural residents may not think that community cohesion is relevant to them, as one of the Pathfinders specifically discovered:

For some rural areas, the issues may be about Travellers or asylum seekers. These groups are often perceived as a threat to the way of life of other residents and will need careful handling.

Tewkesbury houses three permanent Gypsy sites and several private sites. In order to build community cohesion, they have been working with other agencies to develop understanding of Travellers' needs and to develop the capacity of Travellers to represent their needs to other agencies. For example, basic skills and adult literacy courses have been established to support Gypsy and Traveller communities.
Tewkesbury Shadow Pathfinder

Bringing Faith Groups Together

Another important aspect of engaging communities is about bringing faith groups together. Where local inter-faith initiatives work well, they make a significant difference to their area. They bring people together to learn more about other people's faiths and provide a helpful framework for promoting understanding and co-operation between them. Many also provide a channel for consultation by the local authority and other bodies and an opportunity to ensure that new initiatives and policies reflect the needs of the differing faiths in the area.

Case Studies

East Lancs Together realised there was little contact between the mosques and churches in Rossendale, which is predominantly white, but with concentrations of Muslim communities in two areas.

Using their links with Community Action Rossendale and the Lancashire Forum of Faiths, they proposed setting up an interfaith group in the area. Eighteen representatives from different faiths attended a meeting and agreed unanimously to establish the Rossendale faith partnership.
East Lancs Together Pathfinder

In Tower Hamlets, the Shadow Pathfinder found that each partner involved in their projects for young people brought different approaches to the project. For example schools were able to access young people currently not engaging in youth provision out of school. The Catholic Church worked via a newly established centre, which had live-in volunteers and was open to all. The mosque worked on promoting interfaith dialogues and cross-generation communications.

The bringing together of these organisations had some interesting spin-offs. For example during Ramadan (2003) a group of Bangladeshi people living in Wapping were given use of the Catholic

centre for their evening prayers. The same facilities were made available in 2004.

The Catholic school and church were able to 'reach' some of the newer communities in the area (from Eastern Europe) who were initially less familiar with the predominantly local Muslim culture and population.

The mosque organised a number of events including a Community Leaders' Iftar Party, a Drugs Workshop for Bangladeshi fathers and a major conference on religious tolerance.
Tower Hamlets Shadow Pathfinder

Further practical information on establishing a faith partnership is contained at the end of this chapter.

Conflict Resolution

Some Pathfinders have put resources into conflict resolution training. This involves developing awareness and skills to work with the following issues:
• myth busting;
• prejudice reduction;
• bridge-building;
• conflict resolution; and
• leadership skills.

This then enables front line staff and others working in the community to have the knowledge and skills necessary to address some of the difficult issues that arise around community cohesion.

Case Studies

The Leicester Pathfinder worked extensively on a conflict resolution programme for young people. Teams from three schools joined together for an intensive three day training event. They also ran in-house anti-bullying activities and are working out how to become sustainable without additional support.

Twenty-two Community Facilitators have also received intensive training on an ongoing development programme in conflict resolution and myth busting skills. They are developing a mentoring scheme for adults on how to work with young people in non-oppressive ways that facilitate young people's involvement. *Leicester Pathfinder*

Conflict resolution is a key strand of Peterborough's Pathfinder programme. A number of local community liaison groups have been established in the city. This approach is proactive, bringing together local residents and statutory agencies, identifying national and local issues and tensions and seeking to resolve potential and actual conflict.

The development of this resource is already producing good information and intelligence for statutory agencies working with the local community. A training programme has been developed to ensure that community representatives receive the necessary skills with a view to them being the first point of contact for conflict resolution within the community. *Peterborough Pathfinder*

Employing Innovative Methods to Engage with your Communities

Community cohesion is about changing attitudes and in order to grab people's attention, you sometimes have to work with more unusual methods. Pathfinders employed a variety of interesting methods in consultations on their Community Strategies and on their approaches to community cohesion.

Case Studies

As part of Tameside's community strategy consultation, a session was run at Tameside College to which a varied group of young people was invited. The Pathfinder used 'Ask the Audience' electronic voting technology to allow young people to vote on important issues. Questions around community cohesion provoked very challenging discussions and raised some concerns about community relations.

The Ask the Audience system was used again at the public consultation on community cohesion in September 2003.

The authority also surveyed school pupils to ensure that young people's views were included in the borough's decision-making process. All year 7 and year 10 pupils were invited to take part. Questions relating to community cohesion were included. This consultation will be repeated to measure changes in opinion. *Tameside Shadow Pathfinder*

Oldham used food to bring people from different communities together and to get them thinking about community cohesion. 50 women and children were brought together to sample different food from the Caribbean, the Ukraine, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and the UK. A highlight of the day was the simultaneous demonstration of how to make pancakes with sugar and lemon and stuffed parathas. *Oldham Shadow Pathfinder*

Top tips for success – Dos and Don'ts
✔ Do identify what the particular issues are for your area.
✔ Do introduce activities that are fun and consider the extent to which you overlay these with messages about cohesion.
✔ Do think about unusual and innovative methods of involving people.

