

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2ND FEBRUARY, 2021

SUBJECT:
COMMUNITY COHESION ACTION PLAN

Purpose:

To provide an overview of the Community Cohesion regional plan.

To consider and comment on the following issues:

To endorse the attached action plan.

Reasons:

Carmarthenshire County Council is the host authority for Mid and West Wales community cohesion grant. Every year we are required to submit to the Welsh Government our action plan for the Mid and West Wales (Dyfed-Powys) region.

To be referred to the Executive Board/Council for decision: NO

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER.
Cllr. Cefin Campbell (Communities & Rural Affairs Portfolio Holder)

Directorate: Community Services	Designations: Head of Homes and Safer Communities Engagement and Partnership Manager	JMorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk 01267 228960 <u>lesjames@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</u> 01267 228930
Name of Head of Service: Jonathan Morgan		
Report Author: Les James		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2ND FEBRUARY, 2021

COMMUNITY COHESION ACTION PLAN

Background

Since 2010, Carmarthenshire County Council has acted as the host Authority in receiving community cohesion grant from the Welsh Government. The grant is for the delivery of a set of actions set out by Welsh Government to deliver a community cohesion plan for Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. In 2015, this was extended to Mid and West Wales region which added Ceredigion and Powys. The delivery plan (attached) aims to meet regional, county, and local issues in the spirit of the guidance set out by Welsh Government.

What is community cohesion?

Community cohesion is what must happen to enable different groups of people to get on well together, whatever their backgrounds or circumstances. Building cohesion within and between communities is an essential step towards improving people's quality of life. Viewed from outside, a cohesive community is one in which people will want to live and invest.

Key indicators of community cohesion relate to how people feel about their local area. It can therefore be used as a measure of how well different minority and majority communities develop and relate to each other. Communities may define themselves by neighbourhood, ethnicity or culture, age group, faith, sexual orientation, language, gender or other characteristics or interests.

There are eight regional community cohesion co-ordinators for Wales, funded from an allocated fund by the Welsh Government. The Mid and West Wales Co-ordinator covers Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, and Powys and is employed by Carmarthenshire County Council. The Community Cohesion Action Plan 2020/21 has four main themes with several key objectives.

- Theme A – Identifying and mitigating community tensions (hate crime, extremism, anxiety, anti-social behaviour) relating to Brexit
- Theme B – Foster Good Relations
- Theme C – Ensure Equality of Opportunity
- Theme D – Administration and Reporting to support work under themes A-C

Details of the Mid and West Wales plan are contained in the attached action plan. We as the host authority provide quarterly updates to the Welsh Government as well as drawing down on the grant. As part of our grant arrangements, officers meet representatives of the other three local authorities on a quarterly basis to set regional and local objectives.

Community Cohesion and impact of Coronavirus on our communities.

The Cohesion team have recently completed a research project, delivered by Premier Advisory Group to look at the impact that Brexit and Covid had on communities. The purpose of this was to provide an evidence base, identifying potential community hotspots, tensions and issues and recommendations as to how we embed good practice into our work moving forward. We are now considering how to embed several recommendations into our policies and strategies.

Also, the Community Cohesion team have made available a grant of up to £2500 to be used to develop projects which aid the recovery of community groups during the pandemic. The aim is to help bring communities together safely (online or in person if appropriate), ensuring groups and premises can access initiatives that promote cohesive communities. Work includes supporting Community Groups to open (adhering to current guidance); the development of online events, resource materials or other initiatives which improve relations within our communities.

We have encouraged projects that help people to enjoy and celebrate living in their communities and strengthen their sense of belonging. This could mean helping people to understand and enjoy each other's cultures and traditions. It could involve new ways of working, developing materials which help bring people together and promote diversity and inclusion.

Key achievements and actions over the last 12 months.

