
MEETING: THE EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL

DATE: 7 NOVEMBER 2007
12 DECEMBER 2007

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY COHESION – BURY VALUES
PROSPECTUS

REPORT FROM: COUNCILLOR YVONNE CRESWELL
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT AND USER FOCUS

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HEAD OF URBAN STRATEGY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

TYPE OF DECISION: COUNCIL DECISION

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

SUMMARY:

Following the conclusion of Bury's Community Cohesion Pathfinder programme a review was undertaken, earlier this year, to consider the way forward. The recommended option was to first develop a statement of common or shared values, to be known as the Bury Values Prospectus. At its meeting on 21 March 2007 the Executive agreed a draft Values Prospectus for consultation with the intention that the Council would be invited to adopt the Prospectus, amended if necessary, as a preface to the Constitution. This report outlines the results of the consultation and presents an amended document for consideration.

OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTION:

Option 1:

That the Bury Values Prospectus be agreed, that the Council be recommended to amend the Constitution accordingly, and that the document be forwarded to the Team Bury Executive Board in order that strategic partner organisations can consider whether they, similarly, wish to adopt the Prospectus (**recommended**).

Option 2:

That the draft Bury Values Prospectus is not agreed.

Option 3:

That the revised Bury Values Prospectus be the subject of further consultation.

Reason

The Bury Values Prospectus has been the subject of widespread consultation. The principles behind the Prospectus have been widely supported. The draft Prospectus has been amended to take account of the views expressed insofar as is possible without compromising the initial intention behind the document, and taking account of the fact that potentially contradictory views have been expressed on some issues. It is not considered that any new points would be likely to emerge from further consultation.

IMPLICATIONS -

Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:

Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? **Yes**

The proposals will play a key role in achieving the Council Priority of Strengthened Communities

Financial Implications and Risk Considerations

Risk issues are set out in paragraph 4.1.

Statement by Director of Finance and E-Government:

The production of the Values Prospective itself requires no additional resources.

However the report produced by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion "Our Shared Future" makes a number of recommendations which represent a challenging programme of work for the authority with potentially significant resource implications.

The impact on resources has yet to be quantified but may be significant and the authority's ability to meet its responsibilities from within existing mainstream resources is still unclear.

The proposal that an Action Plan be drawn up where Directors will identify priorities and resources within their own service areas is supported and any funding gap may have to be the subject of a bid against the 2008/09 Priority Investment Reserve

Equality/Diversity implications

Yes
(see paragraph 4.2 below)

Considered by Monitoring Officer:

Yes

The proposal to include the Values Prospectus as a preface to the Constitution must be considered and agreed by Full Council.

Are there any legal implications? None arising from the report as drawn

Staffing/ICT/Property: No implications at this stage

Wards Affected: All

Scrutiny Interest: Safe, Strong and Confident Communities

TRACKING/PROCESS

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Chief Executive/ Management Board	Executive Member/ Chair	Ward Members	Partners
22 October 2007	23 October 2007		LSP Executive 11 July 2007 28 November 2007
Scrutiny Commission	Executive	Committee	Council
	7 November 2007		12 December 2007

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Consultation on the draft Bury Values Prospectus was launched at the Community conference held on 11 June 2007. Discussion took place at that event and more detailed responses were solicited via open consultation on the Council's website, including a dedicated e-mail address. Each of the Local Area Partnerships debated the Prospectus during the July cycle and a presentation was given to the Team Bury Executive Board in the same month. Bury Third Sector Development Agency Shadow Board members were consulted in an effort to target special interest and hard to reach groups. Various other groups were invited to respond following suggestions from elected Members. The consultation period ran up to 28 September 2007.

2.0 CONSULTATION

2.1 The response to consultation was numerically limited but some of these were in-depth and included detailed wording suggestions. Most respondents welcomed the principles behind the Prospectus. Several respondents sought clarification on the definition of "citizen" in the document and, following consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, a footnote has been added to make clear that this is intended to include all people who live in the Borough. Diverging views were expressed on two issues in particular – whether the document was unnecessarily negative in terms of

extremism, or whether it did not go far enough; and secondly on the desirability of economic migrancy and whether this depressed wage levels, and if so who is at fault, the employer or the employee. Under these circumstances it could be argued that the wording adopted on these issues in the original draft was broadly appropriate.

- 2.2 A number of respondents, including several from the faith communities, felt that the whole document should be more positive in its overall tone. Other comments from some of those representing faith communities expressed concerns regarding the perceived treatment of faith communities, both within the document and more generally. A number of suggestions for detailed wording amendments were made by this sector which were not all compatible with one another. However, a very helpful response was received from the Bishop of Bolton which drew on discussion with leaders of different faith communities within the Borough, and this has been used to guide some significant amendments made to the draft document.
- 2.3 One suggestion from the Bury Third Sector Shadow Board, which it is felt has considerable merit, is that a representative survey of residents should be carried out in order to measure perceptions across the Borough in relation to current levels of satisfaction with the main elements within the Prospectus. This would then be used as a baseline to measure progress in changing perceptions and behaviour annually. The questions asked of the Citizen's Panel currently include some related to values and it is proposed to examine whether these can be more closely tied to the Prospectus before the next Citizen's Panel mail-out in January 2008.
- 2.4 The draft Prospectus has been amended to take account of the views expressed during consultation insofar as is possible without compromising the initial intention behind the document, and taking account of the fact that potentially contradictory views have been expressed on some issues. It is considered that the document has been strengthened through the consultation process. A copy of the final document, once adopted, will be forwarded to respondents thanking them for their contribution.
- 2.5 A number of significant issues were raised during consultations that, whilst important, were not directly related to the wording of the draft Values Prospectus. These included:
 - Language was considered to be a major barrier to integration, concern was expressed over reduced (national) funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages
 - The Role of Education was strongly emphasised in promoting understanding and integration
 - Engagement – there is a need to engage all communities and ensure that communication is fed back to them
 - Consultation with, and valuing young people was seen as being very important

- The actions of the Council in some areas of service delivery was criticised as not meeting the aspirations set out in the draft Values Prospectus. This was particularly a feature of responses received from representatives of disabled people

It is proposed that these issues are considered as part of the Council's response to the final report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion.

