

One Peterborough One Community

Community Cohesion Strategy



February 2012

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Introduction

Community cohesion is very easy to take for granted. When we have it, we almost don't notice it. However, when cohesion is missing, its absence can create a range of social problems from the minor to civil disorder.

Community cohesion is both very simple and incredibly complex. It exists everywhere; in our schools, offices, shops and neighbourhoods. Put simply, it is about ensuring different groups of people get on well together. It is not just another word for diversity or equality.

It is recognising that we may not all be the same, but we treat each other with equality and with mutual respect. Often, community cohesion is described as the gel that sticks us together. It makes our society function with a strong sense of belonging and community spirit. A cohesive society is one where strong and positive relationships exist and where people's differences are celebrated and valued.

Peterborough has a proud history of being a peaceful, vibrant and tolerant city. To ensure that our city remains peaceful, the Greater Peterborough Partnership has developed a community cohesion strategy to promote greater harmony and reduce tensions between communities.

Our vision is to create a truly sustainable Peterborough that is a healthy, safe and exciting place to live, work and visit.

Cllr Irene Walsh

Cabinet Member for Cohesion

Paul Phillipson

Chair of Community Cohesion Board



What is community cohesion?

Put simply, community cohesion brings groups of people from different faiths, race, cultures, ages and backgrounds together and helps us all get on. Community cohesion allows us to celebrate the best of other cultures, share common values and respect our differences.

Put simply, community cohesion is the social glue that binds communities together.

The Government has defined cohesion as:

- A shared future vision and a sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of community
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds

What do we mean by 'community'?

Within this strategy, we have defined community as:

- People living or working within a defined geographical area, for example; a council ward, neighbourhood or housing estate
- People who share a particular identity, for example; people of a similar age, who have a disability, practice the same faith or students

Within Peterborough community cohesion means:

- Giving everybody similar life opportunities
- Better understanding of our individual rights and responsibilities
- Trusting one another and local institutions acting fairly
- Sharing a vision and a sense of belonging
- Recognising and valuing diversity
- Creating strong and positive relationships within the whole community





Our Values

We believe that Peterborough's cultural diversity is one of its greatest strengths and the city's future depends upon people from different backgrounds getting on well with each other.

Peterborough should be a place where:

- People from different backgrounds get on well with each other – in the community, at work and at school
- Age, gender, race, religion or beliefs, disability, sexual orientation and cultural differences must be respected and valued
- People are proud of their city, and its surrounding, and can have a say in its future
- The contribution of young people to the life of Peterborough must be recognised and facilitated
- Peterborough's image, to its own people and to the outside world is of a vibrant and cohesive community

Our aim is that these values should be reflected in the policies and delivery of the public services and community and voluntary groups within the city.

Our Strategy

Our overarching aim is to make Peterborough a more cohesive city by enabling everyone, regardless of background, belief or circumstances to be respected and feel part of the community.

We have identified four key priorities where we believe we can have the most impact on improving cohesion:

- Tackling hate crime (where an offender targets a victim because of his or her ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability etc) and reduce tensions in the city
- Engaging young people - especially those who are not in education, employment or training
- Improving access and take up of services in deprived neighbourhoods and families
- Promoting a better understanding and harmony between Travellers, Gypsies and the wider community





Success story one

Faith Statement and 'One Voice One Community' event

On 5 December 2010 faith groups came together and signed a faith statement which publicly pledged their commitment to stand together against anyone who seeks to divide or sow seeds of distrust.

This ceremony was held at the Peterborough Cathedral and supported by leaders from all faiths including different denominations. After the faith statement was signed, it was taken by a procession to the Town Hall where the Mayor started a signature book in support.

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On 12 December 2010, the Faith and Cohesion Network organised 'One Voice and One Community' outside the Cathedral. It was attended by over 700 people from all walks of life. The event was marked by a peace vigil with message of peace and tolerance.

The faith statement was taken back to the Cathedral where it remains to be displayed for all visitors.

One Peterborough, One Community

- a brief history of community cohesion in Peterborough

'One Peterborough, One Community'

is not something that is as new to Peterborough as one may think. It has in fact been developing within Peterborough from our beginnings over two thousand years ago, when the migrating Austrian Celts settled here originally in about 45 BC. The area soon became a settlement known as Medeshamstede, which roughly translates into 'A Home in the Meadow'.

In the seventh century, Peterborough became the site for a new monastic Order of Christian Benedictine Monks who were renowned for embracing and welcoming weary and lost travellers. They provided food and shelter for the poor and those who were in distress, or unable to care for themselves.

Today, Peterborough has a rich cultural diversity that gives it a unique cosmopolitan feeling. There could be no better expression of how this city is a beacon to the world and has stood the test of time. Our city can rightfully take its place as one of the most forward looking cities in Europe. It has never been afraid of change or adapting to a modern way of life and has a cohesive strength like no other city in Britain. Through the historical and cultural diversity, we can truly be proud to call our city **"One Peterborough, One Community"**.

