



Coventry City Council

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## **Council Meeting**

13<sup>th</sup> December, 2005

**Booklet 3**

Recommendations

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## CABINET MEMBER (FINANCE AND EQUALITIES)

7<sup>th</sup> December, 2005

Cabinet Member

Present: - Councillor O'Neill

Shadow Cabinet

Members Present: - Councillor Mrs Bigham  
Councillor Mutton

Employees Present: - G. Carter (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)  
J. Elrick (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)  
J. Venn (Chief Executive's Directorate)

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Public business

#### 31. The Institute for Community Cohesion

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Chief Executive regarding the invitation, from the National Institute of Community Cohesion, to Coventry City Council to become a founder partner.

The report indicated that the term "Community Cohesion" was developed following the disturbances in the north of England four years ago and since then the concept had been developed rapidly by Central Government. As a result, Local Authorities were expected to play a leading role in developing cohesive communities.

Coventry has a history of relatively good race and community relations and had been fortunate in not experiencing the disturbances that had been seen in the north of England or more recently in Birmingham. The City Council was not complacent and continued to work with local organisations and local communities to promote and develop good race and community relations. The City Council's commitment to this work was demonstrated by the corporate objective to '*actively promote equality so that people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities*' and the Council's vision '*value diversity, social justice and community cohesion*'.

The Coventry Partnership and Coventry City Council were currently working together with local organisations and communities on the development of a framework and strategy to promote community cohesion in Coventry, and the City Council was also developing and consulting on its own community cohesion strategy, which would be adopted in the New Year.

A National Institute of Community Cohesion, led by Ted Cattle, was being established to provide a new approach to race and diversity and in particular would focus on building positive harmonious relations. It was aiming to establish itself as the leading national and international proponent of the principles and practice of community cohesion.

The Institute would have the following aims: -

- To become a national and international centre of expertise.
- To provide a partnership of academic, statutory and non-governmental bodies, which combined the experience and expertise of four universities with practitioners from local and national agencies.
- To collate and disseminate best practice and provide a network for all agencies interested in community cohesion so that developments could be shared and constantly updated.
- To evaluate cohesion programmes and conduct action research to be able to say, with authority, "what works".
- To build capacity at all levels and provide development opportunities, ranging from the training of community leaders to post-graduate based programmes.
- To build clearer connections between the community cohesion, citizenship and civil renewal agendas.
- To consider different models of multiculturalism and development of understanding of communities' acceptance of diversity.

Activities would include the enhancement of training and development programmes commissioned by the IdeA and peer review programmes, initially for local government but with a view to developing similar programmes for Central Government, key agencies and the voluntary and community sector.

Coventry University, the University of Warwick, Leicester University and De Montfort University are the four universities at the heart of the partnership. Other partners were likely to include key government departments such as the Home Office and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as well as agencies such as the NHS and the Commission for Racial Equality. Private sector sponsors and charitable bodies were also being approached. In addition, Leicester City Council was also being invited to be a founder partner.

The administrative centre of the Institute would be based at Coventry University and the research hub at the University of Warwick, with a number of other functions based in Leicester.

In addition to the national value of the work of the Institute itself, it would be an asset to both Coventry and Leicester as their Councils and communities would be involved in developing new ways of promoting community cohesion and would benefit from being associated with the Institute.

For Coventry, in particular, the Institute of Community Cohesion would add to the reputation as a City of peace and reconciliation and complement the centres of expertise already associated with the City such as the Centre for Study of Forgiveness and Reconciliation at Coventry University, the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations at the University of Warwick and the International Centre for

## Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral.

Following initial discussions with the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member, a formal invitation to Coventry City Council to become a founding partner of the Institute of Community Cohesion was received on 17th November, 2005. As a founding partner, the City Council would be involved in shaping the development of the Institute and, once it was constituted, would have a representative on the Institute's Board.

It was proposed that the City Council accepts the invitation from the Institute of Community Cohesion and becomes a founder partner. The City Council should allocate £20,000 funds for its subscription to the Institute and appoint a representative to the Board once it was established. It was recommended that the representative would be the Cabinet Member (Finance and Equalities).

**RESOLVED that, after due consideration of proposals contained in the report and the matters raised at the meeting: -**

- (1) Coventry City Council becomes a founder partner of the Institute of Community Cohesion.**
- (2) Up to £20,000 be allocated from policy contingency funds as the Council's annual subscription payment to the Institute of Community Cohesion in this financial year and instruct officers to identify future years' funding for annual subscription payments through the annual budget setting process.**
- (3) The report be referred to Council recommending the appointment of the Cabinet Member (Finance and Equalities) as the Council's representative on the Board of the Institute of Community Cohesion when it is constituted.**



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