



Centre for Local
Economic Strategies

bulletin

What is the role of the new local performance framework in promoting cohesive communities?

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Introduction

Emerging after the inter-ethnic conflicts in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2001, the concept of community cohesion has come to dominate the Government's rhetoric on race relations. Running in parallel with this 'turning point' was the emergence of the new local performance framework. This framework has increased the responsibility of local authorities to tackle priority issues in their area, issues such as community cohesion, and given them the flexibility to meet the specific demands of their area.

This idea echoes the concept of 'place shaping'. Place shaping is concerned with "the creative use of powers and influence to promote the general well-being of a community and its citizens"¹. It is the view of CLES that for too long issues of economic and social regeneration have been separated. From this standpoint we can assert that in order for communities to be cohesive, local authorities must have the responsibility and capability to develop areas that are characterised by sustainable economic development and fairness. In turn, creating localities in which all members of the community feel valued and share a strong attachment to place.

This bulletin sets out to:

- Provide an overview of what is meant by community cohesion, and also the context from which it emerged
- Explore how community cohesion has guided Government policy
- Explain what the new local performance framework is, and how it relates to community cohesion
- Outline what these new responsibilities mean for local authorities

¹ 'Local Government White Paper', October 2006
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/158064>

What is meant by community cohesion?

Definitions

The emergence of community cohesion marked a shift away from multiculturalist approaches, which dominated race relations throughout the 1980s and 90s. Notable academic Bhikhu Parekh defines multiculturalism as "the acceptance, respect and even public affirmation of...differences"². However, in celebrating diversity, some critics argue that multiculturalism divided communities, thus threatening social solidarity.

In contrast, the community cohesion approach is concerned with promoting meaningful interaction between communities, shared values and feelings of shared citizenship and attachment to place. Various definitions of what is meant by community cohesion have been developed, which it is useful here to set out:

1. For the Local Government Association³, a cohesive community is one where:
 - There is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
 - The diversity of peoples' different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued
 - Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
 - There are strong and positive relationships being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools, and within neighbourhoods
2. Dr Rosalyn Lynch, writing in *The Cattle Report*⁴, suggests that community cohesion refers to situations in which individuals are bound to one another by common social and cultural commitments such as shared norms and values and interdependence arising from shared interests.
3. From a local authority perspective, Leicester City Council⁵ defines community cohesion as:
 - Learning to live together
 - Understanding what makes us different, as well as what unites us
 - Reaching out to people of all backgrounds and in all areas of the city
 - Communicating without prejudice and bias
 - Providing opportunities for all groups in the city that do not traditionally come together to get to know one another, work together and discover shared experiences

Whilst there are clearly recurring themes running through these definitions, there are nevertheless subtle differences between them. With the implementation of local performance frameworks, local authorities will have to think carefully and come to a definition of what community cohesion means in the context of their local community.

² Parekh, B. (2000), 'Rethinking Multiculturalism', p.1

³ 'Leading Cohesive Communities - a guide for local authority leaders and chief executives'

⁴ <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys->

<files/Guardian/documents/2001/12/11/communitycohesionreport.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=7292>

Context: the 'riots' of 2001

It is useful here to provide a brief historical context of the concept of community cohesion, as is it linked quite explicitly to a particular era in race relations. Community cohesion came to the forefront of British politics after the disturbances in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in 2001. In August of 2001, violence erupted between young, working class Asian and White men. In what came to be defined as 'riots', 200 police officers were injured and many homes and businesses vandalised, leading to inevitable comparisons with the notorious uprisings in Handsworth, Toxteth and Brixton in the 1980s.

The events of the summer of 2001 can quite rightly be described as a turning point in the Government's tackling of race relations issues. The 'riots' spawned numerous reports and responses, but by far the most influential was *The Cattle Report*, a Government commission report chaired by Ted Cattle who currently chairs the Institute of Community Cohesion⁶. According to the report, the fundamental cause of the disturbances was that in these towns, "communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives". In other words, these communities were living in a state of segregation, rather than integration. Many reasons for this segregation, or "depth of polarisation", have been proposed, including employment, housing, and education.