✘ Don't forget to work with faith groups who are often very receptive to developing cohesion.
✘ Don't forget front line workers and members of the community who need to be equipped with the skills to resolve conflicts.
✘ Don't forget to work with existing local mediation groups in your area.

Practical Examples

Developing a Faith Partnership

Slough wanted to build community cohesion into everything that it does and saw the development of a Faith Partnership as fundamental to this approach. The partnership also contributes to a wider programme of involvement and understanding. The following were included in its development:

- Faith Leaders from the Sikh, Christian, Islamic, Hindu and Bahai faiths;
- Slough Borough Council (who organized and part funded the meetings);
- Government Office for the South East (who part funded the meetings); and
- A Neighbourhood Renewal Adviser.

The Slough Faith Partnership has set itself the following terms of reference, to:

- meet with each other;
- understand what the Council are currently doing, with specific reference to the development of the Local Strategic Partnership and community cohesion;
- explore commonalities between the rich multi-faith backdrop of Slough;
- develop a mechanism through which the local authority can link directly into the faith groups and utilise the added value this will bring to Slough as an area;
- understand how and in what capacity faith groups want to be represented on the LSP;
- have a voice in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services and actions at local level;
- articulate and prioritise how they would like to be involved; and
- establish a broad framework for further development and participation from each faith.

In developing this Faith Partnership, the Slough Shadow Pathfinder generated a number of learning experiences. These are as follows:

- establish a working group early;
- where there may be potential conflict or a range of perspectives and beliefs, use an independent facilitator;
- manage participants' expectations (i.e. clarify that process will work in specific timeframes and developments may be slow);
- ensure that all faiths are invited and represented;
- circulate important documents to all faiths, including those that are not present; and
- arrange meetings at different faith venues, to increase ownership and learn more about different faiths.

Encouraging Youth Involvement

The Unity Project was organised by Peterborough City Council's Unity Youth Team in partnership with schools and Connexions. The Unity Youth Crew (UYC) recruited young males aged 16 to 19 from the African-Caribbean, Asian and white communities as peer group leaders and provided them with accredited residential training in youth work skills so they could support local youth projects that improve community cohesion. The young males targeted were from 'hard to reach' groups; they had all been involved in racial incidents or on the edge, they were currently not in education, employment or training and they were seen as leaders or opinion formers on the streets. Since the programme began in July 2003 it has shown tangible results, including:

- real friendships have been established amongst UYC members and through these friendships and their status as peer leaders the UYC have diffused clashes between rival area gangs on a number of occasions;
- ten young people have gained Millennium Volunteers accreditation; and
- UYC members have been speakers at local and national conferences during 2004.

Step 5: Challenging and Changing Perceptions

Why Is Challenging and Changing Perceptions Important?

People generally base what they believe in from what they have experienced or heard through hearsay or through the media. In this sense, perception quickly becomes reality and a basis for beliefs. When beliefs start to impact on or are divisive to individual or community relationships this causes a threat to cohesion. This is why it is fundamentally important to find ways to define, test and then change perceptions of individuals and groups where these perceptions are misplaced or misunderstood.

As a practitioner in the local government or voluntary and community sector you will need to find and provide gateways to enable people to make informed choices and decisions and not accept at face value whatever may have been portrayed by the media, politicians or pressure groups or even community leaders.

How can we go about Challenging and Ultimately Changing Perceptions?

The Pathfinder approach to this issue in the early stages of their programme was informed by how well they thought the community would receive the messages they wanted to send. This required some work in establishing local perceptions, but also drew on their existing knowledge of their own local circumstances. Depending on this analysis and the support of politicians, Pathfinders adopted one of the following approaches to begin to challenge and change perceptions locally:

• a low key approach where information about cohesion was drip fed into the community;
• an incremental approach, that gathers momentum as confidence is built;
• a high profile approach that was specifically designed to attract attention and get the

community actively talking; and
• the delivery of messages not specifically under the community cohesion label – rather, through existing community based projects that the community is engaged in and is comfortable with.

The key learning point around this issue is being able to gauge your community and its capacity to take on your message. The approach you take has to be relevant to your local community, which is why it is important to have a good feeling about what perceptions currently are. Pathfinders demonstrated their awareness of these issues, and provided the following comments:

"Our low profile approach has minimised the dangers of adverse publicity and allowed free and open discussion of issues within the Steering Group. However, the message has probably reached fewer people". *Charnwood Pathfinder*

"Taking a low-key approach has allowed for a wider understanding of issues and has built solid foundations to work on. However we recognise that this approach could be seen as a slow way forward with results being diluted or not visible or challenging enough to counter some of the views or perceptions held". *Bury Pathfinder*

"Building on the support of those who are sympathetic has to be the place to start - but it is important to recognise that this is only the beginning. We need to get beyond the circle of Elected Members, council officers, community groups and other supportive individuals who agree with the agenda and engage further and change the perceptions of those who are more sceptical or hostile." *East Lancs Together*

The timing for launching your idea or publicising your message is also critical. For example, for some Pathfinders, election time was seen as a time to minimise messages around community cohesion issues, as they did not want to draw attention to it. Other Pathfinders used elections as a platform for getting their message across at a time where their communities were particularly politically conscious.

Equipping the Messengers
Before you go about challenging perceptions within your community, you will need to look to those who will be delivering the messages on your behalf – e.g. council members and staff and/or voluntary and community sector representatives.

You will need to ensure that these individuals are skilled and competent in their ability to change and challenge perceptions without the fear of antagonising or creating friction within the community. Some Pathfinders recognised this as a particularly important first step and set about finding ways of training and equipping those individuals who were delivering the messages about cohesion.

Case Studies
The Kirklees Pathfinder invested a lot of time in the early stages of their programme to equip front line staff with myth busting information. Training around dealing with disagreement and conflict was successful and meant that staff felt confident to address issues in their community of interest. *Kirklees Pathfinder*

In Leicester, the whole focus of the NCBI Community Cohesion Training Project and Young People Resolving Differences projects was on myth busting and teaching skills to enable people to take on individual initiatives. *Leicester Pathfinder*

The West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder designed an induction manual to help Elected Members, staff and volunteers in all organisations to better understand the communities in West London, particularly new and recently-established communities. *West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder*

Myth Busting
Myth busting has proven to be a particularly useful technique for Pathfinders in challenging and changing perceptions, the following case studies demonstrate the different approaches undertaken:

Case Studies
The Middlesbrough Pathfinder carried out a number of myth busting activities including a 'Culture Matters' project with children. This was carried out in a number of secondary and primary schools whose pupils came from various ethnic, economic and religious backgrounds. The project's primary aim was to raise awareness of the diverse cultures in Middlesbrough and emphasise the commonalities that they share. A video, 'Diversity in our Town', was also produced by a group of young people and was distributed to every school in Middlesbrough. *Middlesbrough Pathfinder*

Partners in East Lancs Together have been working on a myth busting column in the 'Burnley Now!' free Council newspaper. *East Lancs Together*

Encouraging Banal Encounters
Where perceptions are ingrained, myth busting or awareness raising projects may have little effect. Finding more direct routes into local communities provides a better platform for challenging and changing perceptions of 'outsiders', such as asylum seekers, Travellers, or gay and lesbian people.

The most direct route is straight into your community of interest. Think of ways to creatively promote and initiate debates between people on an informal level. One Pathfinder was particularly successful in their encouragement of 'banal encounters' between people. Whether that

encounter is inviting your neighbour for a cup or tea, or talking to the person next in line at the grocery store, this approach clearly recognises the fact that people talking together on an informal level can be the most effective way of breaking down the barriers between communities. At the end of this section an example is provided to draw on.

Working with the Press and Media
Another direct route that Pathfinders used to change perceptions was through developing relationships with the press and media. This was in recognition of the fact that the media has a powerful role to play in influencing the perceptions of local people.

Given that most of the obstacles regarding changing perceptions link directly with press and media, Pathfinders have sought innovative ways in which they can keep this group informed and up to date with issues around improving community relations.

The following case studies demonstrate where Pathfinders have successfully engaged the media in helping to dispel rumours and myths, promote a positive view of diversity and ensure that extremist views do not dominate.

Case Studies
In Tameside, the Pathfinder instigated a meeting with the editors of local papers. At this meeting they discussed the national guidelines on community cohesion as they relate to the media.
High profile Council Members and Directors attended the meeting and emphasised the importance of the community cohesion agenda. The outcome was an agreement for the media to take a responsible approach to promoting good community relations in Tameside.

However, Tameside also noted that maintaining a partnership with the media is an ongoing process as editors change. *Tameside Pathfinder*

Encouraging Debates and Conversations in Key Communities of Interest
Another key way of challenging perceptions has been in the encouragement of difficult debates. Pathfinders have found that addressing traditionally 'difficult' topics has been necessary in the progression of the community cohesion agenda. Once discussion on difficult topics has been instigated, it allows the chance to have an open, honest and meaningful dialogue. This in turn allows

an opportunity to get to the bottom of deeply set perceptions and influence their change.

A topic that many Pathfinders have had to get to grips with is that of counteracting the negative influences/messages in the community particularly from extremist groups. Your vision should have set the scene for what your community as a whole is prepared to tolerate, you therefore have a responsibility to counteract negative and potentially disruptive messages. Pathfinders had to face this issue, as the following case study demonstrates:

Case Study
In Oldham, the 'No Place for Racism' campaign involves the following elements:
• a large number of 'Hate Incident Reporting Centres' across the borough, including libraries;
• staff in all service areas fully trained to deal with recording hate incidents;
• a weekly return from all schools;
• a comprehensive hate crime reporting procedure with a simplified form and guidance notes for staff (including a section for action taken); and
• publicity material.

