

### Community Cohesion within Northamptonshire

Community Cohesion is an action that provides the greater knowledge, respect and contact between the various cultures and communities. Community cohesion aims to develop:

- A common vision and sense of belonging for all communities.
- The appreciation within the community of different backgrounds and circumstances
- Similar life opportunities for people of all backgrounds.
- Within all environments be it the workplace, schools or within neighbourhoods, strong positive partnerships and relationships between people from different backgrounds.

In order for community cohesion to be successful, as many communities, agencies, organisations and institutions should be involved in the implementation as possible. This includes:

*Specific Populations:* e.g. BME communities, young people, old people, asylum seekers Lesbian gay and Bisexual community, gypsies and members of various faith/religious communities.

*Organisations:* e.g. Voluntary organisations, local strategic partnerships, police service, fire service and media organisations and companies.

*Service Delivery:* e.g. The diverse service delivery should encompass community cohesion including housing, arts, sports, education, disability and cultural services.

An integral part of community cohesion is the provision of education, training and awareness building. From this members of different community groups can understand and learn about other cultures, backgrounds and range of circumstances that are different from their own.

The work carried out to build community cohesion often takes place throughout various projects and organisations within the community in different forms. These are a necessity within larger scale projects in order for the desired results and outcomes to be achieved. Examples of this may be *equal opportunities* and/or *diversity statements* that exist, *social inclusion policies* and *programmes* and *community awareness schemes*.

The ideal of community cohesion can be made on the basis that the methods, objectives, aims and outcomes can be implemented generically throughout the community through support agencies and networks and mainstream core services and providers.

This results in an initial change in the attitudes, perceptions and lack of appreciation that is often present amongst different cultures and communities, with the breakdown of the anonymity and isolation that has formed.

The encouragement of the community to take an active role within community cohesion projects and schemes will ultimately lead to a sustainable cohesion within the community. From this the communities themselves will be empowered to develop an awareness of barriers that may be apparent and identify methods to overcome these. Good practice models will be in place and thus can be used as benchmarks in areas of the community where cohesion is at an earlier stage of implementation.