Brian Gascoyne

*Community Cohesion Board member
and Chair of Millfield and New England
Regeneration Partnership (MANERP)*

'One Peterborough, One Community' is not something that is as new to Peterborough as one may think'.

How can we improve community cohesion??

The cohesion strategy is overseen by the Community Cohesion Board – part of the Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP). The GPP is Peterborough's Local Strategic Partnership; the body that unites the public, private, faith, community and voluntary sectors together to work collectively together.

Through our partnership working we will:

- Positively engage and understand our communities
- Monitor, manage and reduce community tensions including extremism
- Identify issues which may affect community relations and proactively develop multi agency responses to address them
- Recognising the contribution that communities play in achieving a sense of belonging



Success story two

Engaging young people

Successfully engaging young people is a priority for the community cohesion Board. Young people have made a significant contribution to keeping our city cohesive. Some of the ways in which we have positively worked with young people are:

- Unity Saturday Club - the Unity Saturday Club was set up for 12 to 18 year olds and ran at a local nightclub during the day. The project was set up in response to young people not having enough to do during the winter. Young people were able to listen to music, play computer games or try MC-ing. The project was considered a great success with young people and led to a considerable reduction in anti social behaviour.
- Public engagement events – a number of public meetings have been held to discuss community issues of concern. These have ranged from British Foreign Policy (held in conjunction with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) to the protest march by the English Defence League. These meetings have proved a successful way to debate controversial topics and allow young people to have a voice.
- Youth MP – Kamal Hyman is the elected youth MP for Peterborough and is able to represent the views and experiences of young people in a range of different partnerships, including the Community Cohesion Board. Kamal is organising an event to celebrate Black History Month and will shortly be delivering a series of school talks on youth employment.

Single Delivery Plan

The GPP has developed a Single Delivery Plan which pulls together the cross cutting strategic priorities for the city as a whole. The long term agenda is to create a bigger and better Peterborough by:

There are seven programmes of the Single Delivery Plan which are:

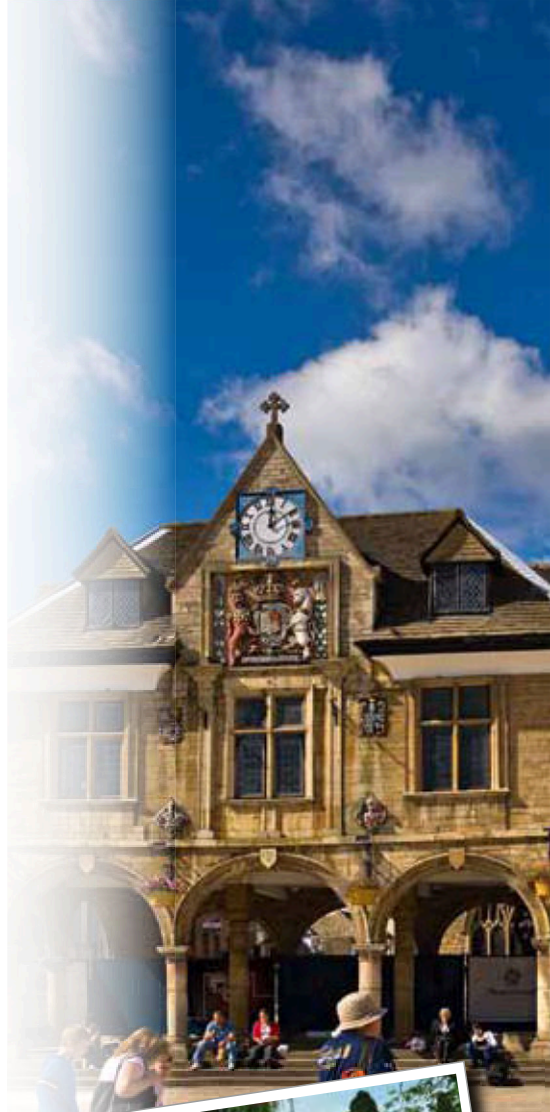


The GPP Executive will oversee delivery of the Single Delivery Plan as outlined in the structure plan contained within appendix 2.

How do we know if we're making a difference?

A vibrant and diverse Peterborough which enjoys strong community relations has a positive impact on everyone who lives, works and visits the city. Community cohesion is part of our everyday lives and often goes unnoticed. However, there are many positive examples of community cohesion within the city. These include:

- Perkins Great Eastern Run
- International Children's festival
- Race for Life
- Big Lunch in neighbourhoods
- Pride in Peterborough event in college/schools
- Dozens of fayres, fetes and festivals
- Schools conference on celebrating diversity and challenging homophobia
- Leadership seminars led by the Faith and Cohesion network
- Community forums (for example the Disability forum which seeks to engage and influence public services on a whole range of local and national policies)
- Intergeneration conference
- International Childrens Festival





Success story 3

St George's Hydrotherapy Pool

Improving cohesion within the city can come about in many different ways. The re-opening of the hydrotherapy pool is an excellent example of how a problem can empower an individual and provide an essential facility for many of the city's residents enabling them to lead fuller lives.

When local resident Karen Oldale discovered that the hydrotherapy pool at the old Peterborough hospital was to close, she took matters into her own hands to ensure that this vital facility would not be lost.