This has resulted in a more accessible system for reporting of hate incidents and confidence that action is being taken as a result.
Oldham Shadow Pathfinder

Many of the Pathfinders recognised that the key group to engage in the perceptions exercises was that of young people. Attention was focused on young people as future citizens, and as the main gateway and influence of their family members.

Case Studies

In Rochdale, the Sports United Project was designed to tackle high levels of racial tension and territorialism amongst young people from deprived areas and disadvantaged groups. The project transports young people from their own community to a neutral venue. It brings young people together to socialise, play sport, and to participate in workshops dealing with issues of drugs, racism, territorialism, community safety, anti-social behaviour. Through the project, awareness has been raised about culture and acceptance has grown of each others differences.
Rochdale Pathfinder

In Plymouth, partnership working and focusing on youth is a stated priority. In March 2004 a 'Celebrating Difference' Event was held which engaged black and minority ethnic and white young people aged 11 to 18 years. A number of creative workshops were organised in order to explore perceptions and celebrate the ethnic diversity of Plymouth and the wider community, to encourage young people to share aspects of their own culture and learn about other cultures and to learn new skills. *Plymouth Pathfinder*

The Escape to Safety exhibition, which was brought to Wigan is an emotional experience, combined with facts and figures, which challenges racism towards refugees. The exhibition used true life-stories and views recorded by three refugee visitors and followed a multimedia "journey." It was reported that the exhibition provoked a dramatic change in the attitudes of many children and adults. Some already had positive views and didn't change, but a vast majority admitted to previous negative stereotyping of refugees and said they now had a greater understanding of the challenges faced by refugees. *Wigan Shadow Pathfinder*

A children's drama "Peace Child" was produced in Charnwood, this brought together children from many local schools. The project brought together children from a variety of schools to work on the production, to counteract some of the inter-school tensions that were emerging locally.
Charnwood Pathfinder

Top tips for success – Dos and Don'ts

✔ Do invest time in training those who will go out and deliver the messages.

✔ Do use children and young people as a first point of contact, they are the gateway to the rest of their family.

✔ Do build in a process for testing and challenging on a frequent basis, this will enable you to establish long term trends.

✔ Do try to avoid using language that conjures up stereotypes – e.g. replace words like 'asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees' with neutral words like 'new families'

✗ Don't think that you have to 'badge' an activity using public sector terminology such as community cohesion or conflict resolution. Much time can be wasted on establishing definitions instead of getting on with the job at hand.

✗ Don't be tempted to think that perceptions can change overnight.

Practical Example

Developing Relationships with the Media

The West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder developed a relationship with the Trinity Mirror Group in an attempt to influence the local press, increase opportunities for local people and improve access for communities to local papers.

The three-way partnership of Trinity Mirror, Ealing Community and Voluntary Service and senior press officers from the local authorities brought an exceptional range of skills and knowledge to bear on the key questions of how to portray local communities and interactions between them, how to make news without resorting to stereotypes or sensationalism and how to present 'good news' effectively. Even familiarising all partners with the 'community cohesion' terminology required lengthy and subtle discussions. Changes have been made in the local papers as a result of this in order to ensure that, in accordance with the definition of community cohesion, 'the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued.'

At a final media seminar, representatives of black and minority ethnic and refugee communities and community media were openly appreciative of the work of Trinity Mirror Southern and of the changes in the content and approach in the local newspapers. Both sides welcomed the use of good contact lists and committed themselves to keeping these up to date.

More detailed tips on working with the media can be found at:
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/cohesion/keydocs.html
A guide on generating positive public relations and media coverage can be accessed at:
www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publicationsdetail.asp?id=574&freetext=media

Encouraging Banal Encounters

Rochdale Pathfinder developed a campaign called "Who put the T(ea) in BriTain?". As part of this project the Pathfinder undertook a series of events, publicity and dissemination activities to promote a debate on the cultural links between Britain and the subcontinent. Rochdale has a significant population of south Asian origin, mainly from Pakistan and Bangladesh and the campaign was designed to promote greater understanding of the links and common points between apparently diverse cultures.

Making tea an emblem of the campaign served to underline the fact that something apparently English is in fact a product of cultures cross-fertilising. The campaign provided a talking point for local communities and the encouragement of 'banal encounters' between neighbours. The campaign had the support of local businesses and aimed to get people from different cultural groups, faiths and generations sharing a cup of tea. It went 'on the road' to shopping centres and schools.

Myth Busting

A subgroup of Pendle Partnership, funded through East Lancs Together, worked on themes and issues for the cartoon strips, alongside a local cartoonist and writer. Cartoon characters were used to help debunk local myths correcting exaggerated views or justifying and explaining real situations. In Pendle it was also felt that cartoons would have the benefit of injecting some humour into the difficult world of community cohesion.

As a result of working closely with the editor, the cartoons have been developed and are now serialised in the local newspaper.

