COMMUNITIES AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report of: Councillor Ray Wootten
Chairman for Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report to:	**Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Date:	**23rd January 2018**
Subject:	**Community Cohesion in South Kesteven LDS263**

Decision Proposal:	
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nick Neilson Cabinet Member for Communities Councillor Jacky Smith Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Skills
Report author:	Carol Drury c.drury@southkesteven.gov.uk 01476 406 161 Date: 4th January 2018
Reviewed by:	Lucy Youles l.youles@southkesteven.gov.uk 01476 406 105 Date: 4th January 2018
Signed off by:	Tracey Blackwell t.blackwell@southkesteven.gov.uk 01476 406 058 Date: 9th January 2018
Approved for publication	Councillor Ray Wootten Chairman Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee Date: 9th January 2018

SUMMARY
This report provides members of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an outline of community cohesion, potential areas for consideration in developing a programme of work and statistical information relating to possible target communities.

RECOMMENDATION
It is recommended that Members consider the content of this report LDS 263 and determine the requirement for further research and/or make recommendations to the relevant Cabinet Member to take this work further.

1. BACKGROUND TO REPORT

1.1 At its inaugural meeting in May 2017 the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified community cohesion as a subject of interest to be included within its work plan.

1.2 Discussion at subsequent meetings determined that information was required relating to the communities this Council serves; possible locations for interventions and potential partners for collaborative working. Also identified was the need to define exactly what we mean by community cohesion.

1.3 This report seeks to give an initial response to these requirements and also to share intelligence gathered and advice given during visits to other local authorities that have experience in this area of work.

1.4 What is clear from the work undertaken to date is that community cohesion is as difficult to define as it is to measure – it means different things to different people. Community cohesion is much easier to see and explain when it is not present and when there is conflict and discord between groups within communities.

1.5 Community cohesion is at its best when everyone has the opportunity and the motivation to participate in society as fully as they wish – on an equal basis with others. Lack of community cohesion occurs when people are prevented from participating or feel alienated. These barriers, which can also be self-imposed, are not always discernible. They relate to how much money people have, their health and the confidence they have to engage in social activities. Sometimes there are more tangible barriers such as discrimination, which does not always take place along ethic or religious lines. Discrimination occurs quite frequently for young people and people with disabilities.

1.6 The Council for Europe's 2004 strategy for Social Cohesion states "social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means".

1.7 Dame Louise Casey DBE CB (Dame Commander, Order of Bath - Companion) asserted in her 2016 review into opportunity and integration that "There is

strong evidence around the benefits that can derive from high levels of meaningful contact between people from different backgrounds. Analysis of the academic evidence base and a number of case studies conducted for the review suggests that social mixing can:

- reduce prejudice
- increase trust and understanding between groups (with a knock on effect that allows negative perceptions of other groups to be challenged)
- lead to a greater sense of togetherness and common ground
- promote resilience to extremist ideologies and provide a challenge to dangerous world views".

1.8 During 2017 officers met with colleagues working in the field of community cohesion from Peterborough City Council and Lincolnshire County Council. Peterborough has a team of 'Community Connectors' whilst Lincolnshire has a team of 'Community Collaborators'. Both organisations have identifiable issues within their catchment areas and work directly with community groups and individuals to help engender cohesive communities.

1.9 It should be acknowledged that no evidence currently exists to suggest that South Kesteven has the scale of issue being tackled by our neighbouring colleagues. The knowledge and advice shared by both organisations has, however, proved really useful in helping to frame a potential way forward for this Council in its emerging community cohesion agenda.

1.10 Both Peterborough City Council and Lincolnshire County Council have offered support and would welcome opportunities to work in partnership with this Council in promoting community cohesion. The advice of both was:

- Get to know where your intervention is needed - identify the communities where tensions lie
- Know your limits - start small, even small steps can lead to big change
- Don't think you're on your own – there are others doing this work already within your communities – work in support of, or partnership with them
- Recognise that this work does not have a quick fix – if you're going to do it, you have to commit to it. It can take years to build trust

1.11 Statistical information is available to us relating to our communities. Sources such as the Census, School Census, Office for National Statistics Mid Year Population Estimates, Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI) and Project Older People Population Information (POPPI) and the Local Government Association give us data relating to population, age, ethnicity, disability and poverty. Crime, anti-social behaviour and hate crime statistics which can highlight potential tensions are produced and provided by police analysts.