Hydrotherapy is a form of physiotherapy treatment conducted in a small heated swimming pool where people undertake specially designed exercise to regain or enhance their well-being. Around 35,000 residents have long-term health conditions could benefit from this facility.

Karen brought the issue to the attention of the NHS who worked with partners to develop a replacement facility.

A year later, Karen was celebrating as Peterborough's first community hydrotherapy pool opened.

Our last survey showed that 67.8 per cent (national average 75.8 per cent) of people thought that Peterborough was a place where people from different backgrounds got on well together.

Karen, who now regularly uses the pool said "St George's Community Hydrotherapy Pool is beyond my expectations, it really is a superb facility.

Community cohesion is a difficult area to accurately measure. Public perceptions are the most important factor in measuring levels of community cohesion. Our last survey showed that 67.8 per cent (national average 75.8 per cent) of people thought that Peterborough was a place where people from different backgrounds got on well together.

The use of modern technology such as the city council's Neighbourhood Window system can draw together information from a range of sources. By regularly monitoring information, the Community Cohesion Board can review performance, identify trends and hot spots and commission activity from partners to address issues.



Our future

Peterborough is recognised as a major growth hotspot for the region and nationally. We have undertaken a number of major projects which have included; the redevelopment of Cathedral Square, a financial school as part of the University campus and the City West project to transform the station gateway potentially creating 8,000 jobs and 1,000 new homes. Other projects include the £35million redevelopment of Edith Cavell Hospital, the regeneration of the South Bank and the ongoing work to position Peterborough as the UK's Environmental capital.

Community cohesion plays a vital role for all those who live and work in the city. Often we focus on the issues and problems within our city and whilst it is right that we do so, we mustn't overlook the great number of successes we have

had and will continue to have. There are untold every day activities that bring our communities together and help breakdown barriers. In shops and libraries, offices and public spaces, communities interact and make Peterborough a peaceful and successful city.

Each one of us can play a role in making our city more cohesive. From helping out a neighbour, to organising a citywide festival there are opportunities for everyone to make a difference.

The future prospects for our city are bright and having a strong and cohesive society continues to make a positive difference to people's daily lives. A cohesive community will help our city grow into a vibrant place where people want to live, work and visit.

For further information on this document please contact Peterborough City Council Neighbourhood Services Community Cohesion team:

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Community Cohesion Board



Partnership structure



Our Key Achievements

The Cohesion Board, through its partners have developed and delivered a number of successful projects and interventions. A selection of these is set out below:

Engaging and understanding our community

1. The Faith Community Network has been established to work on common social issues across a range of different faiths and communities.
2. We have worked in partnership with MANERP (Millfield and New England Regeneration Partnership) to respond to challenges around growing communities especially in housing and education.
3. Facilitated the development of numerous community and resident groups to have a voice within the community and engage with public services.
4. We have held a number of public Free Discussion forums to debate sensitive and complex agendas. Topics so far covered include British foreign policy, Islamophobia and Stop and Search.

Monitor, manage and reduce community tensions

1. Partnership working to identify and address hate crime issues in the city. Key issues have been the identification of hot spot areas, raising awareness of hate crimes and ways in which crimes can be reported.
2. Work in a multi agency partnership through Tension Monitoring Group to strategically review inter community tensions, identify and implement solutions.
3. Engaged vulnerable young people through youth workers and diversionary activities in partnership with voluntary and community sector and PCC 8-19 service.
4. Workshops for front line community workers are taking place to address myths and misconceptions regarding different communities.

Identify issues which may effect community relations

1. The lack of English language can lead to a range of social problems for individuals. We have worked in partnership to increase the

availability and access to ESOL provision within the city.

2. The 2011/12 community cohesion action plan developed for the first time cross cutting priorities that deliver against a number of the priorities outlined in the single delivery plan. A Project Review Group has been established to monitor progress and review delivery.
3. In 2011 a schools conference was held to look at the role schools have in relation to cohesion and equality. 80 staff from schools across Peterborough attended.
4. Working with voluntary sector partners to look at ways which educational attainment and literacy support can be improved in deprived neighbourhoods.

Recognise the contribution that communities play in achieving a sense of belonging

1. Taxi drivers perform a vital public service for the city. A number of workshops have been held to look at issues, which most concern drivers. In addition, the Cohesion Board is keen to recognise the service taxi drivers bring, and from 2012 will be running a taxi driver of the award.
2. Many community associations are keen to host events that can bring people from different backgrounds together. The community cohesion grant provides small grants to these groups for just this purpose. In 2011/12 we estimate over 500 people will have benefited from this grant.
3. City Centre celebrations bring people together in a positive environment. We have worked with a number of partners to develop activities, which engage people from a range of different communities. Some examples include, Black History month, Inter Faith week, Big Lunch, One Voice, One Community event.
4. The disabled community can often struggle to have a voice within the city. The Cohesion Board has supported the Disability Forum to provide a platform for disabled to regularly meet and have meaningful dialogue in relation to policies from across the public sector.