Step 6: Community Cohesion and Specialist Areas

There are clear links between community cohesion and other areas such as the local economy, health and housing. Poor planning of housing developments and decisions about the local economy can adversely affect community cohesion. Equally it is more difficult for people to get actively involved in their communities unless they have access to health and good quality housing and a degree of financial security within their family.

Local Employers and Community Cohesion
Encouraging local employers to think about recruiting people from the local area is an important aspect of building community cohesion. A quote from a West London Pathfinder's conference aptly sums up the situation.

"Experience and research has shown us that one of the best ways of helping new migrants and their families to become integrated into the UK, is to enable those who are economically active to move into work. Yet moving into work for a variety of reasons is often fraught with difficulties for the would-be employee and employer. It is important to demonstrate that new migrants are making an active contribution to the economy, rather than being a drain on it, as this can also counter misperceptions and myths about migrants."
West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder

Various methods can be used to encourage local people into employment and to improve community cohesion. These include:
• improving the employability of local people;
• encouraging employers to employ local people; and
• improving relationships between people whilst at work.

Case Studies
A working group of the West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder put together a good practice guide on local recruitment. This was designed to encourage and assist local employers to make employment opportunities available for local people and to help community organisations set up schemes for local people to move into work.
West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder

Rochdale Pathfinder ran a conference entitled 'Equality And Diversity Is Good For Business'. The aims and objectives of the conference were to:
• explore 'what is diversity'?
• share information on equality and diversity, best practice and the benefits to business;
• hear about examples from leading organisations who have benefited through equality and diversity initiatives.

The conference was well attended by over 100 delegates and brought together representatives from the private, public and voluntary sector.
Rochdale Pathfinder

'Oldham United' is a private sector initiative set up by a group of local companies. It promotes the business case for corporate social responsibility and workforce diversity. They have held a series of 'managed exchanges' at different company premises to demonstrate the importance of recruiting a diverse workforce and the benefits of doing so. *Oldham Shadow Pathfinder.*

There are clear links between the economic regeneration of specific areas and community cohesion. In an area of high unemployment, community cohesion will not be assisted if the majority of new jobs in a regeneration area are taken by people who live outside of the area.

In areas with student populations, there can be a conflict between the substantial economic benefits brought by students and the negative effects on housing availability and affordability. This can have a serious impact on community cohesion and relationships between the local population and student population.

Where 'town-gown' relationships are poor, students can feel unwelcome which can have a negative effect on numbers of students moving into an area and a subsequent impact on the economy.

Case Studies
The Tameside community cohesion programme is directly linked to the major economic development sites in the area and developed a project to ensure that local people were equipped to compete for the new jobs.

The programme engages with employers moving into the Economic Development Zone (EDZ) to identify their skill and recruitment needs and then brokers schemes offering guaranteed job interviews for people from the most disadvantaged communities. Linked to the project is a 'priority skills worker' who negotiates with local providers of employment skills training and support to ensure they are able to deliver training linked to the skills needs of employers.

The programme collects data on all people who obtain employment by area, race and disability and matches this to the employers moving in to the EDZ so that we are able to identify if any communities are not being successful in obtaining the new employment opportunities.

An integrated partnership approach can ensure that all communities can take advantage of the employment opportunities created by major developments. This is especially true where these jobs are in retail or leisure.

However, if we are truly going to ensure that all communities can gain employment in the higher waged jobs, further work needs to be done to enable them to acquire the higher level skills required. *Tameside Shadow Pathfinder*

In Charnwood, the effects of a large student population upon cohesion have been a particular issue. One ward has a student population of over 50% which means that neighbourhoods can be 'ghost towns' in summer. Late night drinking can cause problems and permanent residents feel resentment. Charnwood is undertaking work to bring students and permanent residents together and to make both feel better about their neighbourhoods. *Charnwood Pathfinder*

Local employers have been used as a means of getting the community cohesion message across to local residents by building on their self interest in ensuring employees do not get involved in community conflict.

If community cohesion is to be built within the community, it is equally important that this cohesion continues within the workplace. Developing guidance for employers on building a cohesive workplace has been one response to this.

Case Study
Blackburn with Darwen was not a Pathfinder area, but they have completed a lot of work with local employers in the area of community cohesion. This includes launching an 'Investor in Cohesion Toolkit'. This toolkit takes employers through the steps they need to think about in order to achieve cohesion in the workplace and to become an accredited 'Investor in Cohesion'.
These include:
• understanding community and workplace;
• establishing a cohesion baseline;
• developing cohesion;
• ensuring equality of opportunity;
• recruitment;
• cultural preferences and workplace practice;
• business advantage; and
• reviewing and maintaining cohesion.

In addition, the toolkit provides a number of training

Community Cohesion and Housing Market Renewal

Community cohesion has a critical role to play in the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programmes taking place in the North and the West Midlands. Whilst the nine HMR programmes should generate significant economic regeneration within the areas it is important that the bricks and mortar elements of the programme (that is, clearance and demolition) take into account the impact on cohesion and settled communities. There are both opportunities and threats associated with HMR.

