Community Cohesion Partners Workshop

2nd February 2010

Farah Ismail
Consultation & Community Engagement Team

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission on Community Cohesion is being asked to examine community cohesion in Luton in 2010 and how people's identities impact on their experience of living here. It will make recommendations by the summer for how the Council, its partners and our communities can accelerate progress towards the Luton 2026 vision set out by our residents as a society where “everyone is treated the same, equally with fairness and respect”.

This report aims to summarise the findings of the Community Cohesion Workshop for partners (organisations/groups delivering services within Luton). The event took place on Tuesday 2nd February 2010 at the Best Western Menzies Strathmore Hotel in Luton’s Arndale Centre. The event was from 10am to 1.15pm.

Luton Borough Council sent invitations through its extensive partners and community networks. These included Luton Forum, Stronger & Safer Communities Theme Board, Luton Assembly, Race Advisory Forum, Disability Advisory Forum, Luton Action Against Poverty etc. A total of 39 delegates attended the event from a range of organisations/groups (see appendix 5.2 for the complete list). The agenda is attached as appendix 5.1.

All delegates were provided with information prior to the event (see appendix 5.4).

Dean Stokes, Head of Strategic Planning, Policy and Performance chaired the event. Four short “scene setting” presentations were delivered to all delegates in the main meeting hall by Cllr Joan Bailey MBE (Commission member), Noreen Kellett MBE (Commission member) and Trevor Kippax (LBC Community Cohesion Officer) to offer some explanation around terminology, context, issues and aims of the event. Following the presentations, delegates moved into 4 smaller breakout groups (8 –10 people) - this was achieved by randomly colour coding delegate’s name badge for round table discussions.

Two breakout sessions took place amongst the smaller groups that each lasted 45 minutes. All delegates returned to the main meeting hall to take part in a plenary session at the end of each session.

The discussions were structured broadly around a similar set of questions that were asked of the residents at the Community Cohesion workshop for residents held on Saturday 30th January 2010 (the topic guide and facilitators notes are attached as appendix 5.3). Experienced LBC staff facilitated the discussions and a designated scribe on a flipchart captured feedback within the group discussion.
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section draws out some key themes from the workshop discussions.

There is so much to be positive about

Luton has a rich, vibrant and diverse community and the vast majority of people in the town feel that people get on well together. There is a high level of commitment to cohesion by partners and many examples of good partnership working which provides a solid foundation. The “Generations Together” project and “Luton in Harmony” are excellent cohesion projects. Luton has a number of events that bring people together such as the Carnival, the Mela and the Faith Walk.

Overall, it was felt by delegates that community cohesion is achievable in Luton.

Need for a common understanding of cohesion

Community cohesion can mean different things to different people, and often people can focus on ethnicity issues. It is much wider and delegates raised in particular the importance of culture. A common understanding is needed.

Image/perceptions

Luton has recently attracted an amount of negative media attention and there is a feeling among partners that the media’s reporting of issues can play a part in escalating tensions to an extent amongst communities. To support this, during the workshop, strong feelings were shared on the role the media has played, both nationally and locally in presenting Luton to the local and wider public. Furthermore, the image portrayed is not seen as an accurate reflection of Luton as a town. Delegates mentioned Luton is a peaceful town, and felt that despite tensions, we celebrate our diversity, respect faiths and welcome new arrivals to the town.

Civic pride

Following on from this, it was felt that a campaign is needed to present Luton in a better way and promote civic pride and a more positive image of Luton. Delegates felt the Council had a leadership role in this.

Communication
Delegates emphasised the need for ensuring there is effective communications with the general public and that members of the community are well informed. Work needs to be done around methods for sharing information with the public – this is essential as miscommunication can lead to urban myths. Delegates raised as an example of a myth, the way resources are allocated and the perception that some communities have better access to resources than others and that therefore there is inequity in support and resource.

**Inclusion and engagement**

Delegates stressed that the community cohesion agenda should be inclusive and reach all groups including “the invisible”. We should look at ways of making and maintaining effective communication with hard-to-reach groups beyond the ‘usual suspects’. Delegates felt that the Council will be the ultimate driver for change by developing a genuine engagement strategy to reach the ‘invisible’.

