

**REPORT FOR DECISION**

Agenda Item	
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**MEETING:** THE EXECUTIVE

**DATE:** 21 MARCH 2007

**SUBJECT:** COMMUNITY COHESION – DRAFT BURY VALUES PROSPECTUS

**REPORT FROM:** EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND USER FOCUS

**CONTACT OFFICER:** COLIN FISHWICK  
HEAD OF URBAN STRATEGY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

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**TYPE OF DECISION:** EXECUTIVE (KEY DECISION)

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/ STATUS:** This paper is within the public domain

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**SUMMARY:**

Following the conclusion of Bury's Community Cohesion Pathfinder programme a review has been undertaken to consider the way forward. The recommended option is to first develop a statement of common or shared values, to be known as the Bury Values Prospectus. The Values Prospectus allows us to define what we mean by the term "community cohesion" in Bury. It should apply equally to all members of society and be a document to which all can subscribe. A draft Bury Values Prospectus is appended to this report. The intention is that this should be the subject of widespread consultation over the summer, following which Council would be invited to adopt the Prospectus, amended if necessary, as a preface to the Constitution.

**OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTION:**

**Option 1:** That the draft Bury Values Prospectus be agreed for public consultation with a view to its adoption as a preface to the Council Constitution, and that a further report be presented following the summer recess (**recommended**).

**Option 2 :** That the draft Bury Values Prospectus is not agreed for consultation

**Reason**

The adoption of a Bury Values Prospectus requires widespread "buy in" from all communities. It is considered that a period of 2 to 3 months is required for this exercise and the summer period, where there will, for example, be meetings of the Area Boards, affording the opportunity for local consultation.

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## IMPLICATIONS -

<b>Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:</b>	Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
	The proposals will play a key role in achieving the Council Priority of Strengthened Communities
<b>Financial Implications and Risk Considerations</b>	Risk issues are set out in para. 2.1
<b>Statement by Director of Finance and E-Government:</b>	There are no direct financial implications at this stage
<b>Equality/Diversity implications</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (see paragraph 2.2 below) Comments
<b>Considered by Monitoring Officer:</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> . Comments
Following consultation, if the draft values are accepted as a preface to the Constitution, this will have to be considered by the Council as an amendment to the Constitution.	
Are there any legal implications?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Staffing/ICT/Property:</b>	No implications at this stage
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Scrutiny Interest:</b>	Safe, Strong, and Confident Communities

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## TRACKING/PROCESS

## DIRECTOR:

Chief Executive/ Management Board	Executive Member/ Chair	Ward Members	Partners
5 March 2007			
Scrutiny Commission	Executive	Committee	Council
	21 March 2007		

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### 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Bury was one of 14 Community Cohesion Pathfinder authorities and received funding totalling £285,000 between February 2003 and April 2006. This funding has now ended and there is a need to review the existing position and future direction of social and community cohesion work in Bury. In particular there is a need to provide a definition of what community cohesion means in Bury.
- 1.2 One concept that is gaining adherents in efforts to define community cohesion is that of common or shared values – a Values Prospectus that should apply equally to all members of society and to which all can subscribe. There has been much debate recently at the national level about what it means to be

British, about what the expectations of citizens are and what duties and responsibilities might be placed upon each of us. A shared Values Prospectus provides one means of achieving this. Following the disturbances in 2001 and the Cantle and Denham Reports, Oldham Council has developed a Statement of Values. This is a preface to the Council Constitution and has received all-party support. It is seen as a clear response to the particular issues that Oldham faces, including the challenge of “parallel lives” and far right activity. In this respect any person elected to serve on Oldham Council would be required to adhere to the Statement of Values.

- 1.3 The development of a Bury Values Prospectus, along similar lines, might provide a mechanism for allowing the Council to define what it means by community cohesion in the over-arching strategic context. In particular, it would inform the process of reviewing and refreshing the Bury Community Strategy, and the preparation of other strategic documents such as a Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.
- 1.4 Attached at Appendix 1 is a draft Bury Values Prospectus. It is proposed that this should be the subject of widespread consultation over the summer period with a view to a further report being presented after the recess and adoption, with amendments if necessary, in the autumn. The Bury Prospectus seeks to build on and develop the Oldham Statement of Values to take account of:
  - Different circumstances in Bury, in particular a view that community cohesion might mean different thing in different parts of the Borough
  - A paramount concern that the central theme should be opportunities for all
  - The need to commit all sections of society to the community safety agenda following the events of 7/7 in London
  - The increasing incidence of legal economic migrancy, principally from the new accession states of Eastern Europe
  - The interim findings of the Government’s Commission on Integration and Cohesion

## **2.0 ISSUES**

### **2.1 *Risk Management***

If the Council takes no initiative in the area of community cohesion there is a risk that:

- There will be a perception that the Council does not take the issue seriously
- Communities may, consequently, not be motivated to work with the Council and its partners to identify potential extremist activity, thus putting at risk community safety
- Resentment may build up in certain communities regarding perceived preferential treatment of others, opening up the way for the development of far right activity
- Community and social cohesion will break down

### **2.2 *Equality and Diversity***

- An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. Its findings are that, if accepted, the proposals will have a positive impact on all minority groups in the Borough. If the proposals are not accepted there will be an opposite, negative effect on these groups
- The EIA contact officer is Colin Fishwick, Head of Urban Strategy and Neighbourhoods, contact details at the end of this report.

