

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00 am, 6 December 2016

Promoting community cohesion in Edinburgh

Item number	7.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All

Executive summary

This report provides an update and overview of Council work to promote good community relations in Edinburgh.

Links

Coalition pledges	All
Council outcomes	All
Single Outcome Agreement	All

Promoting community cohesion in Edinburgh

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree that:
- future work to promote good community relations in Edinburgh is undertaken alongside the development of new Council approaches to tackling poverty, equality and rights objectives, and
 - actions and measures to monitor progress are embedded within the Council's strategic planning framework, including the Council Business Plan, Locality Improvement Plans for 2017-22, and the Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan for 2018-23.

Background

- 2.1 Edinburgh is home to a large and increasingly diverse variety of communities and cultures. One indicator of such change in the City is provided by an analysis of demographic shifts. In 1981 almost 96% of all Edinburgh residents were UK-born with this figure having shown little change since the 1930's when consistent data was first recorded. By 2011, this figure had dropped by 10 percentage points, with trends showing shifts in the number of residents from EU countries, as well as increased numbers of residents from China, Africa, the Indian sub-continent and other areas of the world.
- 2.2 Within this context of change and diversity, the City has maintained a commitment to ensuring cohesion between its communities. The strategic planning frameworks which guide Council and multi-agency work across the City clearly recognise the importance of good community relations as a cornerstone for improving the quality of life for all Edinburgh citizens.
- 2.3 Within a Council context, the Council Business Plan for 2016-20 sets out specific commitments to deliver resilient, safe and strong communities across the city. At the same time, the Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan for 2015-18 incorporates commitments to tackle poverty and inequality, and ensuring that Edinburgh's communities are healthier, safer and have improved physical and social fabric. This includes specific priority activity to improve community cohesion and participation; reduce antisocial behaviour, violence, and harm, and reduce re-offending. Priorities which contribute to this outcome also form a significant element of the Neighbourhood Partnership Local Community Plans. A range of local actions and service responses are delivered as part of this, with community cohesion forming one of the indicators of the overall success of the approach.

- 2.4 Across all these plans, the Council's current Equality and Rights Framework 2012/17 also describes specific commitments to promote good relations between those who share, and do not share, protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010). This framework is being reviewed with a new framework and set of outcomes planned for publication in April 2017.
- 2.5 While complex to quantify precisely, some evidence on community cohesion in Edinburgh can be drawn from qualitative survey work, from police data and other sources. Data from the 2015 Edinburgh People Survey provides a good headline measure of cohesion and finds that 83% of Edinburgh residents agree that their neighbourhood is a place where people of different backgrounds get along. This proportion is broadly consistent with recent waves of the research study, ranging from a high of 84% in 2013 to 81% in 2014. Overall, the research shows that the level of agreement was also similar between ethnic minorities (82%) and non-ethnic minorities (83%), though ethnic minorities/non-UK citizens were more likely to 'strongly agree' (44%) than other respondents (35%). Data relating to 2016 will be available for publication in early 2017.
- 2.6 Alongside evidence on cohesion, data from Police Scotland and other sources provide some evidence on outcomes which can arise when cohesion breaks down in communities. The latest statistics available in regard to hate crime across Edinburgh indicates a 3.2% drop in the number of crimes recorded based on same period last year (Apr-Oct). These figures cover the period of the EU Referendum result, following which a marked difference was observed in the hate crime levels reported in England and Wales compared to crimes reported in Scotland where no significant rise was reported. These data do, however, relate only to reported crimes and, as such, a great deal of work is carried out by third party organisations to address and capture instances of under-reporting across the city.
- 2.7 This report provides an update and overview of Council work to promote good community relations across the city.

Main report

Community Cohesion

- 3.1 Academic literature in this field gives a number of definitions of what is meant by good community relations or community cohesion. All sources, however, emphasise the importance of promoting a shared belonging and identity between communities, nurtured through interaction and shared participation. Within this context, a UK Government report from 2005 notes that:
- "A strong society relies on more than simply good individual life chances. Experience suggests that people also need a sense of common belonging and identity, forged through shared participation in education, work and social activities, and through mutual understanding of cultural difference."*
- 3.2 Building on these definitions, the Department of Communities and Local Government in 2008 provided a useful analysis of approaches to improving community cohesion, emphasising the importance of citizenship and community empowerment. The framework describes an integrated and cohesive society as one in which people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities,

know their rights and responsibilities, trust one another, and trust local institutions to act fairly.