Potential opportunities include:
• badly needed housing investment in areas of entrenched poverty and deprivation; and
• a chance to overcome one aspect of parallel lives by creating new areas of integrated housing.

Potential threats include:
• breaking up well established communities;
• fear of isolation and harassment if communities are dispersed; and
• tensions over who is seen to benefit and who is seen to lose out - exploited politically.

Cohesion should be considered in all aspects of a HMR programme. In the development of an HMR plan you could usefully:
• ensure the cohesion strategy is linked to the HMR programme effectively;
• work with LSP organisations to integrate and co-ordinate their actions more effectively to support cohesive principles;
• map current activities and interventions;
• develop tools with respect to impact assessment;
• provide opportunities to share baseline data in respect of communities;
• provide advice and support in developing detailed plans in respect of intervention areas and the support to neighbourhoods;
• establish standards with respect to media and communication which support principles of cohesion;
• assist capacity building though advice, training and support to community forums in respect of valuing diversity and cohesion; and

• commission training and development programmes for communities/organisations to help them prepare for change.

Examples of good practice relating to HMR and community cohesion include:
• integration of refugees in new housing developments; and
• black and minority ethnic and mainstream housing providers working closely together on allocations.

Community Cohesion and Health

Community cohesion is also closely associated with the health of an area and inequalities in access to health and there are some examples of Pathfinders working with health providers to map the relationship between community cohesion and health. There are a number of established tools that can be used to do this:

• Health Needs Assessment – this measures the health needs of different groups and their access to services;
• Health Impact Assessment – this measures the impact that particular policies or programmes will have on the health of a group or area; and
• Integrated Impact Assessment – this combines the measurement of impact on health with the impact on other dimensions of an area including community cohesion, the economy and the environment.

For more information on these see Health Development Agency website www.hda.nhs.uk or www.healthaction.nhs.uk

community cohesion agenda in that many quality of life objectives have a direct link to enhanced community cohesion. *Stoke-on-Trent Pathfinder*

Although there are few examples of Pathfinders working on health related projects, the following example from Oldham lists a number of ideas for developing projects which link health and community cohesion.

Case Study
Cottoning On is a project developed by Oldham PCT in recognition of the importance of community cohesion to the development of health in the area. Projects include:
- improving mental health support to South Asian Women;
- supporting black and minority ethnic women to develop healthier communities through volunteer activity;
- training for young parents in parenting and health issues;
- easy access to web-based health information for young people; and
- involvement of young people in the development of a fitness trail and the promotion of healthier lifestyles. *Oldham Shadow Pathfinder*

Community Cohesion and Community Safety
Community cohesion has strong links with community safety since much of community cohesion is about reducing tension between groups and the perceived threat posed by other groups. The work of many Community Safety partnerships also focuses on this. Many Community Safety Partnerships have developed work around town centres, reducing crime and the fear of crime and reducing tensions between different groups – particularly in the evening.

Anti-social behaviour has many forms, it can be noisy neighbours, graffiti, litter, abandoned cars on the street or drunken disorder. Anti-social behaviour can hold back the regeneration of disadvantaged areas and damages quality of life. It also has a negative effect on community cohesion in several ways:
- it can make people afraid to go out or to visit certain parts of the city;
- the resentment and unhappiness it causes can be one of the reasons why some communities make scapegoats of others; and
- alcohol fuelled disputes between different groups can lead to raised community tensions.

Case Study
The Evening Economy Project is led by the Peterborough Community Safety Partnership. Its aim is to bring together stakeholders to minimise the level of anti-social behaviour and maximise partnership working. It concentrates on reducing tensions and targets 14-17 year olds who are the next generation of visitors to the city centre. The first action was to host a conference in May 2004 involving a number of local businesses. The outcomes from this will be incorporated into a strategy. *Peterborough Pathfinder*

Top tips for success – Dos and Don'ts
- ✔ Do remember that communication through local employers can be a good way of connecting with local residents.
- ✔ Do encourage local employers and incoming employers to recruit local residents.
- ✔ Do work with community groups, trainers and local employers to skill up local residents so they can take up job opportunities.
- ✔ Do ensure that cohesion is integrated into any housing initiatives including Housing Market Renewal initiatives.
- ✘ Don't forget about employers. Consider working with them to encourage cohesion in the workplace.
- ✘ Don't forget to work with your Primary Care Trust (PCT), as inequalities in health access are closely related to cohesion
- ✘ Don't forget about your Community Safety Partnership. They share similar objectives of working to improve cohesion and reduce anti-social behaviour.

A Practical Example

Investor in Cohesion Employers Toolkit

The following is an extract from Blackburn and Darwen's Investor in Cohesion Toolkit. Blackburn with Darwen is not a Pathfinder area, but like many other local authorities, it has made considerable progress in developing community cohesion. The toolkit identifies eight elements which make up a cohesive workplace. Elements one and six are abridged and summarised here.