### **3 CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 A Bury Values Prospectus would represent a high level statement of intent to sit alongside the Local Strategic Partnership's Ambitions and the Council's Priorities statement. At the strategic level it is intended to refresh the Community Strategy and the Values Prospectus would need to inform this process. This, in turn, would enable our LSP Partners to participate in, and contribute to the process of implementation.
- 3.2 The Council is currently reviewing the operation of the Area Initiative which is likely to result in Area Boards being developed into Local Area Partnerships as a sub-set of the LSP. If accepted, these proposals would have a key role to play in developing and delivering social and community cohesion strategy at the local level. It is clear that social and community cohesion will mean different things in different parts of the Borough and it is vital that this local flavour is reflected in order for widespread "buy in" to be achieved. If the Bury Values Prospectus is agreed for consultation it is the intention to examine in detail how implementation can be woven into the operation of the new Local Area Partnerships.

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#### **List of Background Papers:-**

Interim Statement of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion – February 2007,  
[www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk](http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk)

#### **Contact Details:-**

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## **Appendix 1 - DRAFT BURY VALUES PROSPECTUS**

Bury Metropolitan Borough Council has drawn up a statement of values to be known as the Bury Values Prospectus upon which it wishes to consult widely. The Values Prospectus aims to capture and define a set of shared values to which all can subscribe, and which will define what we mean by the term “Community Cohesion” in Bury. The intention is that, following consultation, and, if necessary amendment, the Values Prospectus will be adopted as a preface to the Council Constitution in order to guide decisions of Members and officers of the Council. The Bury Local Strategic Partnership will, similarly, be offered the opportunity to embrace the Values Prospectus.

### **Equality of Opportunity**

- The Council has set out a series of ambitions for Bury. Our intention is that in working to achieve these ambitions we will create opportunities for all, where those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities.
- Whilst the Council values diversity it believes that the way forward lies in developing shared futures rather than necessarily addressing visible differences
- Further, the Council recognises that one of the major threats to community cohesion is the build up of resentment within individual communities concerning the perceived treatment of others. The Council will ensure that where it does intervene to affect the prospects of individual communities this will be based on objective criteria.
- In particular the Council recognises that where public resources are finite there may be competition for these resources. We will address these issues on the basis of shared concerns rather than competition between communities.
- Disadvantage arising from the structure of society will be sought out and combated.

### **Community Safety and the Rule of Law**

- It is the prime responsibility of the Council to do all in its power to ensure the safety and security of its citizens.
- We will work with our strategic partner organisations to identify extremist elements that threaten community safety, whether in Bury or elsewhere.
- The Council recognises that it cannot fulfil its responsibility to ensure community safety without the active support and participation of all communities
- In particular the Council will seek to build bridges within, and between communities, in order that they can be committed to confronting any extremism within their own communities and identifying any potential threats to cohesion.
- The Council will obey, and expect citizens to comply with, the law of the land.
- It has the right and duty to campaign against what it considers to be bad law, but not to disobey the law.

### **Democracy**

- The Council will actively promote participation in the democratic process and protect each citizen’s right to vote fairly, freely and secretly.
- It will listen to and take account of the views of the people.

- It will be open in its decision-making, except where the law declares otherwise.

### **Human Dignity and Liberty**

- Every citizen has a right to life and freedom from mental and physical harm, and also to self-determination in this respect. These rights will not be overridden, except possibly where this conflicts with the same right of another individual or group.
- The Council will not interfere with those who do not jeopardise the freedoms of others.
- It will actively promote tolerance of all views and lifestyles which are not prejudicial to others.
- It will respect the right to hold and practise traditions and religious faiths, but only if those beliefs are not used to justify curtailment of human rights.
- It will not favour any religion over any other, nor hold an absence of religious faith to be inferior to having a faith.
- Members and officers of the Council are entitled to hold their own views, but when representing the Council must behave in ways which are consistent with the Council's values.

### **Economic Exclusion**

- Economic exclusion of communities and individuals threatens cohesion. We will work to create job and training opportunities in the Borough appropriate to the needs, skills and abilities of all members of society
- The Council welcomes in-comers who wish to come to Bury to live or work, where they are legally entitled to do so, as a positive contribution to creating a successful, dynamic economy, and a cosmopolitan society
- The Council will work with employers and trade unions to ensure that acceptable and improving terms and conditions of employment are maintained for existing employees and in-comers alike.
- The Council values its workforce highly. It will protect employees' welfare and provide suitable support in developing their potential, including achievement of full (Level 5) National Equality Standard for Local Government
- It will endeavour to provide an example to other employers in the Borough.

### *Acknowledgement*

*In drawing up the draft Bury Values Prospectus we have drawn on the work undertaken by Oldham MBC in the development of their Statement of Values and we wish to acknowledge this, and the assistance of the officers of Oldham MBC*

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