There was a view that the Commission itself should be listening to those that are not being reached, and those who may hold “uncomfortable” views. Delegates felt there was a greater need to understand those who feel that “people do not get on well together”, for example people who feel disenfranchised, those “mumbling into their beer” or people who hold extreme views.

**Economy, wages**

There was a view that the recession is making cohesion more difficult in Luton. There is the further issue that peoples’ earning power is disproportionate to house prices in Luton and their housing status leads to issues/concerns around deprivation. There was also the view that people are facing hard times and that this can contribute to an atmosphere of blame and tension – especially in the belief among a small minority that minority groups are coming and taking ‘our’ jobs. With the media highlighting ‘British jobs for British people’, protests at this time of sensitivities can impact heavily on a town as diverse as Luton. While acknowledging the national and international nature of the recession, delegates felt that creating jobs locally would reduce tensions.

**Data monitoring**

Outcomes of the workshop suggest a need to review the categories of personal data collected. This include the categories used to define ethnicity to help partners better understand the groups they are engaging and those they are not and to ensure they are able to take account of the diverse needs of all of Luton’s residents.

**Action plan**
One community cohesion action plan is required for all key stakeholders. The action plan should include both short and long term goals that have clear and measurable outcomes.
3. UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES (SESSION 1)

This section summarises the feedback from the first roundtable discussion about understanding the issues. Delegates were asked to consider three questions.

Question 1. What do group members think about the general idea of community cohesion and social inclusion as outlined in the presentations?

**Robust definition of community cohesion required**

Delegates felt that we have well-defined categories for equalities monitoring however, community cohesion is a broader concept. Given the ever changing communities in Luton, both the definition and scope of community cohesion will need to be revised to reflect this.

**Variety of cultures**

Culture is different to one’s ethnicity. It was felt there is a need to classify “culture” - although this is not recognised as one of the six equalities strands, this was felt to be a significant factor in building a cohesive and socially inclusive community within Luton. Delegates recognised that there are a variety of cultures and people coming together regardless of background.

**It’s not just about ethnicity**

Community cohesion was viewed as much more than just peoples’ ethnicity and it is a two-way process i.e. older people coming together with young people, new communities being welcomed by the more traditional established communities.

However, not all groups are being involved and some groups are being missed - particularly people with disabilities and hearing impairments. People do not understand “deaf culture” and this further impacts on social inclusion due to the fact that deaf people are isolated by their lack of hearing combined with the inability of the broader community to take this into account. This highlights the need/importance to involve the deaf community of Luton. Improvements to signing are required.

**The need to understand all communities**

Statistical data presented to the delegates in relation to the Community Safety Survey highlighted the need to identify and communicate with people who felt that people did not get on well together.
Review categories used for capturing data for ethnicity

The Police are looking at self-classification for capturing data on race and ethnicity as an interesting way forward and some delegates felt that people should not be pigeon-holed into categories. The Council already uses a system of self-classification.

Question 2. What are the good things about community cohesion in Luton?

Commitment

Luton has a very diverse community and it was felt that there is already a high level of commitment from many organisations in Luton (delegates mentioned Luton Borough Council, the Police, local organisations, MP's and dignitaries) that are committed to achieving community cohesion. This resilience provides a solid foundation to addressing community cohesion.

Delegates also saw as a positive, that Luton has a thriving third sector.

Events

Events such as the Mela, the Carnival and St Patrick’s Day are recognised as part of the local calendar. It was felt that having such social occasions builds on local cultures bringing different communities and people together.

Concern was raised within one group about non-residents who come to the Town and look to cause splits in the communities and affect the cohesion of the Town. The way the community responds to these pressures demonstrates how cohesive we are. Importantly overall, Luton is a peaceful town, despite these tensions.

Young people mix much better because of shared interests or space. It can be more difficult for adults to come together and action is required to help this happen on a more regular basis.