- In December 2019, the team developed a Small Grant fund for Community Cohesion Projects in Mid and South West Wales. The fund was promoted through Community Connectors (or equivalent) and third sector partners. 11 projects ran between Jan – March 2020, including 3 in Carmarthenshire. The fund was run again last November.
- The Cohesion Team developed and promoted a one-minute Hate Crime Awareness Film (in partnership with Victim Support and endorsed by the OPCC and the 4 Police forces across Wales). The film was shared widely on social media. During Hate Crime Awareness Week 2020, members of the public were invited to watch the film, then take part in a short Hate Crime Quiz. The project was developed by the Mid and West Wales team and rolled out across Wales by all Cohesion teams. 516 people responded to the quiz.
- We commissioned Premier Advisory Group to run a research project looking at the impact that Brexit may have had on communities across the region. The purpose of this was to provide an evidence base report, identifying potential community hotspots, tensions and issues particularly arising from the Brexit referendum in 2016 and its subsequent impact on community cohesion in the following years. In March 2020, the project was paused due to the pandemic. As this situation developed, it was decided to extend the scope of the research to also explore the impacts of COVID-19 lockdown measures. The initial findings have been presented to the EBM portfolio holder for Communities & Rural Affairs.
- The team have promoted and signposted to the EU Settlement Scheme. Work has involved drop in sessions; A six month radio campaign started in July 2020 across 4 Radio stations including Radio Carmarthenshire and the Wave; monthly Skype meetings

with the third sector partners involved in promoting and supporting the EUSS; coordinated a series of online webinars for different audiences; set up regular social media message from each local authority; direct email contact with local employers (care homes, retail, tourism, agriculture etc); correspondence with Schools (parents).

- The team supported a range of cohesion campaigns during the year including Holocaust Memorial Day, International Women Day, Black History Month, LGBT History Month, Gypsy Traveller History Month, Refugee Week and Hate Crime Awareness Week.
- The team established weekly multi agency Tension Monitoring briefings, involving partners from Dyfed Powys Police, MAWW Fire and Rescue, Trinity St David's University, Victim Support, Race Council Cymru and the regional Local Authorities.
- The Modern Slavery Act 2015 was introduced to criminalise slavery, forced servitude and human trafficking in the UK, we acknowledge our responsibility to the Act and expect our suppliers to observe best practice and continue to seek improvements throughout their supply chains. During 2018/19, we have signed up to the Welsh Government's Code of Practice on Ethical Employment in Supply Chains to show our continued commitment to the development of more ethical supply chains in delivering our contracts. In signing up to the Code we have agreed to comply with the 12 commitments designed to eliminate modern slavery and support ethical employment practices. These commitments will be embedded into the Ethical Employment & Supply Chains Policy.
- The Community Cohesion team will continue to support EU citizens living and working in Carmarthenshire to access Settled Status Scheme. We will signpost EU citizens to places where they can receive advice and support. This has been a key action moving forward in terms of Brexit.

Details of 2020/21 actions are in the attachment "Mid and West Wales Community Cohesion Plan 2020-2021". A revised action plan will be produced for Welsh Government by March for 2021/22 financial year as part of the grant conditions.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

Action Plan: Mid and West Wales Community Cohesion Plan 2020-2021

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed: Jonathan Morgan

Head of Homes and Safer Communities

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	NONE	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The vision of an integrated, cohesive and resilient society is based on three foundations:

- People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
- People knowing their rights and responsibilities
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly

Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys County Councils work together and work with partners to regionally address needs and issues in relation to community cohesion. This work is supported by the Mid and West Wales Community Cohesion Steering Group and by a Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator and two community officers.

Getting on Together, the community cohesion strategy for Wales, was launched in December 2009. It provides an understanding of community cohesion that is distinct and different to the agenda in England, in that it recognises the potential for deprivation and social exclusion to undermine community cohesion. The National Delivery Plan 2014-16 reaffirm the Welsh Government's commitment to strengthen community cohesion across Wales.

'A Wales of Cohesive Communities,' is one of the Wellbeing Goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Community cohesion is mainstreamed into the Wellbeing Plans and structures of the four Public Service Boards in the region.

3. Finance

The post is funded by an allocated fund from the Welsh Government Equalities Branch which for this financial year is £140,000. The grant funds the salaries of the Community Cohesion Co-ordinator and two Community Cohesion Officers. The rest of the grant is used to fund various projects and initiatives stipulated in our action plan. Welsh Government review allocation of the grant in December and can fluctuate from one year to the next. The award letter is sent out in March and runs for the financial year. In return we provide Welsh Government with quarterly updates and make a claim against the grant.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Jonathan Morgan

Head of Homes and Safer Communities

1. Local Member(s) - Not applicable

2. Community / Town Council - Not applicable

3. Relevant Partners

The Mid and West Wales Steering Group made up of the 4 local authorities have been involved in putting together the community cohesion action plan.

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations - Not applicable

**EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO
HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED**

YES

Include any observations here

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THERE ARE NONE

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection