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**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
- 21 July 2010

**Report of:** Chief Executive

**Subject:** North Manchester Community Cohesion Programme

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**Summary:**

To update members on a programme of activity to address community cohesion issues in north Manchester

**Recommendations:**

The committee is asked to note the contents of the report, provide feedback on the information provided and to request an update on the implementation of the community change and perception monitoring tool and Welcome/Information Pack in winter 2010.

**Wards Affected:**

Higher Blackley, Charlestown, Harpurhey, Moston, Cheetham, Crumpsall.

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact Martin Saker on the contact details provided above.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered progress on the Manchester Community Cohesion Action Plan at its meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2010. At the meeting members asked for a further update on two projects within the Action Plan to be presented to the July meeting. Both projects were being piloted as a programme of activity in North Manchester to address community cohesion issues. These being the implementation of a community change perception monitoring tool and a welcome pack. The community change and perception monitoring tool is currently being piloted in two wards Harpurhey & Cheetham. The trial will be completed in September 2010 when its impact will be evaluated for potential to roll out elsewhere in the City.
- 1.2 The principle of the Welcome Pack is to welcome people to Manchester and ensure that they are able to learn about the city and how to access services they need. A Pack was drafted for the Harpurhey Ward and contained information for all residents, not only those new to the area. Following consultation the feedback was that the focus of the pack had become too broad and was duplicating information that should be distributed by other means particularly the ward newsletter. In light of the feedback it was agreed that the pack be redesigned to focus particularly on new arrivals to north Manchester.
- 1.3 Progress on the community change perception monitoring tool and Welcome Pack will, therefore, be presented to the Committee at a future date when there is further data and the Welcome Pack has been developed. This report presents to Members for consideration, the overall community cohesion programme for North Manchester implemented during the 2009/10 financial year.

## 2. Background and context:

- 2.1 The headline measure of community cohesion is identified as the proportion of residents who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together. Between 2006 and 2008 there was an overall decrease in the cohesion measure across Manchester by 4%. This was in line with national trends. Half of the 8 wards in the city with the lowest level of cohesion identified by this measure were in north Manchester. These wards are Moston, Charlestown, Higher Blackley and Harpurhey. This confirmed anecdotal information being received by the regeneration team from residents, local services and ward councillors of an overall drop in cohesion across the wards but in particular an increase in tensions in the vicinity of Moston Lane and the predominantly private housing areas on either side of the Lane.
- 2.2 Funding from the Manchester Partnership innovation fund provided an opportunity to pilot activity to address community cohesion tensions in north Manchester. The pilot built upon activities already being undertaken through ward co-ordination and other neighbourhood partnerships. The premise for the

programme was that the issues relating to community cohesion are best tackled within the local community and through a partnership response

### 3. **Aims of the programme:**

#### 3.1 The aims of the programme were

- To address community tensions in particular neighbourhoods and across north Manchester through a series of **practical interventions**.
- **Building resilience and intelligence** within the community and neighbourhood services to prevent tensions escalating and issues arising in the future.
- **A research programme** to understand the causes of community tensions

#### 3.2 The programme was overseen by a multi-agency steering group of key agencies within North Manchester. The programme was reported to the Manchester Community Cohesion Steering Group.

### 4. **The programme:**

The programme consisted of a series of activities to address the aims of the project as outlined below.

#### 4.1 **Practical Interventions to address community cohesion issues.**

The key interventions were:

- Events and festival programme:** 11 events were held as part of a wider festival programme in North Manchester. Over 20,000 people attended the events of which 90% were from the local area. The events were held in areas where cohesion issues have been identified as being an issue. Feedback from residents was that these events did contribute to cohesion by bringing the community together, showcasing local talent and groups in a friendly cohesive environment
- Film Project in Charlestown:** The project was developed to get young and older people working positively together following intergenerational issues being identified in Charlestown. The film was around the topic of reducing carbon imprint. The project involved 89 young and older residents participating in the project, which was premiered in the Town Hall attended by 500 local people. The project allowed the different generations to learn from each other and addressed negative attitudes.
- Increasing positive news coverage** in the Advertiser and other local media to address negative images and perceptions of the communities in north Manchester. Between June 2009 and April 2010 there was a significant improvement in positive media coverage for the area with over 60 positive news releases published or transmitted in the local and national media of

north Manchester. The total value of the coverage generated was estimated at £150,000.