Diversity of the Town, “soft” community boundaries

Luton’s diversity provides good foundation and makes it an interesting place to live. There is evidence of mixing along “soft” community boundaries of the every day interactions in day to day life. There was also recognition of the commitment from partners across local organisations that are committed to diversity and promoting harmony.

Bury Park was identified by one of the groups at the event as a unique shopping area, larger than the shopping area in Bradford. It was described as a very
colourful and vibrant part of the town with its own economy. This part of the town requires better marketing to a wider audience.

Celebration of faith & diversity

There was agreement that in Luton we do celebrate our multi-cultural society and work together in celebrating our diversity with different organisations, communities and residents throughout the town.

As a community, we are proud of the various faith groups that make up the demographics of Luton and have respect for and celebrate faith groups.

Delegates felt that new arrivals to the town have been accepted and their cultures respected.

Importance was also given to the fact that we have had mayors from different communities, (this shows that people from different communities can play a major part in the life of the town).

Question 3. What are the most difficult and serious problems?

Image and perceptions of the town

There is a view that Luton is sometimes used as a platform and as people progress they aspire to move out of Luton – some local people see Luton as somewhere you want to leave.

Much work is needed around raising the profile of Luton as the general image and perception of the Town via the media does not always reflect the town accurately. Many delegates felt that Luton is a peaceful town and the trouble is due to outsiders coming into Luton, causing disturbances and raising tension. This then can attract negative press via the media at both a local and national level. There is a need to develop a greater sense of civic pride.

Need to establish shared values across communities

Some delegates felt there are often conflicts between local and national cohesion priorities. While some communities are cohesive within themselves they may not be cohesive within the wider population of the town. In contrast another view captured was that ethnic groups did mix, just not all the time. Delegates also highlighted perceptions that sometimes certain groups or communities receive more funding than others.
The cohesion agenda was thought to miss some groups. For example, people with learning disabilities and the older vulnerable person living alone were not always considered when referring to community cohesion.

The actions required are continuous, and a recognition that society comprises people with differing backgrounds of education, work, family, culture, language and financial security. Developing shared values was identified as important.

Delegates felt that an action plan was needed that is ongoing with short and long term goals, and outcomes. This should not fall aside when something new comes along.

**Engaging beyond the “usual suspects” and with those who are dissatisfied**

There is a need to go beyond the “usual suspects” and seek the views of people "on the margin". This may be achieved by speaking to different sections and hard to reach groups of the community and allowing those sections of the community to express concerns they may have in a constructive way. We need to provide a mechanism where residents know that they can speak openly and not be afraid of their views being seen as unacceptable, or feel they must be politically correct at all times.

A delegate in one of the groups stated that 300 of the 500 that were involved in the protest in May 2009 that was featured prominently in the national media were residents of Luton and not outsiders. This suggests there is an element of dissatisfaction in the town and there are strong feelings of disenfranchisement amongst some of the white community. There were mixed feelings about this, as some other delegates within the group were of the opinion that the organisers of the May 2009 protests were from outside of Luton.

When looking into this type of tension, there is a need to look at cohesion of teenagers and young people (upper teens 16+ and early 20’s White and Muslim). They can be vulnerable and at risk of extremism.

This could be a challenge to the Commission to seek and capture these people’s views.

**Learning from others & sharing good practice**

Partners felt they could work more effectively together and share information and knowledge on best practice.

It was suggested that the service sector is where experience can be obtained as they have a significant role in dealing with multi-cultural needs.
Delegates need assurance that "something will be done" as a result of the commission as much work is often carried out across the town but no action is taken as a result.
4. ISSUES FOR PARTNERS (SESSION 2)

This section summarises the feedback from the second roundtable discussion focusing on issues for partners. Delegates were asked to consider two questions.

Question 1. Discuss examples of what partners are doing to address the most difficult/serious problems.

Social events which bring all groups of people together

Many groups talked about social events being a good way of bringing people from different backgrounds together. Successful events included the Carnival, Mela, St George’s Day, St Patrick’s Festival, multi-cultural events & dance, concerts and the Faith Walk.

