
Report to
Cabinet Member (Finance And Equalities)

7 December 2005

Report of
Chief Executive

Title
The Institute for Community Cohesion

1 Purpose of the Report

To consider the invitation to Coventry City Council to become a founder partner from the national Institute of Community Cohesion.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member is recommended to agree the following actions and to recommend them to full Council:
- 1) agree that Coventry City Council becomes a founder partner of the Institute of Community Cohesion
 - 2) allocate up to £20,000 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) ask Council to appoint the Cabinet Member (Finance and Equalities) to be the Council's representative on the Board of the Institute of Community Cohesion when it is constituted

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The term "community cohesion" was developed following the disturbances in the north of England four years ago and since then the concept has been developed rapidly by central government. Local authorities are expected to play a leading role in developing cohesive communities.
- 3.2 The national definition of a cohesive community is one where there is a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities; the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued; those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds.
- 3.3 Coventry has a history of relatively good race and community relations and has been fortunate in not experiencing the disturbances that have been seen in the north of England

or more recently in Birmingham. The City Council is not complacent and continues to work with local organisations and local communities to promote good race relations and develop good community relations. The City Council's commitment to this work is demonstrated by our corporate objective to '*actively promote equality so that people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities*' to support the Council's vision and this is underpinned in the way that we will '*value diversity, social justice and community cohesion*'.

- 3.4 The Coventry Partnership and Coventry City Council are 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 is also developing and consulting on its own community cohesion strategy which is to be adopted in the new year.
- 3.5 A national Institute Community Cohesion, led by Ted Cattle, is being established to provide a new approach to race and diversity and will in particular, focus on building positive harmonious relations. It is aiming to establish itself as the leading national and international proponent of the principles and practice of community cohesion.
- 3.6 The Institute will 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 combines 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 can 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 and citizenship and civil renewal agendas
 - To consider different models of multiculturalism and development of understanding of communities' acceptance of diversity
- 3.7 Activities will include the development of training and development programmes commissioned by the IdeA and peer review programmes, initially for local government but with the view to developing similar programmes for central government, key agencies and the voluntary and community sector.
- 3.8 Coventry University and the University of Warwick along with Leicester University and De Montfort University, Leicester are the four universities at the heart of the partnership. Other partners are 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 are also being approached. Leicester City Council is also being invited to be a founder partner.

- 3.9 The administrative centre of the Institute will be based in Coventry University and the research hub at the University of Warwick with a number of other functions based in Leicester.
- 3.10 In addition to the national value of the work of the Institute itself, the Institute will be asset to both Coventry and Leicester as their councils and communities will be involved in developing new ways of promoting community cohesion and will benefit from being associated with the Institute and be seen to be places developing and promoting good practice.
- 3.11 For Coventry, in particular, the Institute of Community Cohesion will add to our reputation as a city of peace and reconciliation and complement the centres of expertise already associated with our 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.
- 3.12 Following initial discussions with the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member (Finance and Equalities), a formal invitation to Coventry City Council to become a founding partner of the Institute of Community Cohesion was received on 17 November 2005. As a founding partner, the City Council would be involved in shaping the development of the Institute, and once it is constituted, would have a representative on the Institute's Board.

4 Proposal and Other Option(s) to be Considered

- 4.1 It is proposed that the City Council accepts the invitation from the Institute of Community Cohesion and becomes a founder partner of the Institute. The City Council should allocate £20,000 funds for its subscription to the Institute and appoint a representative to the Institute of Community Cohesion Board once it is established.

5 Other specific implications

5.1

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Best Value		<input type="checkbox"/>
Children and Young People		<input type="checkbox"/>
Comparable Benchmark Data		<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate Parenting		<input type="checkbox"/>
Coventry Community Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Crime and Disorder		<input type="checkbox"/>
Equal Opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health and Safety		<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Resources		<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Rights Act		<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact on Partner Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Information and Communications Technology		<input type="checkbox"/>

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Legal Implications		☐
Neighbourhood Management		☐
Property Implications		☐
Race Equality Scheme	☐	
Risk Management		☐
Sustainable Development		☐
Trade Union Consultation		☐
Voluntary Sector – The Coventry Compact		☐

- 5.2 **Coventry Community Plan** – the Community Plan has community cohesion embedded into its Equalities and Community Theme. Coventry's involvement with the Institute of Cohesion through our two universities and the council will assist in the development and delivery of the outcomes of this theme of the Community Plan. In particular, it will assist the Coventry Partnership in promoting good practice in all sectors across the city.
- 5.3 **Equal Opportunities** – equality of opportunity is a key component of community cohesion. Close involvement with the Institute of Community Cohesion should assist the council in developing good practice to improve equality of opportunity in Coventry.
- 5.4 **Finance** – the City Council will contribute a £20,000 subscription payment to the Institute of Community Cohesion. As a new call on Council's finances, the Cabinet Member (Finance and Equalities) is advised to allocate funds from the Policy Contingency budget. In subsequent years funding will need to be identified from mainstream budgets to pay an annual subscription and the Cabinet Member (Finance and Equalities) is advised to instruct officers to identify future resources through the annual budget setting process.
- 5.5 **Impact on partner agencies** – as a founding partner of the Institute of Community Cohesion the council will be supporting Coventry University and the University of Warwick in a new area of academic work.
- 5.6 **Race Equality Scheme** – the positive promotion of good race relations is a statutory duty of the council.

6 **Monitoring**

- 6.1 As an organisation with a formal council representative, the Institute of Community Cohesion will be the subject of a formal annual outside body report to Scrutiny.

7 **Timescale and expected outcomes**

- 7.1 The Institute will hold an inaugural lecture at Coventry University on 14 December 2005. Further development of the prospectus of the Institute will take place in December and the establishment of the Board is expected to take place in the new year.
- 7.2 The Institute has already launched its Training and Development agency and it is intended to begin its research role in April 2006.

	Yes	No
Key Decision		no
Scrutiny Consideration (if yes, which Scrutiny meeting and date)		no
Council Consideration (if yes, date of Council meeting)	13 December 2005	

List of background papers

Proper officer: Stella Manzie, Chief Executive

Author: Telephone 024 7683 3741
 Jenni Venn, Policy and Performance Manager, Chief Executive's Department
 (Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Other contributors:
 Chris Hinde 024 7683 3020
 Simone Donaghy 024 7683 3788
 Sue Iannantuoni 024 7683 3241
 Jayne Elrick 024 7683 3016

Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper	Location
Draft terms of reference for Institute of Community Cohesion CH 48	