3.0 COMMISSION ON INTEGRATION AND COHESION

3.1 During the consultation period on the draft Values Prospectus the Government's Commission on Integration and Cohesion published its final report "Our Shared Future". This, together with the values Prospectus, was the subject of a training day for elected Members on 4 September. The COIC report makes 57 recommendations in all; those for local authorities are listed at Appendix 2. They represent a challenging programme of work with potentially significant resource implications. A key question is how much can be achieved within existing mainstream resources and priorities should lie. No timeline is given in the COIC report but this is a long term project. It is proposed that an Action Plan be drawn up where Directors will identify priorities and resources within their own service areas with monitoring falling within the remit of the Safe, Strong and Confident Communities Scrutiny Commission.

4.0 ISSUES

4.1 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

4.2 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.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 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 has informed the refresh of the Community Strategy. This, in turn, will enable our LSP Partners to participate in, and contribute to the process of implementation.
- 5.2 Following the adoption of a refreshed Community Strategy (report elsewhere on the agenda) each Local Area Partnership will prepare a new Local Community Plan. The Local Area Partnerships will 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 it is the intention to examine in detail how implementation can be woven into the operation of the new Local Area Partnerships.
- 5.3 The recommendations for local authorities contained in "Commission on Integration and Cohesion – Our Shared Future" represent a challenging agenda for the Council at a time of significant budgetary pressure. However, the identification and implementation of action on priorities is vital if the Values Prospectus is to influence how the Council delivers services and how it is perceived by residents.

List of Background Papers:

Commission on Integration and Cohesion – Our Shared Future, June 2007
www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk

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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 has consulted widely. The Values Prospectus aims to capture and define a set of shared values to which all can subscribe, and provide a foundation for community cohesion in Bury. As a sign of commitment the Values Prospectus will form a preface to the Council Constitution in order to guide decisions of Members and officers of the Council. The Council is committed to leading by example across all points in the document.

We already have a strong foundation upon which to build. Positive contacts exist between our diverse communities, every community is valued and values each other, and rights and responsibilities are of equal importance.

Equality of Opportunity

- The Council has set out a series of ambitions for Bury. In working to achieve these ambitions we will create opportunities for all, so that all, from whatever background, have similar life opportunities.
- Whilst the Council values and celebrates diversity it believes that the way forward lies in developing shared futures rather than addressing visible differences
- The Council will ensure that where it intervenes to affect the prospects of individual communities this will be based on objective criteria which are justly and fairly established. Further, the Council will communicate these decisions transparently to all to prevent the potential build up of resentment concerning the perceived treatment of others
- 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*.
- The Council recognises that the active support and participation of all communities is essential if it is to fulfil this responsibility
- We will work with our strategic partner organisations to identify extremist elements and hate crime that threaten community safety and community cohesion, whether in Bury or elsewhere.
- In particular the Council will seek to build bridges within, and between communities, in order that all sections of our community seek actively to promote peaceful and harmonious relationships and are committed to confronting any extremism within their own communities and identifying any potential threats to cohesion.
- Respect for the law by all is fundamental to a cohesive community. The Council will obey, and expect all 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 and injustice, 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, given the understanding that, on occasions, adjudication may be necessary when the rights of one party conflict 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 consistent with the law of the land and not prejudicial to others.
- The Council respects all faith traditions, and those with no faith, equally
- The right to hold and practise a religious faith or other tradition must not be used to justify curtailment of human rights or the rights of other groups.
- 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, including disabled people.
- The Council welcomes all people who wish to come to Bury to live or work as a positive contribution to creating a successful, dynamic economy, and cosmopolitan society
- The Council will work with employers, their representative organisations, 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 and work with partner organisations to disseminate good practice.

*** NOTE**

For the avoidance of doubt, where the term "citizen" is used in this document it is intended to include all people who live in the Borough

COMMISSION ON INTEGRATION AND COHESION – OUR SHARED FUTURE

Key Role of Local Government

- Community Leadership – knowing and leading your communities
- Understanding and meeting the needs of all your communities
- Improved outcomes and aspirations

Key Recommendations for Local Authorities

- Mapping communities
- Monitoring BVPI performance indicators and developing locally-specific cohesion indicators
- Mainstreaming issues of integration and cohesion into Sustainable Communities Strategies
- Developing and improving diversity through workforce strategies
- Citizenship Education and the role of schools
- Enhancing the role of citizenship ceremonies, particularly to include all young people
- Developing “welcome packs” for new migrants which might be linked to local contracts
- Developing a more strategic approach to community capacity building
- Maintaining a communication plan and myth-busting strategies
- Auditing opportunities for inter-cultural activity and developing funding strategies to promote intercultural dialogue
- “Community cohesion audit resource” for tension monitoring
- Neighbourhood policing
- Identifying housing “hotspots” of tension