Element 1: Understanding Community and Workplace. It will be useful for any employer to understand the economic, cultural and social background of both the community from which his or her workforce is drawn and of the workforce itself. You will probably have a good knowledge both drawn from your own research and from dealing with businesses and people in the community at large, and with your employees. To take this a step further, the successful development of cohesion in the workplace will be greatly assisted if you, your workforce and the trainers who deliver cohesion training are all aware of this background information. Here are some questions you might wish to focus on in developing this understanding.

- do you know what languages are spoken in the community and amongst your workforce?
- do you know which faiths are represented in the community and amongst your workforce?
- do any of your workforce have particular needs for flexibility in their times of attendance or absence from work which arise from their culture or faith? Are these needs met?
- do any of your workforce have particular dietary needs or preferences which arise from their culture or faith. Are these needs met?
- are particular sections of the community disadvantaged in the labour market? If so do you know why? Does the situation have any effect on your work place?

Element 6: Cultural Preferences and Workplace Practice. An important element of a cohesive workplace is its capacity to respect the different needs of employees arising from their cultures and faiths. Areas for employers to consider include the flexibility of working hours, the operation of a dress code and the dietary requirements of different cultures. Flexibility in Working Hours - a constructive approach from all involved to listen to staff concerns, can deal with any issues arising from cultural requirements and working time.

- prayer is a vital part of many faiths. Muslims for example, are likely to wish to pray in the morning, afternoon, evening and at night. Each set of prayers takes five to ten minutes and some may fall within working time. If a clean, secure area for prayer is provided in the workplace, staff will not need to travel away from the workplace to perform their prayers. Employers should be able to agree when any period of absence can be made up;
- Muslims will also need to travel to Mecca to perform the hajj pilgrimage. Staff may need up to three weeks leave in order to perform the pilgrimage. Company annual leave policy should take this into account;
- when Hindus celebrate festivals such as Diwali, they may need to prepare for duties in the home and the temple. Members of the Jewish community may not be able to work on the Sabbath, during Yom Kippur or other festivals;
- during periods of fasting Muslim staff will need to break their fast each day at sunset. During the winter, this may fall within work time and employers need to be aware that the fast is broken with water and some fruits which staff may need to consume at work;
- women may need to go home and prepare the evening meal.

Step 7: Ensuring Sustainability of Programmes

What is sustainability all about and why is it important?

Sustainability is about linking community cohesion to the mainstream delivery of services and ensuring that your vision can be delivered over time and in the face of conflicting priorities and diminishing resources.

Mainstreaming can be defined as the process of moving from time-bound, area based or ad-hoc programmes to universal services which are available to everyone and become part of the long term landscape of service provision. Mainstreaming involves more than changing plans and policies, it also involves changing hearts and minds. This will be one of your greatest challenges and you may not see the evidence of your hard work for years to come. What will be important is that foundations are properly and securely laid for enabling projects and initiatives to make an impact into the future.

"Sustainability must be planned from day one. Either ensure that a project can be continued or plan projects that can be one off". *Charnwood Pathfinder.*

"It is easier to sustain things if community cohesion work is not seen as an additional thing to do, but as part of normal good practice". *Kirklees Pathfinder.*

"Whatever we do must not be a short term quick fix, the reasons for this are self evident, issues can only be addressed and continue to be avoided if the solutions have longevity and are sustainable. *Slough Shadow Pathfinder.*

What factors influence the potential for sustainability?

As has been frequently raised in this toolkit, your local circumstance will impact on your ability to drive initiatives through. However, no single challenge is unique and it can be overcome through making use of existing practice or establishing new and innovative practices.

Where Pathfinders have succeeded in mainstreaming or sustaining their community cohesion projects, this was because one or more of the following factors came into play:

- there was a strong level of buy in from the LSPs. Involvement of the LSP from the project's inception was instrumental in ensuring that project aims were understood and supported by a wide range of democratic, community and voluntary sector representatives;
- 'community cohesion proofing' of long term planning documents was undertaken;
- community cohesion projects were integrated into existing longer term programmes, such as neighbourhood renewal and community safety;
- energy was directed into training and development of those delivering community cohesion messages;
- individuals were specifically recruited to lead key projects and ensure that these projects remained visible and relevant;
- stakeholders, e.g. voluntary and community sector representatives championed the projects,

which meant that ownership was promoted outside of the Pathfinder;

• innovative projects became in such demand that continuation of them was viable; and

• alternative funding and/or sponsorship was found outside of the Pathfinder to carry on the projects in the community.

Case Studies

The REWIND programme in Sandwell is a peer education approach to anti racism that is primarily delivered in schools and youth settings. The programme explores with participants the roots of racism as a social construct and through introducing knowledge of history and science, breaks down the myths that are the building blocks underpinning racism. This programme was expanded in the summer of 2003 and has delivered its unique programme to many primary and secondary schools in Sandwell. REWIND is especially targeting schools in deprived or 'hot-spot' neighbourhoods.

