



Equalities and Community Cohesion Theme Group

Terms of Reference

Role

The Coventry Partnership acts as the strategic umbrella which brings together the public, private, community and voluntary sectors in order to oversee delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.

The Coventry Partnership has a key role in shaping and influencing the future of the City and provides a forum for both networking and consultation. It was formed to “bring together the resources, energy and creativity of key organisations, groups, communities and people to work to meet the economic, social and environmental needs of the City of Coventry and the health and well-being of its people”

The Equality and Community Cohesion theme group’s key aim is to provide an effective advisory, supportive co-ordinating role within the wider Partnership to ensure that all projects and Partnership activities ensure that Coventry becomes a more cohesive city, a place where:

- There is a sense of belonging and involvement for all Coventry's communities
- The diversity of Coventry people's backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued
- People from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds
- Coventry's diverse communities and neighbourhoods are vibrant and successful with local people and communities involved with the way that local needs are met and in their future development.

Key Objectives

The Equalities and Community Cohesion theme group will be responsible for delivery of the priorities identified within the section of the Sustainable Community Strategy entitled “A more equal Coventry with cohesive communities and neighbourhoods”. These include:



Long-term outcomes

- Coventry will be a more inclusive and cohesive city and people will feel able to influence the quality of services and be involved
- There will be more equal opportunities for people from different backgrounds in Coventry
- People will have seen improvements to quality of life happen most quickly in priority neighbourhoods and communities

Short-term priorities

- Improve community engagement and meet local and national government requirements to involve local communities in partnership working and decision making
- Ensure that equality of opportunity and community cohesion are embedded throughout Coventry's Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement
- Improve neighbourhood planning to involve local communities in addressing local issues and improve local service delivery
- Develop a better understanding of the changing demographics and future needs of people in Coventry, including the effects of migration into and out of the city on local communities and the delivery of services

The group will achieve these by undertaking an annually agreed work programme, appended to this document.

Accountability and Responsibility

- The group will be accountable to Coventry Partnership for the delivery of the Equalities and Community theme as stated within the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- The Chair will ensure that the group adheres to the principles set out in the "Practical Guide to Partnership Working" (Nov 2007), produced by Coventry Partnership.



- Individual organisations represented within the group are responsible for ensuring that their nominated representative (or an appropriate substitute) is available to attend all Equality and Community Cohesion theme group meetings, which will be scheduled in advance.
- All members of the group will be in a position to make or influence decisions within their own organisations/groups where appropriate, and have sufficient knowledge of the needs of their client groups to contribute to discussions and decision making.
- Members will be responsible for reporting to the group on relevant issues/developments from their own organisation/group, and also for communicating Equalities and Community Cohesion business back to the group or organisation they represent.
- The Chair will formally report relevant issues back to the Coventry Partnership Board

Working Arrangements

- Meetings will be held approximately every 6 weeks, and scheduled in advance
- Papers and agendas will be sent out at least 7 days in advance of the meeting
- The Chair will be nominated on an annual basis, and must not be a City Council employee. Nomination forms will be circulated on an annual basis to members of the theme group. The current Chair can be re-nominated.
- The Chair can resign by giving one month's notice to the group.
- The Adviser to the group will be the senior council officer with corporate responsibility for Equalities and Community Cohesion.
- Membership of the group will be reviewed annually to ensure that all identified organisations maintain representation on the group.
- The meeting timetable will be scheduled over the year



Membership

The Equalities and Community Cohesion group will consist of senior representatives from:

- Coventry City Council Cabinet (Member whose portfolio includes community cohesion)
- Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership
- Older People’s Partnership Board
- Mental Health Partnership Board
- Physical and Sensory Impairment Partnership
- Learning Disabilities Partnership Board
- Sexual Orientation Advisory Group
- Coventry Ethnic Minority Action Partnership (CEMAP)
- 2 x representatives from the Community Empowerment Network
- Coventry Voluntary Service Council
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- 2 x Private Sector representatives
- University of Warwick - CRED (Centre for Rights, Equality and Diversity) or the LASE network (Local Authority Social Exclusion)
- Health Sector
- Police
- Community Safety Partnership – Hate Crime Co-ordinator
- Neighbourhood Management
- LEA representative

- Whitefriars



Potential gaps in the Membership List include faith groups and representatives from BME Community organisations.

Member's rights and responsibilities

- All partners are treated as equal and their contributions are respected and valued.
- All partners are able to voice the views and opinions of their organisation /sector at meetings and are responsible for feeding back from the group to the organisation they are representing. The group comprises members who are representing a wider network or partnership. It is important that each member of the group facilitates a 2-way flow of information between the network or partnership they represent and the Theme Group.
- All partners are able to contribute to the formal decisions and recommendations of the partnership.
- The partnership will support all sectors in building up their capacity to participate fully in the work of the partnership.
- Where partners have participated in the priority setting process and feel the current year's programme is of limited relevance to them, they may opt to receive information only. This may be reversed at any time.

Admin Support

This will be provided by the Council's Corporate Policy and Research Team.

Review

This document will be reviewed every 12 months

Date of last update: November 2008
SB/DB