Groups suggested creating more social places where people from all backgrounds can come together, and enable a mix of cultures with everyday activities.

Local initiatives in Luton which contribute towards community cohesion

Delegates identified many initiatives as having a positive impact on the community cohesion agenda. These included:

- “Generations Together” - the Cultural Trust recently held an exhibition in the Central Library on “Generations Together” that was well received and this could be used as a campaign idea for better community cohesion and build bridges between young people and the older generations.

- Luton in Harmony – delegates felt that this needed to be rolled out across cross-cutting groups in Luton. The whole of Luton needs to know about it.

- Organisations are working in partnership to change perceptions of young people in Luton. This is being achieved by addressing matters such as anti social behaviour by challenging common (however often false) perceptions such as young people show no respect, groups of youngsters hanging around street corners intimidating people.

- The Salvation Army has a bereavement advice programme that helps people look at financial arrangements and points of contact after the loss of a loved one. They also have a gardening club. Both provide help across all communities.

- Other initiatives included: Cultural discovery in schools (8 – 10 years), Awards for All – sessions on Indian culture, Senior People’s Forum open meetings.
Partnership working

There is much partnership work already in action within Luton and many organisations are factoring in effective engagement practices as part of their action plans and service delivery.

Some organisations are taking a more proactive approach as they are “going out and asking” the community for their views. This is seen as a positive way forward.

The Police are constantly improving their regular consultation with residents and are responding better to their individual needs. The Police have an Independent Advisory Group. Police are also key players in the development of the Luton Forum Community involvement Strategy

The Cultural Trust provide services to assist a variety of groups with events across the borough from local smaller community events like the Lewsey Fun day to larger projects like Luton Carnival, Carnival Arts Centre. This work has helped to underpin lots of community action.

Work is being carried out with youths around gun crime and education around gun crime – however a comment was made that the partnership could be improved. Funding for a youth worker has helped and also raised money that was required to support these types of initiatives.

The University of Bedfordshire has high levels of diversity and represents a “global village”.

Delegates who attended older persons groups noted that slowly more people from the African and Caribbean communities are attending, but there was still less involvement from the Bangladeshi community. Action was required to ensure that their voice could also be heard.

Beds Art was also mentioned as an inclusive and diverse group, and it was felt that it was important to note the significance of how the arts in all its forms brings people together, whether its music, dance, theatre, cinema, literature or poetry.

Engaging diverse communities

The Health Service has recently been looking at five targeted areas to improve health outcomes. Issues such as lower life expectancy, deprivation, ethnicity of groups are all being looked at. This research has shown a difference of outcome within the different communities and how access to services is being obtained.
The work of Victim Support was also provided as an example as the organisation visits all communities, work around race issues and hate crime reporting and support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The Luton All Women’s Centre and Beds Body Positive were also discussed.

The Police have strong community links, both with organisations and community leaders. One of their roles is to understand community tensions, and also preventing extremism which can break a community’s cohesion. The police have also appointed an African Caribbean person to work specifically with this community.

The role of the Council was also raised and examples given of positive work to connect communities. One programme considered by Community Development is a Mini World Cup as it is thought that Luton would be able to produce a team from all the countries taking part in the Summer World Cup.

One of the partners (Irish Centre) spoke of the welfare programmes that they run, ensuring greater benefit take up. They welcome all members of the community, and have been involved in bringing children into presenting their different cultures through dance to other young people. They also supported the Culture Box to be used in the local Museum where people can see and feel a different culture closer up.

Partnership working opened the debate around involving different communities and how to make the process inclusive. A discussion took place where delegates stated that involving and engaging more people would break down barriers and lead to greater integration particularly of Asian and African Caribbean people.

There was recognition that often people require specific support that recognises the cultural and language needs of individuals or groups. When supporting such groups there is a need to ensure that the skills the partners bring, are appropriate to the need(s) of the community or the individual.

Faith groups

As discussed in the earlier session there was agreement that in Luton we do respect and celebrate faith groups. In support of this, examples include work around faith mediation between communities, identifying issues affecting communities, holding cultural events. Work on faith issues is taking place in some of the authority’s schools and the University of Bedfordshire.