The existing REWIND team is based in the Primary Care Trusts and there is no dedicated full time officer. Funding has been put in place for a team for 2 years with support from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the Children's Fund. The Local Education Authority is also a partner and is negotiating how aspects of the programme might be mainstreamed. In addition to the work with young people the REWIND initiative will support training and awareness raising among elected members, decision-makers, leaders and officers working in Sandwell. *Sandwell Pathfinder*

In Tower Hamlets, Bishop Challoner School, which led on the work with pupils from different schools, is being supported to sustain the work developed thorough the Extended Schools community cohesion funding.
Tower Hamlets Shadow Pathfinder

Pathfinders largely made use of a common sense approach to mainstreaming. However, this can be easier said than done if you are faced with challenges such as:

• limited political support to carry out activities;

• having to 'tread carefully' in your community so as not to exacerbate existing tensions with the community;

• constant changes in personnel, effecting the momentum for your planned or current projects;

• difficulties around delivering work concerning communities of interest in largely geographically-

focused work; and

• having an unsupportive media, who won't shout about your successes.

Top tips for success – Dos and Don'ts

✔ Do begin with the ambition of mainstreaming projects. Sustainability should be one of the first issues addressed when programmes are being developed.

✔ Do continue year on year to build community cohesion into service plans, it is not a one off exercise.

✔ Do think about innovation, the more interesting the project the higher the demand for it to continue.

✔ Do ensure projects have a mix of representatives to make them credible – this means having good representation from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors.

✘ Don't re-invent the wheel, tap into what already exists on the ground and add value that way.

✘ Don't leave funding decisions to the last minute – think about resources up front

✘ Don't fixate on delivery to the exclusion of other things – ensure the project infrastructure is stable.

✘ Don't try and go it alone! Look to your partners and initiate a discussion with them.

✘ Don't raise expectations without having the support and the funding to carry projects through

Practical Examples

Integration of community cohesion into external programmes

In Southwark, community cohesion has consistently been integrated into the Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) programme, it is one of the main criteria considered when allocating funding particularly at a neighbourhood level, and to the community and voluntary sector infrastructure in the borough.

Renewal Managers in neighbourhoods consider funding activities which will contribute to community cohesion in priority neighbourhoods. These include: newsletters, youth activities, training, support to refugees and asylum seekers, support to Travellers and community events. All organisations funded through the allocation for community and voluntary sector infrastructure are required to monitor the range of people they work with, and the extent to which they are promoting community cohesion. In addition, community cohesion is one of the criteria for NR community chest funding for small groups.

Specifically through the work of the Pathfinder, there are examples of integration within the NR programme (and ultimately with a view to mainstreaming within the Council programme):

• the NR and Community Cohesion Pathfinder are directly linked through the work of the youth and community cohesion co-ordinator, who is funded by NR but implements Pathfinder activities. Neighbourhood Renewal Funding has now been agreed to continue the work beyond the completion of the Pathfinder; and

• the South Bermondsey Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder was awarded funds by Central Government. Cohesion will continue to be a core focus of this and other renewal programmes. Learning from South Bermondsey has influenced the activities for the priority Neighbourhood Plans elsewhere in the borough.

Integration of community cohesion into service delivery

Southwark have also made some progress in influencing service delivery, through mainstreaming:

• having piloted and further developed the 'Tools for Dealing with Racism' training package the Pathfinder is in discussion with the Police, Social Services and Community Wardens about developing a specific package for them, and about building it into their core training programme;

• in addressing anti-social behaviour within the neighbourhood, the Social Landlords' Community Cohesion Group in South Bermondsey & Livesey, is seeking to ensure that work on enforcement goes hand-in hand with constructive interventions that build long-term sustainable relationships between individual tenants and between different estates; and

• through the Children and Young People's Partnership Board and Save the Children Fund, training and tool kits on youth participation have been developed and accessed by service providers. The board has allocated funding to recruit a participation worker to continue the work.

Appendix:
Pathfinder Contact Details

Contact Details for the 14 Pathfinders are outlined below.

Bury Pathfinder
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Charnwood Pathfinder
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East Lancs Together – Lancashire County Council, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle and Rossendale District Councils
Ian McHugh
East Lancs Together
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Kirklees Pathfinder
Karen Johnson
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Leicester Pathfinder
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Mansfield Pathfinder
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Plymouth Pathfinder
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Rochdale Pathfinder
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Sandwell Pathfinder
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Southwark Pathfinder
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Stoke on Trent Pathfinder
Silvia Mctaggart
Stoke-on-Trent City Council
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West London Community Cohesion Partnership – London Boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow
Sabin Malik
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Shadow Pathfinder Contact Details

Contact details for the 13 Shadow Pathfinders are outlined below.

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Oldham Shadow Pathfinder
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Wigan Shadow Pathfinder
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Notes