Employment, Housing and Education: Three key issues in creating cohesive communities

1. *Employment*

- By the end of the 20th century, deindustrialisation had truly set in, and towns and cities that had once relied on industry, were now faced with high unemployment rates, leading to deprivation. Furthermore, minority ethnic communities responded by setting up their own businesses catering for their own communities, which inhibited the extent to which people integrated.

2. *Housing*

- Much has been written on patterns of residential segregation. For some, 'White Flight' is the cause of this: the notion that White members of the community leave depressed inner-city areas as soon as they can afford to, leaving ethnic minority communities to reside in concentrated clusters. Others highlight a long history of segregationist housing policy as the cause of segregation, whilst some suggest that communities voluntarily cluster in certain areas because of cultural amenities and kinship networks. This is a contentious and unresolved debate, however what *The Cattle Report* made clear is that geographical segregation negates meaningful interaction between ethnic communities, instead encouraging misunderstanding and misinformation.

3. *Housing*

- As catchment areas dictate, segregated neighbourhoods lead to segregated schools. In turn, if children are not meeting each other,

⁶ The iCoCo was established in 2005 to provide a new approach to race, diversity and multiculturalism. It represents a partnership of academic, statutory, and non-governmental bodies. <http://www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/icoco>

then neither are their parents. Leading Sir Trevor Phillips, Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (formally the Commission for Racial Equality), to the conclusion that children were growing up as strangers. Furthermore, *The Cattle Report* criticised multiculturalist approaches to education for offering children only a superficial understanding of Asian culture.

Employment, housing and education are amongst the many factors that can affect whether a community is cohesive. However, there are many less tangible factors that also have an important role. For example, the extent to which people feel part of their local community, or communities' perceptions of unfair treatment. A more holistic approach to measuring community cohesion has been set out in the national indicator set, which this bulletin will consider later.

Community cohesion and Government policy

Having briefly outlined the historical context of community cohesion and also some of the causes of segregation, it's now relevant to explore in more detail the Government's strategy to encourage community cohesion. Whilst *The Cattle Report* identified the problem of segregation and laid the foundations for the community cohesion approach, *Our Shared Future*⁷, a report published by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion on 14 June 2007, provides a more up-to-date picture of how the principles of community cohesion may play out in policy. The report makes a number of recommendations for creating more cohesive communities according to the following themes:

1. Values and citizenship

- ❑ The report suggests that whilst our values may be drawn from different sources, in practice we can agree about what many of these values are. This is important because we need to have a degree of common ground in core values that can underpin our shared future.
- ❑ It stresses the emphasis on shared belonging and pride of place.
- ❑ *Our Shared Future* also reminds us of the value of discussion and debate in ensuring active citizenship and increased engagement in the democratic process.

2. National accountability for managing the integration of new migrants

- ❑ The report recommends that a national body be established to manage the integration of new migrants. It is believed that this would help deal with a number of issues that prevent new migrants from integrating in British society. For example, a lack of practical information about how to live in the UK, the lack of recognition of migrants' qualifications, difficulties in accessing English classes, and a lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities.

3. Providing access and information: welcome packs for all new immigrants

- ❑ The report also recommends that the Department for Communities and Local Government develop a welcome pack of essential information for new migrants, for example the conditions attached to their immigration status.

⁷Our Shared Future', June 2007

http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/upload/assets/www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/our_shared_future.pdf

4. Working in partnership to deliver 'cultural briefing'

- Another suggestion put forward in this report is the need for new migrants to get to grips with local protocols and etiquette, or information about how a local community functions outside of the more straightforward administrative tasks. For this to be achieved, it is required that there is a joined up local approach involving partners such as voluntary, community, and faith organisations. The report also advocates that these partnerships are formalised through local service level agreements or contracts.

5. Support for learning English

- A shared language is seen as being fundamental to integration and cohesion in binding people together and promoting a sense of shared heritage. Furthermore, a sound grasp of English is as a key factor in determining whether new communities successfully enter the labour market.
- The report therefore urges the Government to invest more in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision.
- The economic benefits of ESOL are highlighted in the report, as poor English language skills are one of the biggest barriers to accessing employment. As such, *Our Shared Future* suggests that ESOL should be a significant element of the Learning and Skills Council's strategy to tackle worklessness.