The Council of Faiths and local churches are diverse in their congregations and the work they undertake is with all communities, example One World Day, Fair Trade Events and Holocaust Memorial Day.
Overall, faith groups strongly support and contribute towards the community cohesion agenda however, there was still a feeling among delegates that in light of the issues Luton has faced recently, religious groups could do more, show greater leadership and that specifically Mosques could play a greater role.

Question 2. What are the gaps, what else do partners need to do to attempt to address the issues?

This part of the discussion summed up the main gaps identified by the delegates and areas for development by partners. These included:

**Engagement**

Delegates highlighted the need to empower the residents of Luton by ensuring there is good public engagement. We need to identify who we are currently hearing from and which voices are missing, then explore how to reach and capture the views of these “invisible” groups.

Engagement is important with groups/people that may have some difficult/challenging views – whether white working class people that feel alienated, those with extreme religious views or those that are “mumbling into their beers”. These views need to be captured without being watered down by providing opportunities and appropriate forums to express themselves openly and honestly.

Also, the engagement process must also be inclusive of all groups and there is a need to have appropriate methods to involve young people as they are our next generation.

**Image**

Delegates emphasised the need to promote the image of Luton through positive messages and developing a sense of civic pride. It is important to bring different communities together to dispel negative perceptions and facilitate community cohesion - for example developing Bury Park as a place which all residents see as a shopping destination rather than an area to avoid.

We need to give a high profile to the good work that is being carried out by partner organisations through various initiatives/projects etc.

**Local partner organisations**

Luton Borough Council as an authority needs to provide leadership while actively communicating and working with other organisations, including the Third Sector and public bodies. This will allow greater sharing of knowledge and expertise to
target services which help people who feel deprived or groups that are difficult to contact. Projects need to be community led or peoples’ initiatives (such as working through Neighbourhood Watch and Tenant and Resident Associations) as well as partner led.

Sport was viewed as being very important in helping to bring communities together. Food, drink and arts were similarly identified.

**Economy**

We need to be doing everything that can be done to improve the local economy, given the current climate. This will help to ensure perceptions around “British jobs for British people” are managed appropriately.

**Luton in Harmony**

Delegates saw the campaign as a start towards a cohesion brand that structures partnership policies and could be an effective way forward.
5. APPENDICES

5.1 Agenda

Commission on Community Cohesion

Dean Stokes
Head of Strategic Planning, Policy and Performance

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<tr>
<td>09.30-10.00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.00-10.05</td>
<td>Welcome and introduction – Dean Stokes</td>
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<td>10.05-10.30</td>
<td>Three short, scene setting presentations - terminology, context, issues, what are we trying to achieve today?</td>
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<td>- Cllr Joan Bailey “The Commission on Community Cohesion”</td>
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<td>- Noreen Kellett MBE “What is Community Cohesion”</td>
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<td>- Trevor Kippax “About Luton”</td>
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<td>10.30-11.15</td>
<td>First break out discussion - understanding the subject, establishing the issues</td>
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<td>11.15-11.35</td>
<td>Quick feedback – two minute headlines from each group</td>
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<td>11.35-11.45</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>11.45-11.50</td>
<td>Further presentation - Trevor Kippax “Where to next? – the vision for Luton”</td>
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<td>11.50-12.40</td>
<td>Second break out discussion - ideas for the future, what do we need to do?</td>
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<td>12.40-1.00</td>
<td>Plenary feedback from discussion groups</td>
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<td>1.00-1.15</td>
<td>Discussion and closing remarks</td>
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<td>Close and lunch</td>
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### 5.2 List of organisations attending

Partners' panel attendance
Thirty-nine people attended the event. Details of the organisations they represented are listed below.