3.3 Within such a society, the framework suggests that citizens in a cohesive society live together with:

- A shared future vision and sense of belonging;
- An understanding of what new and existing communities have in common, as well as a recognition of the value of diversity; and,
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

3.4 The importance of these outcomes is outlined in a recent report by the Scottish Government's Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion. The report describes the isolation and fear which arises as a result of poor community cohesion as "a threat to the basic values of an open and democratic society". In the long term, the report notes that the impacts of social isolation are often associated with poor personal mental and physical health and well being among individuals and families. Across society and the city as a whole, such isolation and poor community participation is associated with an increased potential risk of radicalisation, hate crime, violence, and social instability. The Scottish Government's Equality, Human Rights and Third Sector Division has produced strategic plans on community relations, and the EHRC Scotland has also published a code of practice on promoting good relations.

3.5 For these reasons, work to promote good community relations and address related issues such as prejudice and hate crime play a key role in efforts to maintain and improve the quality of life for citizens in all communities. As such, these issues should be recognised and promoted as not solely an issue for individual groups, but rather a priority for the whole of society.

Legislative drivers

3.6 The policy and legislative context for community cohesion in Scotland includes:

- Equality Act 2010
- Criminal Law Consolidation (Scotland) Act 1995 section 50A
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998, section 96
- Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003, section 74
- Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Act 2009, section 1
- The Scottish Government is refreshing its National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People.

Approaches in Edinburgh

3.7 The Council's approach to improving community relations in Edinburgh is structured around two inter-related workstreams. Work across all these areas are led by the Council, Edinburgh Partnership, and Neighbourhood Partnerships across the city:

1. **Promoting good community cohesion** – Including activity to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between communities in Edinburgh.

2. **Preventing or addressing the effects of poor community cohesion** – Including activities to safeguard vulnerable individuals, raise awareness of potential vulnerabilities and other impacts arising from poor community cohesion.

Promoting good community cohesion

- 3.8 This workstream incorporates work to promote good relations between ethnic and racial groups, between faith communities, between citizens of different age groups or generations, as well as work to promote LGBT rights and equality. Activity in this area includes engagement and capacity building with groups who share protected characteristics and those who do not, as well as approaches to embedding diversity policies and training across the organisation.
- 3.9 Activity in this workstream covers city-wide and neighbourhood based initiatives. Key work programmes and examples of projects undertaken to promote good community cohesion include:
- **Managing responses to Brexit.** The result of the referendum on the UK's relationship with the EU raises a number of questions for EU nationals resident in Edinburgh. Two member officer working groups have been established in recent months to understand the scope of impacts and identify responses for Edinburgh citizens. These include a Community Forum group established with specific remit to identify and assess the impact of the EU Referendum result on communities and neighbourhoods across Edinburgh.
 - **Neighbourhood Partnerships.** Working with communities is at the heart of the NP approach and critical to achieving the long-term, sustainable change which drives community planning and the public sector reform agendas. Communities are involved in a wide range of ways from participation in structures and decision making processes, to working with partners to develop and deliver service solutions in response to locally identified priorities. Locally devolved budgets play an important role in supporting this activity and critically grass roots development. For example, analysis of the allocation of the Community Grants Fund thematically identifies a significant number of awards aimed at supporting activities focused on young people, older people, community involvement, people with disabilities, faith groups and the BME community. This activity is further strengthened through the use of participatory budgeting which as an approach offers significant benefits in increasing levels of citizen participation and greater community cohesion.
 - **Interfaith relations.** The Edinburgh Interfaith Association works to promote religious harmony, diversity and equal opportunities in Edinburgh. The association is not currently funded by the Council, but does work with the Council on projects and represents the interests and needs of faith communities on the Edinburgh Partnership and other groupings. Work undertaken by the association and funded by the Scottish Government includes a programme of school visits to promote understanding of inter-faith and multicultural issues.

- **Responsible Citizenship:** Every school ensures all stakeholders in the whole school community are involved in the creation of unique vision and values for the school. Within the Curriculum for Excellence pupils are encouraged to show respect for others and to develop knowledge and understanding of different beliefs and cultures. This underpins a commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life. In addition to promoting respect and tolerance schools also apply an anti-bullying policy and address all incidents of bullying through their procedures.