- d. **Moston Lane Retail Area Strategy and Masterplan study:** A key focus of cohesion activity has been focused along Moston Lane and the housing areas on either side of the Lane. The area has undergone change and migration into the area, which has been reflected by the nature of the shops and services along the Lane. There is a perception amongst some of the residents that the changes have not been beneficial to them. A survey was undertaken of residents as part of a Respect Action Neighbourhood Initiative. Key issues identified by residents as causing community tensions were youths causing annoyance, behaviour of neighbours and area changing.

Many of the issues causing tensions related to the management of the Lane. In response a multi-agency taskforce and business forum were established and action plan developed to address issues such as refuse disposal, licensing and other neighbourhood management issues. A master-plan was developed to guide development along the Lane including the construction of 400 new family homes by Redrow Homes which will bring investment and a better housing mix into the area. The former Ben Brierley public house has been refurbished and brought back as community use as a CAB and Law centre bringing much needed services back into the Lane.

A Moston Lane parade and festival was held along the Lane for the first time. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this helped to reduce tensions along the Lane.

The Contact Theatre Company re-opened the vacant former co-operative store as a youth engagement project during the summer. The North Manchester Family and Fitness Centre along Moston Lane was made available free for young people to access sport and cultural activity on Friday night, a peak time of ASB. ASB incidents decreased in Harpurhey & Moston by 3.5% compared to the previous year.

- e. **Welcome / Information Pack - Harpurhey**

Using the feedback from consultation with strategic partners, elected members and representatives from the voluntary and community sector, on the purpose and value of the proposed Welcome Pack for Harpurhey it has been recognized that there are already a number of neighbourhood mechanisms and tools in place to support and signpost residents to key services and things going on in their local area. Ward newsletters and the neighbourhood focus through ward coordination all provide good opportunities for strengthening the approach and way in which we help residents to participate in Manchester life.

Based on the outcomes of the consultation and the review of the original purpose of the Welcome Pack, it was identified that additional support and understanding was needed around the practical support and mechanisms that should be in place to identify monitor and manage the integration of new arrivals in the area (especially based on the new waves of migration being

experienced). Therefore, it is proposed to undertake further work between June – November 2010 to establish an Information Pack, which provides guidance and support to local services, front line staff and reps from voluntary and community sector organizations and groups around engaging and supporting new arrivals and managing and responding to challenges and needs.

#### 4.2 **Building local resilience to address cohesion issues:**

An important element of the North Manchester community cohesion programme has been to develop and test approaches for building community resilience and capacity to address cohesion within neighbourhoods in the future. The aim of this area of work is to develop the ability of officers to analyse information in a way that helps areas to understand threats to community cohesion and reduce the likelihood of conflicts occurring. In order for this to happen it is essential that we develop the skills within our communities to recognise, name, manage and resolve conflicts that may arise in the process of community change, in order to build and maintain cohesive communities.

This has involved the following activities:

- a. **The community change and perception monitoring tool.** There is often long lead in times for data relating to demographics and perceptions to become available by which time an issue may have escalated within the community and neighbourhood. The community change and perception monitoring tool provides a systematic mechanism by which community changes, perceptions and risks to community relations and service delivery can be identified / flagged by officers working at a neighbourhood level with communities.

The community change and perception monitoring tool has been developed over the last six months by officers from the Corporate Performance Group, supported by the North Manchester Regeneration Team and it is currently being piloted in two wards within North Manchester – Cheetham and Harpurhey. The benefits of piloting this tool in these wards has enabled officers to strengthen existing appropriate neighbourhood processes for monitoring and responding to the changes and risks – making it core business. This approach has also provided the opportunity to test how we manage and respond at a local level to issues on a ‘real time basis’. The tool is currently being used by colleagues from Neighbourhood Services, GMP, Childrens Services (education) and Health to record and flag community cohesion issues as they arise. Training to use the tool has been provided to all officers responsible for inputting information onto the tool and colleagues from the Corporate Performance Group have also developed a spreadsheet, which officers who cannot access the tool through Lotus Notes can use to record and flag changes and risks outside of the tool. The existing governance arrangements and ward coordination processes are being used to manage and respond to the changes and risks being recorded / flagged.