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<td>Luton Assembly</td>
<td>Silent Impact</td>
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<td>Luton NHS</td>
<td>London Luton Airport Operations Ltd</td>
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<td>Key Ring</td>
<td>African Caribbean Community Development Forum</td>
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<td>Bedfordshire Police</td>
<td>Luton Senior Peoples Forum</td>
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<td>Corporate &amp; Customer Services</td>
<td>Voluntary Action Luton</td>
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<td>Disability Advice Forum</td>
<td>South Anglia Housing Group</td>
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<td>Victim Support</td>
<td>Deaf Support</td>
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<td>Churches Together</td>
<td>Luton Cultural Services Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luton Council of Faiths</td>
<td>Luton Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bedfordshire Fire &amp; Rescue</td>
<td>Marsh Farm Community Development Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luton Irish Forum</td>
<td>Jewish Community</td>
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<td>University of Bedfordshire</td>
<td>Luton Pensioners Association</td>
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<td>Housing and Community Living</td>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
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<td>Advocacy Alliance</td>
<td>Greenhouse Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luton Community Housing</td>
<td>Mary Seacole Housing Association</td>
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5.3 Topic guide/facilitators notes

| COMMUNITY COHESION COMMISSION |
| PARTNERS WORKSHOP 2.2.2010 |
| TOPIC GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS |

1. GENERAL NOTES

- Group members will be asked to identify what they think are the key messages’ to be reported back at the plenary session. Inform the group members that detailed discussions will be captured and written up from the flip chart.
- Group members should be reassured around confidentiality. It is not anyone’s intention to report the views of individual organisations, and neither will notes link particular views to particular people.
- Some of the issues which we discuss will be sensitive. Ask group members to be sensitive to the views of others in expressing themselves, It is likely that some people will also say things they don’t like or agree with.

Be aware:

- There is a risk that discussion will tend to gravitate towards issues of ethnicity and religion, given their high profile recently in the borough – this is inevitable, and to some extent the workshop will act as a forum to unpack these issues. Whilst this is important, try to ensure that discussion of other aspects of community cohesion are also fully addressed by the group.
- It is also important to keep the discussion focussed on community cohesion, rather than allowing it to drift towards a wider discussion, for example, of service delivery issues, or wider satisfaction with the town or the council.

FIRST BREAK OUT GROUP – UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES (50 minutes)

Round table brief introductions. Explain the first session is about ‘understanding the issues’, the second group session will discuss how we can take these forward. Seek agreement about who will feedback.

Question 1: What do group members think about the general idea of community cohesion and social inclusion as outlined in the presentations?
(Report back 1 bullet point – seek agreement on which point to feedback)

Prompts

➢ Is it achievable?
➢ Do they agree or disagree with the issues as presented?
➢ How much of this is specific to Luton?
➢ Have other issues been missed out in the description of what community cohesion is about? Explore around:

- Differences in prospects and opportunities; differences in wages between those that work in Luton, and those that live in the town
- Younger or older people;
- Gender; sexual orientation, transgender;
- Disability;
- Ethnicity, religion

Question 2: What are the good things about community cohesion in Luton?
(Report back 1 bullet point – the “best” good thing – seek agreement on which)

Prompts

➢ Don’t talk about what we are doing as partners – this will be in the second session, we are more interested here in discussion on the positive aspects of cohesion – try to unpack what these are
➢ Presentation statistic - 82% of residents believe people from different backgrounds get on well in Luton – why?

Question 3: What are the most difficult and serious problems?
(report back 1 bullet point – the most difficult or serious problem- seek agreement on which)

Prompts – these could either be for the borough or individuals

SECOND BREAK OUT GROUP – ISSUES FOR PARTNERS (50 minutes)

Please do not allow discussion on question 1 to overrun. Aim to allow lots of time for question 2 – at least 30 minutes. Seek agreement about who will feedback.
Question 1: Discuss examples of what partners are doing to address the most difficult/serious problems.
(report back 2 bullet points – seek agreement on which)

Question 2: What are the gaps, what else do partners need to do to attempt to address the issues?
(Report back 2 bullet points – seek agreement on which)

Prompts
- Who needs to be involved?
- What needs to happen?
- If you were in charge for a day what you would do? (note some group members may be in charge!)
5.4 Presentations & Background Information

What is Community Cohesion?