How these recommendations play out in policy

The recommendations set out in the report present a convincing strategy for promoting community cohesion. Indeed, many of the themes outlined appear to be making their way into Government policy. For example, last year the Government announced that every teenager in the UK would be given a citizenship pack when they became eligible to vote with information on democracy and civic duties. In another attempt to boost a shared sense of citizenship, the Government has proposed a national 'British day'.

Targeting new migrants from outside of the European Union in particular⁸ has also been a priority. In order for them to become British citizens they must demonstrate good behaviour and a willingness to integrate. They will also need to comply with a citizenship deal for newcomers, setting out their responsibilities to be 'good neighbours'. Finally, the Government has recommended that resources be spent on English language lessons rather than on translations services.

However, it is worth noting that ESOL provision remains a contentious issue after the Government's announcement in late 2006 that they were to axe free English language lessons for adult asylum seekers. As of August 2007, asylum seekers aged over 18 are no longer eligible for free further education and English courses. Ministers suggest that funding will be shifted towards those who have been granted leave to remain in Britain, however critics argue that this move undermines efforts to encourage new arrivals in the UK to integrate and will leave young children acting as translators for older relatives.

⁸ Including refugees and asylum seekers

How do local performance frameworks link with community cohesion?

Having looked at what is meant by community cohesion and how it has influenced the development of Government policy, it is necessary to consider what community cohesion means for local authorities. One of the key themes of the community cohesion approach to race relations is the rejection of a broad top-down strategy. Multiculturalism's axiom of 'the celebration of difference' was criticised for being superficial and for failing to tackle inequality, and as such, community cohesion hopes to offer a more targeted and pertinent means of dealing with the problem of segregation. In this respect it can be seen as offering a more pragmatic approach.

This rejection of a one size fits all solution means acknowledging that challenges differ from area to area. For example, the relationships between young, working class Asian and Black men in Birmingham may well be very different to the relationships between Portuguese migrants and the local White community in rural Lincolnshire. As the report *Our Shared Future* suggests, because cohesion is about a complex interlocking of local factors, a national policy based on one specific set of those factors will not work everywhere. This change in tone has significant consequences for the role of local authorities, as their responsibilities for promoting community cohesion become more explicit.

New Local Performance Frameworks: the Policy Context

The new local performance framework is perhaps best understood within the context of three pieces of Government policy, the *Comprehensive Spending Review 2007*, the *Local Government White Paper and Bill*, and the *Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration*. These documents signal a shift towards the devolution of power from Central Government and Local Government, and make clear the responsibility for local authorities to promote community cohesion.

*Comprehensive Spending Review 2007*⁹

- This review set out the Government's spending commitments and strategy for delivering regeneration and economic development. There are numerous facets to the review, among which is the greater emphasis on community cohesion. There are two Public Service Agreements of particular relevance: 'PSA21, build more cohesive, empowered and active communities' and 'PSA15, address the disadvantage that individuals experience because of their gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief'. These priority areas are supported by new funding commitments. In response to the findings of the Commission for Integration and Communities, £50million will be made available over the next three years for local authority led community cohesion projects. It will be up to local areas to decide upon how the projects are implemented with suggestions around youth projects, conflict resolution, and awards ceremonies.

*Local Government White Paper and Bill*¹⁰

- Published in October 2006, this paper advocated measures to give local authorities more opportunity to lead their area, work with other services, and better meet the public's needs. This approach sees the rejection of the

⁹ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/7/4/pbr_csr07_completereport_1546.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/152456>

'one size fits all' model. Rather, councils are to be provided with the freedom and space to respond with flexibility to local needs and demands. Local authorities will therefore have the powers, and the responsibilities, to shape local places.

- In a break away from the more traditional vertical power relationship, *The Local Government White Paper* sets out a vision of a horizontal power relationship between central and Local Government. In terms of the performance framework, this paper began to increase the significance of Local Area Agreements, establishing them as a tool to enhance performance management in the local public sector. With regards to community cohesion then, *The Local Government White Paper* signalled the Government's intent to make cohesion part of the performance framework for Local Government through the use of Local Area Agreements (see below).

*Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration*¹¹

- Published July 2007, the review highlighted the importance of Local Government to localities and in particular its role as a 'place-shaper' for localities and local economies. 'Place-shaping' and strong local governance is embedded in the process of phase two 'new' Local Area Agreements with local authorities viewed as leaders of local coalitions of partners and service deliverers.

The place shaping agenda

The Local Government White Paper and *Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration* both recognise that action at the sub-regional and local level will develop stronger local and national prosperity. Such prosperity will, in turn, develop the distinctive nature of places and their communities. It is this concept that has come to be known as place shaping.

The Local Government White Paper and *Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration* both recognise that place shaping and the importance of local place are coupled with a sense that Local Government needs more powers and control over activity. The concept of place shaping came to the fore following the publication of the *Lyons Inquiry into Local Government – Place Shaping: a shared ambition for the future of local government*¹² in March 2007. In his report, Sir Michael Lyons argued that local authorities should lead the development of a broad vision for an area and its communities.

The crux of the place shaping agenda is to link up the economic and the social within our cities and towns in order to create places that are more prosperous and, crucially, fairer too. Consequently, the approach advocates 'the creative use of powers and influence to promote the general well being of a community and its citizens'¹³. It is hoped that the new powers set out in the *Local Government White Paper* and *Sub-national Review* will grant local authorities the responsibility to shape the place by developing economic strategies that consider the social problems specific to that area. For example, this may be the issue of poor community cohesion. *The Cattle Report* highlights this issue, noting, "In societies where there is a high degree of community cohesion, there is greater economic

¹¹ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/9/5/subnational_econ_review170707.pdf

¹² <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/158064>

¹³ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/9/5/subnational_econ_review170707.pdf

growth and stronger development" (p.75). Conversely, "areas lacking in cohesion are usually identified as economically deprived" (ibid).

Cantle notes that multiculturalist approaches to regeneration "often resulted in further undermining of community cohesion by forcing equally deprived areas to compete against each other". This resulted in facilities and projects catering for particular ethnic communities, for example a community centre for the Pakistani community. As a consequence, the number of opportunities to integrate with people from different backgrounds was reduced. In contrast, Cantle advocates the development of initiatives that foster social integration as well as economic regeneration. As such, it seems convincing to CLES that economic and social justice are crucial foundations for developing community cohesion.

Local Government's responsibility to promote community cohesion

The Department for Communities and Local Government's recent report, *Building cohesive communities: The crucial role of the new local performance framework*¹⁴ highlights the responsibility of local authorities under the new local performance framework to promote community cohesion. This new framework is made up of a number of elements, which it is now relevant to explore:

1. Sustainable Community Strategy

Every local authority is under a duty to consult widely in developing the strategy, which acts as the starting point for local delivery. The Sustainable Community Strategy creates a long-term, sustainable vision in an area and serves to set the agenda for the priorities of the Local Area Agreement.

2. Single Set of 198 National Indicators

As part of the Comprehensive Spending review, the Government published the single set of 198 national indicators that will underpin the new performance framework. These indicators cover all the national priority outcomes which local authorities are responsible for delivering. These indicators will be used to measure performance in all areas over the next 3 years and will be implemented from April 2008.

3. Local Area Agreements

Local Area Agreements are the most significant element of this framework, and as such it is relevant here to reiterate what they are. Local Area Agreements were first introduced as part of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda in 2004 and to date there have been three rounds of pilot Local Area Agreements with 21 areas 'signed off' in March 2005, a further 66 in March 2006, with the remaining 62 top-tier authorities new Local Area Agreements signed off in March 2007. Broadly, a Local Area Agreement can be defined as an agreement set between Local and Central Government intending to give local authorities more flexibility in the way in which they set out and meet targets, spend funding, and deliver public services. Local authorities will be measured against all the of the 198 single set indicators, however each Local Area Agreement will have up to 35 national priority targets.

¹⁴ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/621282>

4. Comprehensive Area Assessment

Introduced as of April 2009, the Comprehensive Area Assessment will provide assurance about how well run local public services are and how effectively taxpayers' money is being spent locally. In addition, it will develop a shared view about the challenges facing an area, such as community cohesion.