LGBT equality and rights: The Council provides funding to organisations such as LGBT Youth Scotland and LGBT Health. These organisations work to promote the health, wellbeing and equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Edinburgh.
- **Race relations:** The West Edinburgh Group Against Racial Harassment (WEGARAH) provides an example of local partnership activity to address racial attacks and harassment in the community, and tackle inequalities in service delivery. The group brings together the Police, City of Edinburgh Council housing staff, the High School at Wester Hailes Education Centre and others, along with people from local minority ethnic communities. Members report that this forum creates an effective mechanism to hold agencies to account and likewise, for members to provide support to the agencies to guide equitable service delivery.
- Alongside examples such as WEGARAH, activities funded through the Community Grants Fund in 2015/16 include community events run by Prospect Community Housing addressing race and hate crime issues; activity programmes for older people developed by The Pakistan Society Information and Advice; and, support for Spartans Football Academy to establish a new club for minority ethnic children.
- **Intergenerational relations:** Example projects include a series of intergenerational events held in Gorgie/Dalry involving local schools and partner organisations. The project outline was to deliver an 'Intergenerational Project' bringing people of all ages together for activities relating to the history of the Gorgie Dalry and Saughton / Stenhouse areas. In total six events were planned and delivered across the Neighbourhood as a part of the project.
- **Dementia awareness:** Example projects include work undertaken by the Pentland Health & Wellbeing Action Group to deliver a dementia awareness campaign as well as a campaign to target Carers health & wellbeing. The project aimed to build a sustainable programme based around raising awareness of the illness and promoting key events to highlight service gaps and needs within each community area. Over the winter months the promotion campaign aims to tackle the stigma of Dementia working with partners and communities, including development of a programme promoting social inclusion for those diagnosed with dementia. This piece of work offers opportunities to widen involvement of other areas of older people's health and wellbeing.

Preventing or addressing the effects of poor community cohesion

- 3.10 This area of work is concerned with working with key partners to safeguard vulnerable individuals, raise awareness of potential vulnerabilities and other impacts arising from poor community cohesion related to violent extremism and hate crime in Edinburgh.
- 3.11 Hate crime is defined as ‘crime motivated by malice or ill will towards a social group by race, sexual orientation, religion / faith, disability or transgender / gender identity [Offences Aggravated by Prejudice Act 2010]. Police Scotland states that hate crimes target marginalised and vulnerable community members, causing devastation to victims and their families.
- 3.12 Hate crimes can be reported directly to the Police or, if victims / witnesses prefer it, through Third Party Reporting Centres, of which there are thirty in Edinburgh. Reported hate crime figures for Edinburgh are gathered via Police Scotland but it is important to note this does not incorporate figures for unreported hate crimes / incidents. The reasons for these events being unreported are varied and are thought to include issues of accessibility, awareness and confidence. In recognition of these issues, the Council and partners work with third party organisations to gather further evidence on the scale and impact of hate crime and incidences across the city.
- 3.15 This area of work also includes capacity building to prevent, address and develop multi-agency protocols and responses for a range of issues, for example, radicalisation and religiously motivated hate crime. Examples include a City Wide Hate Crime Community Improvement Partnership established in response to the rise in reported Islamophobic incidents. Chaired by the Chief Social Work Officer this group recently launched a Participatory Budgeting Funding Opportunity the focus of which is to foster good relations by promoting understanding and reducing prejudice. Such work also supports awareness raising sessions currently being delivered in partnership with members of the City’s Muslim communities.

Measures of success

- 4.1 Measures of success will be included in outcome based performance frameworks developed for Locality Improvement Plans 2017/22 and the new Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan 2018/23. There currently is a dedicated performance framework for Neighbourhood Partnerships, which includes measures of success relating to community participation and cohesion.

Financial impact

- 5.1 The financial impacts of poor community relations in the City, in terms of their impact on council services and other public services, can be extensive and varied. No specific action has ever been taken to quantify impacts on services or consequent costs.

- 5.2 A key element of the proposed BREXIT Community Forum will be identifying and supporting actions proposed by the Corporate Policy and Strategy Working Group to minimise and mitigate any financial impacts arising from the EU referendum result.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 Key risks identified in this area will feature as part of the Council's corporate risk register, and the Edinburgh Partnership Board's risk register.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 Recommendations outlined in this report will enable the Council to better meet its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. Specifically, the duty to promote good relations and related Scottish Statutory Instruments and EHRC Scotland Guidance

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 If approved, proposals outlined here will contribute to the delivery of Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 social and economic objectives.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 If approved, targeted consultation and engagement activity will be undertaken to identify and work with groups affected by community relations issues.

Background reading / external references

Corporate Policy and Strategy Report: EU Referendum Result – Managing Impacts in Edinburgh.

Andrew Kerr
Chief Executive

Contact: Kirsty-Louise Campbell – Head of Strategy and Insight (Interim)

Email: kirstylouise.campbell@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 529 3654

Links

Coalition pledges	All
Council outcomes	All
Community Plan	All
Appendices	None