Noreen Kellett MBE
Commission Member

Community cohesion is about people and societies working and growing in harmony rather than in conflict

People sometimes described their communities by:

- Neighbourhood
- Ethnic origin
- Age group (both older and younger people)
- Faith
- Sexual orientation
- Gender
- Disability
- Social class
- Other characteristics or interests
Cohesion will grow and develop when everyone in society recognises the right to equality and has respect for diversity (the differences between people)

- Without community cohesion we tend to think in terms of ‘them’ and ‘us’
- With community cohesion the divisions between people are less important than what we all have in common
- We understand and accept the differences between people

The three foundations for an ‘integrated and cohesive community’:

- People from different backgrounds having similar opportunities in life such as in work and in education and in the services they receive such as health care
- People know their rights and responsibilities – what they can expect from others and what others can expect from them
- People trust one another and local institutions like the Council or the police, to act fairly
And three key ways of helping people live together in harmony:

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

Noreen Kellett MBE
Commission Member

commissiononcommunitycohesion@luton.gov.uk
A panel of residents told us they want everyone to be able to share in the town’s success now and in 2026

- "A society without segregation where everyone is treated the same, equally with fairness and respect, and where we are all happy. There will be no ageism and there will be improved opportunities for community engagement to dispel myths such as ‘young people of today have no respect’. We will live in harmony with the environment. There will be a community spirit in the streets we live in. We will be racially tolerant, valuing each other’s race, culture and religion”.

Source Sustainable Community Strategy, “Our vision for Luton in 2026”
About Luton

Trevor Kippax
Community Cohesion Officer

In Luton 82% of residents believe they live in an area where people from different backgrounds get on well together

- Black Minority Ethnic group are more positive (88%) than White group (80%)
- Difference by age with 65+ more positive (88%) than those between 35-44 (80%)
- Difference by ward – 71% agree in Farley, 96% agree in Saints

Source: Community Safety Survey 2009
Pretty good and not something you would know from the papers!

In fact, Luton has been increasingly diverse since the 1950s

- Between 1921 and 1951 the English born population fell from 98% to 91%
- 1950s migration from Ireland
- 1960s migration from Caribbean
- 1970s migration from Pakistan and Bangladesh
- Office of National Statistics mid-2008 Luton population estimate 191,800 with at least 35% estimated to be BME communities

Source: “Sticking Together” 2003;
Office of National Statistics mid year estimate 2008
Luton has a large, established south Asian and African Caribbean population with new arrivals from eastern Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New NI registrations 2002-2008</th>
<th>28460</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>10300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>3530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>1460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep of Lithuania</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak Rep</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity - % of all residents</th>
<th>Luton</th>
<th>East of England</th>
<th>England &amp; Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White British</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Irish</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other White</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Groups</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Work and Pensions
Source: 2001 Census

Luton’s population is becoming increasingly young, old and Black Minority Ethnic

Based on estimates:

- Population is relatively young and is projected to increase to 2016 and then decline
- Projected year on year increase in the elderly population to 2021
- Percentage of population from Black Minority Ethnic communities is increasing

Source 2009 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Refresh
Jobs here pay above average wages but most residents earn less than the average

- People living in Luton earn £1,300 below the national average wage
- People working in Luton earn £1,300 above the national average wage
- Luton workers have the lowest average wages in the sub region - Bedfordshire, Central Bedfordshire (North), Central Bedfordshire (South), and Luton
- Luton has the lowest average house prices in the sub region
- But Luton has the least favourable income in comparison to house prices in the sub region

Source: Land Registry and Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2008

There is an 11-year difference in life expectancy within the borough

- Men and women in Luton have a lower life expectancy than people living elsewhere in the East of England
- The life expectancy gap in Luton between the lowest and highest areas is 11 years for men (70.2 to 81.7 years) and 10 years for women (75.5 to 85.5 years)

Although educational attainment is increasing there is still a variation between different groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Pupils</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luton Boys</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47</td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luton Girls</td>
<td>49</td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All England</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap between English - Luton</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Difference by ethnicity similar to National results
- Pupils whose first language is other than English achieved 45% compared to 47% for those who have English as first language
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieved 32% compared to 50% for those not eligible for free school meals

Luton results 2009 % of pupils who achieve 5+ A*-C including English and Mathematics

What particular areas does the Commission want to examine with our partners and communities?
5. Information sent delegates prior to the event

Background paper for the citizens’ workshop and partners’ panel

What is community cohesion?