1.12 The statistics give us a view of the District. It is important however to also gain the views and experiences of the people directly impacted by any tension. Hate crime statistics for example give the impression that, although figures are slowly

rising (27 incidents recorded by the police between April and October 2016 compared with 32 incidents recorded during the same period for 2017), there is no real issue related to hate crime in this District. Direct interactions with people with disabilities and foreign nationals however tell a different story with hate incidents taking place on a daily basis that are not reported for fear of reprisal.

1.13 The change in this district's population make-up has happened at pace. People from many parts of the world have chosen to make South Kesteven their home. Migration figures show a decline in people coming to Britain however, inward migration shows a steady change with people moving from county to county to live and/or seek work. Intelligence from South Kesteven's Migrant Worker Forum tells us that some European migrants have moved on – either returning to their home country or to another part of Europe due in part to their uncertainty of a post-Brexit Britain.

1.14 A recent celebratory 'Celebrate the Nations' event which took place in Grantham attracted some 250 people and represented 26 different nationalities. This highlights that the ethnic diversity in the town is vast. Conversely however this means that numbers within those communities are small, making these individuals particularly hard-to-reach. It is important therefore that we work with others that have already made connections and built trust.

1.15 Anti-social behaviour statistics show us an increase in reported incidents of inconsiderate behaviour (760 recorded between April and October 2016 whilst 838 were recorded during the same period in 2017) and neighbour disputes (239 recorded April to October 2016 increasing to 274 in 2017). Whilst these figures alone do not give us definitive evidence of a lack of social cohesion they do give a possible indication of increasing intolerance within our communities.

1.16 Intolerance can take place in any community. Traditional tensions for South Kesteven include intolerances between the older generation and the youth of the area; the increasing diversity in relation to the migrant communities that have made their home in this District and hate crime against people with disabilities. Tensions can also arise out of issues of worklessness and poverty. Whilst we have no specific evidence to support these latter claims in relation to this district, data from similar districts indicates that this is a growing area of concern.

1.17 Target communities identified during the gathering of information therefore are:

- Migrant communities
- Communities of age – young/old
- People with disabilities
- Areas of deprivation

1.18 Data has been provided within the appendices attached to this report to give the Committee an overview of these communities and areas of consideration. Information relating to people with disabilities is available at District level only. Information relating to other target communities has also been provided to show geographical locations within the District where the highest concentrations of these communities are located.

1.19 Statistics cannot give us a full picture. Much of what is available is out of date or based on estimate. The only true way to know our communities is to work directly with them. Active promotion and participatory programmes which are long lasting and consistent are key to supporting community cohesion.

2. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 The purpose of this report is for Members to consider the options available to explore further work in this area.

3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

3.1 This is a new area of work for the Council and therefore will inevitably be resource implications. Sources of external funding are also available such as the Controlling Migration Fund which supports work that brings about cohesive communities.

4. RISK AND MITIGATION

4.1 Risk has been considered as part of this report and any specific high risks are included in the table below:

Category Risk	Action / Controls
None	

5. ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS (EQUALITY, SAFEGUARDING etc.)

5.1 This report and any related work are based in the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination. Any projects developed as a response to this report will be subject to equality analysis.

5.2 Safeguarding training and disclosure and barring checks will be required for all individuals working on any projects developed in response to this report which involve vulnerable individuals as participants.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 South Kesteven is a safe place to live and work. There is limited intelligence to show tangible implications in relation to crime and disorder, however, the rise in incidents of inconsiderate behaviour and the contradictory evidence relating to hate crime should be taken into account when determining a way forward.

7. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

The report confirms that external funding is available to support specific community initiatives. Therefore it is recommended that funding is applied for where there are anticipated financial implications.

8. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

8.1 The Council has a responsibility to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty which is set by law as part of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires us have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

9. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES

9.1 None

10. APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix A – Ethnicity and language statistics
10.2 Appendix B – Age statistics
10.3 Appendix C – People with disabilities statistics
10.4 Appendix D – Worklessness and free school meal statistics

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 A new strategy for Social Cohesion (Council of Europe)
11.2 A review into opportunity and integration (Dame Louise Casey DBE CB)