The tool was launched in May 2010 and its impact will be evaluated in September, with a view to roll it out to regeneration areas across the city starting from February 2011. A future meeting of the Committee may wish to receive information about the types of changes and options for analysing information using GIS at its meeting.

- b. **Community cohesion training programme** for local staff and organisations to develop an understanding of cohesion issues and skills required to challenge and address tensions in the community. The programme is currently being delivered to neighbourhood staff delivering services in the vicinity of Moston Lane including CAB, police officers, Sure Start, JC plus, staff in Schools as well as street environment and housing managers. The training programme is building understanding of the issues along the lane, individuals roles in developing cohesion and their contribution to the wider action plan. The training programme will contribute to developing an integrated neighbourhood team for the area. .

#### 4.3 **Research and intelligence programme:**

Apart from the National headline indicators there is a lack of indicators regard the causes of tensions in the community. To understand the causes of the tensions a survey has been undertaken of the Riverdale Estate, Higher Blackley and the Ashley Lane area off Moston Lane, Harpurhey identifying the causes of tensions and perceptions in the community through a mixture of qualitative and qualitative research. The preliminary findings suggest that there are some tensions around perceptions concerning access to scarce resources, particularly social housing and the management of housing by private landlords. However the research would suggest that community tensions are less connected to ethnicity and more connected to stressful circumstances such as anti-social behaviour, unemployment and local facilities.

The quantitative part of the survey is complete and interviews for the qualitative part have just been completed.

The north Manchester Multi Agency Steering Group has had an opportunity to discuss the initial findings and potential recommendations. The Manchester Community Cohesion Steering Group will be presented with initial findings and be involved in developing final recommendations.

The survey is to be used to develop actions to address cohesion along Moston Lane and in the Riverdale Estate and to feed into citywide learning being developed through the Manchester Community Cohesion Board

#### 5. **Impact of the programme:**

- 5.1 The outputs achieved by the programme are outlined in table 1. Activities within the programme including the events and festivals, youth activities and the community film project have engaged all sections of the community and brought them together. Local people will have benefited from increased pride,

and understanding of their neighbours. The Moston Lane Action Plan is addressing issues along the Lane that is causing local tensions.

- 5.2 The headline cohesion measure is the proportion of residents who believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together. The council has undertaken a resident telephone survey in 2010, the results show higher levels of residents agreeing that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together in all wards, including those in north Manchester. However due to the difference in methodology it is not possible to make comparisons with previous results derived from postal questionnaires. When future telephone survey results are known it will be possible to look at trends in the headline indicator. However, Northwards Housing has included this measure within the 2009 survey of its tenants. The survey identified that between 2008 and 2009 there had been a slight increase in cohesion across all wards in north Manchester.

**Table 1**

<b>Output</b>	<b>Quarter 1</b>	<b>Quarter 2</b>	<b>Quarter 3</b>	<b>Quarter 4</b>	<b>09/10 Total</b>	<b>10/11 Total</b>
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Profile
Positive news stories published	12	25	22	12	61	-
People attend local events & festivals	8000	11,800	3904	500	24,204	20,000
Local organisations supported	24	7	7	2	40	-
Neighbourhood action plans implemented	0	0	1	0	1	1
Young people engaged in sporting or cultural activity	112	456	118	203	889	-
Residents participate in perception survey	0	0	0	250	250	0
Local staff/community leaders trained	0	0	0	0	0	50

## **6. Forward Strategy**

- 6.1 Most of the programme activities have been mainstreamed in 2010/11 and will be able to continue without WNF innovation fund. This includes the events programme, Moston Lane Action Plan, activities for young people at the North City Family and Fitness Centre, The community change perception monitoring tool is being piloted and will be presented to the public service board regarding the possibility of it being rolled out across the city.
- 6.2 The project has demonstrated that cohesion issues need to be addressed through partnership working at the local level with an understanding of the

underlying tensions within the community that may be causing these issues. The Institute of Community Cohesion is undertaking a strategic review of community cohesion across the city which will include reflecting on the experience of the north Manchester cohesion programme and where appropriate identify how activities could be replicated across the city. The strategy will be presented to a future meeting of the Manchester community Cohesion Board and Steering Group.

**7. Recommendation:**

- 7.1 The committee is asked to note the contents of the report, provide feedback on the information provided and to request an update on the implementation of the community change and perception monitoring tool and Welcome Pack in the winter 2010.