5. The National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy

This strategy is intended to create a strategic approach, agreed by Government, local authorities and partners, in achieving the priorities agreed through Local Area Agreements. This strategy supports a devolved approach with a stronger role for Local Government in supporting and challenging performance.

The new local performance framework has important implications for the development and implementation of a community cohesion strategy. As *Building cohesive communities: The crucial role of the new local performance framework* highlights, the inclusion of cohesion as a national priority outcome in the national indicator set means a renewed emphasis on local delivery of cohesion. Furthermore, cohesion and integration should be mainstreamed into the Sustainable Community Strategy, whilst Local Area Agreement outcomes and performance indicators should be linked to a picture of what a sustainable, cohesive community looks like for the area.

The new performance framework is not just about improving the quality of places and bettering their public services, it is also an attempt to empower local citizens to have greater influence on how services are delivered and outcomes are achieved. As such, it is hoped that the new performance framework will provide a basis to reconnect citizens with Government. It seems convincing that engaging hard to reach communities in civil affairs will help encourage a sense of ownership to places, and as such encourage both cohesion between communities and also communication between local authorities and communities.

When consulting the national indicator set, it soon becomes clear that community cohesion is an issue that operates across the board, affecting either directly or indirectly all of the eight outcomes. In Box 1 there are examples of indicators that are explicitly related to community cohesion:

Box 1

- ❑ **Stronger communities:**
 - NI 1 % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
 - NI 2 % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
 - NI 13 Migrants' English language skills and knowledge

- ❑ **Safer communities:**
 - NI 23 Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and dignity
 - NI 35 Building resilience to violent extremism

In addition, there are a number of indicators that whilst not directly focused on tackling community cohesion, are nevertheless related. For example: indicators

relating to educational achievement and health. These issues are all part of the wider issues regarding cohesion, in that people are unlikely to integrate into a community that they feel is marked by inequality.

The inclusion of indicators relating to community cohesion sends out a clear signal not only that community cohesion is a vital issue, but also reiterates the fact that a one size fits all approach can no longer be relied upon. Local authorities cannot look to Central Government for an all-encompassing strategy, but are instead required to develop and deliver a relevant and targeted approach: a strategy that becomes central to all of their decision making and delivery.

The fact that community cohesion permeates through the indicator set reinforces that community cohesion is an issue that is cross cutting and one that will influence all aspects of local authorities' delivery. As the Improvement and Development Agency states, community cohesion is "all encompassing"¹⁵. A complex mix of "history and politics, people movement, personal circumstances and the environment" will affect communities' cohesiveness.

The indicator set also raises the idea that issues around community cohesion are unavoidable for *all* local authorities, and not just those with an ethnically diverse population or a history of bad community relations. For example, some rural areas, such as Lincolnshire and West Lancashire, are being faced with community cohesion issues for the first time. In a country that is growing ever more diverse, all areas ought to be integrating community cohesion into what they do.

How can local authorities help to promote community cohesion?

In the light of this responsibility, it is relevant to outline the methods proposed by which local authorities can promote community cohesion in their areas. As mentioned earlier, *The Local Government White Paper*, published in 2006, stressed the challenge of community cohesion that comes with an increasingly diverse population. It also outlined the way in which the new local performance framework has formalised local authorities' responsibility to ensure their communities are cohesive.

As discussed above in terms on indicators, community cohesion will need to be cross cutting, across all targets and indicators. To be successful, community cohesion has to be central to the local authority's ethos, not an 'add-on', and will link to all of the performance indicators. It is vital that local authorities shape their delivery to meet the demands of their area. Whilst acknowledging the flexibility that is required of authorities, *The Local Government White Paper* outlines a number of approaches that local authorities may use to achieve this:

- **Strong leadership and engagement** – Local authorities must develop, through engaging with the community, an agreed local vision that is advocated by respected local leaders. This vision should be published as part of the community cohesion strategy and ought to inform all aspects of service delivery.
- **Developing shared values** – Areas will only flourish if they are based on a set of non-negotiable values that are shared across all communities. Ensuring the availability of ESOL classes, wider work to celebrate diversity, and unequivocal leadership against extremism, are some of the ways local authorities can develop shared values.