Community cohesion is a measure of the ability of communities in society to function and grow in harmony with each other rather than in conflict. Communities may define themselves by neighbourhood, ethnic origin, age group, faith and other characteristics or interests. Cohesion will grow and develop when everyone in society recognises the right to equality and has respect for diversity (the differences between people). Without community cohesion, we tend to think in terms of ‘them and us’, whereas if we achieve greater community cohesion, those sorts of divisions should be less important because we understand and accept the differences between people.

There are three foundations of an ‘integrated and cohesive community’:
- People from different backgrounds having similar opportunities in life (for example in work and education, in the services they receive, such as health care or policing, and in the way that they are treated both by organisations and by other people)
- People knowing their rights and responsibilities
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions (such as the Council, health services or the police) to act fairly.
And “three key ways of living together”:
- A shared vision for the future and a sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

What is the Commission on Community Cohesion?

The Commission on Community Cohesion has been asked to examine community cohesion in Luton in 2010 and how people's identities impact on their experience of living here. The Commission is chaired by Baroness Howells of St Davids. The other members of the Commission are people with a local connection, mostly associated with particular organisations, but above all they have in-depth knowledge and experience of cohesion in Luton.

Why is it happening?

Over the last few months, Luton has been much in the news for all the wrong reasons. The reality of everyday life here is actually much more positive. By working together with other local organisations and local people, we have addressed the high profile and disruptive actions of a small number of people. But with our dynamic and changing population, community cohesion is never something that we can take for granted and there is always more than we can do to build on this crucial aspect of the town’s vibrancy.

Is this mainly about differences between people from different ethnic and religious communities?

Diversity in Luton is not just about ethnicity or religion, though this is part of the town’s diversity. It's also, just as importantly, about differences which are to do with issues such as age (both for older and younger people), gender, sexual orientation, which part of town you live in, what sort of opportunities you have, how much money you have, whether or not you have a disability, and so on. All of these issues have the potential to cause tension and division, but those differences can also be seen as positive, and something which makes the town a stronger and better place to live in.

What else is happening?

A data review led by council officers has been completed bringing together all that we already know about our communities and cohesion in Luton.

Community engagement is an important part of the process and a citizens’ workshop will be held on the 30th January 2010 at the Strathmore Hotel. We want
to explore historical factors, current issues and emerging issues that have the potential to impact on community cohesion. We would also like your views on how we should respond to these challenges.

Partnership engagement is also very important, so that all voices from our extensive networks in the local area can be heard, and the Commission receives input from a wide range of our partners. These include organisations such as health services, police and voluntary organisations, and this session, to which you have been invited, will be held in the Strathmore Hotel on Tuesday 2nd February 2010.

When evidence from the citizens’ workshop and partners’ panel has been collated this will be presented to the Commission. The Commission will then decide on the key points and these will be discussed further in a number of focus groups, made up of a range of local people.

What will be the outcome?

The Commission will make recommendations by next summer for how the Council, its partners and our communities can accelerate progress towards the Luton 2026 vision set out by our residents as a society where “everyone is treated the same, equally with fairness and respect”. We want to keep you informed of what happens as a result of this process, because you have taken the time to be part of this, and to give us your thoughts, and because Luton is your town.

How can I find out more?

There is a lot more about community cohesion and the Council’s strategy on the Luton Borough Council website. Go to: http://www.luton.gov.uk/internet/social_issues/communitycohesion or click on ‘Social Issues’ in the orange ‘Information’ section on the left hand side of the Council’s web page, and then follow the link to ‘Community Cohesion’. On the ‘Social Issues’ page you will also find links to pages on a number of issues which are related to community cohesion.