¹⁵ <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=5770040>

- ❑ **Conflict resolution** – It is recommended that local authorities establish conflict resolution projects, this means that flashpoints which may have led to tension in the past – for example a racist attack – can be overcome. As well as preventative measures, councils also need to plan for how they would respond in a crisis, as such, contingency planning is crucial.
- ❑ **Good information** – A detailed understanding of the communities local authorities serve is vital for developing and monitoring a community cohesion strategy. Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, listed public authorities already have a duty to monitor the impact of their policies on race equality. Local authorities must strive to utilise local citizen intelligence to ensure programmes are targeted and that all communities understand their benefit.
- ❑ **Visible work to tackle inequalities** – Clearly, communities who experience unequal life chances or discrimination and prejudice are less likely to feel part of a wider society. Poor schools, health services, high unemployment are all factors that damage communities and inhibit community pride. Furthermore, they cause people to lose faith in public services and fuel distrust between communities. Consequently, local authorities must commit to developing a fairer community.
- ❑ **Involving young people** – Local authorities must strive to engage young people in innovative ways. Since the terrorist attacks of July 7th, there has been a developing concern that young people may be exploited by extremism. Engaging young people in civil life may go some way in preventing this.
- ❑ **Interfaith work** – Meaningful communication is key to creating cohesive communities. Local authorities should display a commitment to the consideration of faith when developing and delivering a community cohesion strategy. Furthermore, authorities must encourage interfaith communication, with faith leaders playing a particularly vital role.
- ❑ **Partners such as third sector organisations** – Engaging with the third sector can play a significant role in the development of community cohesion. Third sector organisations create opportunities for people of different backgrounds to work together for shared goals, and also bring an understanding of local issues. They are also a useful means of reaching hard to reach groups

In addition, there are a number of funding opportunities that aim to assist local authorities in achieving cohesive communities. For example, the £18m *Connecting Communities Plus*¹⁶ programme that was founded in April 2006 and will run until March 2009. Its aim is to improve race equality and community cohesion via strategic grants for national level organisations, project grants for organisations based in at least one of the English regions, and community grants for local groups.

Conclusion

It is important to bear in mind that the community cohesion agenda remains a contested concept amongst academics and thinkers. For some, multiculturalism has been pushed aside too readily with some claiming “there is no evidence of a trade-off between multiculturalism on the one hand, and community cohesion on

¹⁶ http://www.a4e.co.uk/Customers_Connecting_Communities_Plus.aspx

the other. Multiculturalism can also go hand in hand with support for redistribution and the welfare state¹⁷. Furthermore, with its emphasis on integration, shared values and language, some see community cohesion as a reversion to cultural assimilation¹⁸.

This debate aside, it is clear that the implementation of the new local performance framework has important ramifications for local authorities' handling of community cohesion issues. Furthermore, it illustrates the role all regeneration activity plays in promoting cohesive communities. It seems convincing that a more responsive and flexible approach to local governance will prove to be more successful in promoting community cohesion than a top-down strategy which means little to the particular circumstances of specific areas.

For segregation and inequality to be tackled with any meaning, local authorities must ensure that the principles of community cohesion permeate all of their policy making, strategy building, and service delivery. In light of this, the new framework will encourage local authorities to think more seriously about these issues and ensure that they are meeting necessary targets.

However, whilst the performance framework does have this potential, it is crucial that the issue of community cohesion influences *all* aspects of the framework. Whilst its inclusion in the indicator set is certainly progressive, the consideration of community cohesion needs to also underpin Local Area Agreements, Sustainable Community Strategies, and Comprehensive Area Assessments, if it is to be tackled meaningfully.

Bulletin is one of a series of regular policy reports produced by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES). CLES is a not-for-profit think-doing organisation, consultancy and network of subscribing organisations specialising in regeneration, economic development and local governance. CLES also publishes Local Work, Rapid Research and bespoke Briefings on a range of issues.

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¹⁷ 'The Power of Belonging: Identity, citizenship, and community cohesion', Institute for Public Policy Research (2007) <http://www.ippr.org/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=568>

¹⁸ For more on this debate, see Les Back et al (2002) 'The Return of Assimilationism: Race, Multiculturalism and New Labour', <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/7/2/back.html>