



# ADUR & WORTHING COUNCILS

Joint Governance Committee  
23 November 2021

Ward(s) Affected: All

## Community Cohesion Committee

### Report by the Interim Director for Communities

#### Officer Contact Details

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## Executive Summary

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 At Worthing Council meeting in October 2021, Members agreed to establish a Community Cohesion Committee, to be Chaired by Councillor Hazel Thorpe, the purpose of which is to “tackle harmful ideologies and radicalisation in our community”.
- 1.2 This report sets out the process for engagement to establish this Committee along with the timeline for the formation of the terms of reference. It also proposes that this is developed as a Joint Committee across Adur and Worthing.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Joint Governance Committee is recommended to:
  - To note the recommendation from Worthing Council and to consider and agree to this as joint work across Adur and Worthing;
  - To agree, as set out in the report, to the work being proposed with Bridging Change, who can provide an independent voice together with the challenge and engagement needed for this work, as an

extension of their original contract;

- To agree the formation of the initial working group, as set out in this report, enabling a participatory approach to forming the Community Cohesion Committee in March / April as a joint Adur and Worthing Committee;
- To accept a further report back to the Joint Governance Committee in March 2022 to consider the proposed terms of reference for the Committee prepared by the Working Group in consultation with Members and Bridging Change, and thereafter to make recommendations to Full Council on the proposals.

### **3. Context**

- 3.1. Following the October meeting of Worthing Council, Members agreed to establish a cross party Community Cohesion Committee, with the purpose of “tackling harmful ideologies and radicalisation in our community”. It was requested that this Committee be provided with a remit of liaising with and considering suggestions from Community Groups, Outside Bodies and Political Parties along with a remit of “advising the Council’s Leadership Team on the implementation of those recommendations that fall under their remit.”
- 3.2. As part of our newly forming participation approach, Council Officers have recently developed a new commission, with the explicit purpose of developing greater participation with and bridging the gap between the Councils and minoritised ethnic communities in Adur and Worthing. [Bridging Change](#) have been commissioned to deliver this work between November and March 2022, before this request to establish a Community Cohesion Committee was made by Worthing Members. As a well established and experienced organisation, Bridging Change brings independence and credibility into this space and a strong track record of working with and empowering minoritised ethnic groups, communities and individuals.
- 3.3. The purpose of this commission is to connect with minoritised ethnic groups in Adur and Worthing, especially around the impact of Covid-19, using an asset based approach (focusing on strengths, skills and passions) and to facilitate deep listening and internal reflection for Officers and Elected Members, to inform new ways of working with minoritised ethnic groups that address local health, social and economic inequalities.

- 3.4. Whilst it is a relatively short commission, the aim is to use this as a means of developing the learning that can establish what and how the Councils need to do this work from April and into the longer-term to achieve better and more collaborative working relationships with minoritised ethnic community partners and organisations. The aim has always been to use this commission to influence the work and approach of our Councils' to provide more equitable ways of working and enable greater participation in local decision making. As part of this Bridging Change were asked to design work with a group of Officers and Elected Members between December to March 2022.
- 3.5. This commission is therefore timely given the request by Members in Worthing to form a Community Cohesion Committee to connect this work needed to inform, establish and influence this work. A summary of this is provided in Appendix 1, referred to as the MEC project (Minoritised Ethnic Communities).

#### **4. Issues for consideration**

- 4.1. Whilst the request to form a Community Cohesion Committee has been made by Worthing Members, it is proposed that this Committee be formed between the two Councils as a shared Joint Committee for Adur and Worthing. The engagement work can then be focused on working with minority ethnic communities across Adur and Worthing and will enable this work to form part of the overall change needed across the two Councils.
- 4.2. Initial conversations have been held with Bridging Change to help inform the development of the Community Cohesion Committee and to connect this into the main work they have just been commissioned to deliver. This will involve Bridging Change providing additional support and challenge for Members and Officers, to develop a Community Cohesion Committee so that it has real purpose and intent and that this is informed by and involves minoritised ethnic communities.
- 4.3. To ensure this committee is established with real purpose and intent and in ways that involve minoritised communities in meaningful ways, it is proposed that initially a cross party Working Group is established ahead of the committee, to help ensure real participation in its design and purpose. An initial timeline being developed is being shaped as set out below:

##### November/December:

- Officers work with Group Leaders to nominate representatives to be involved in this cross party Working Group;
- Officers establish the Working Group for Community Cohesion;

- Bridging Change to help facilitate conversations with Working Group Members to determine the terms of reference;
- Bridging Change identify and hold some initial conversations with key groups and individuals to help inform the engagement work in January;
- Bridging Change develop the participation work and approach for January to March with minoritised ethnic communities;

#### January/March:

- Officers in consultation with Members prepare a report for Joint Governance Committee with the outline terms of reference for the Community Cohesion Committee;
- Bridging Change undertake the engagement work with minoritised ethnic individuals and communities about community cohesion and develop good relationships to ensure good qualitative data is gathered and used to inform Members;
- Bridging Change uses this work to engage Lay Members from minoritised ethnic groups to be involved in this Committee;
- Bridging Change to work with Members of the Committee to help ensure they are well informed, involved and engaged in this work;

#### March/April

- Officers produce a report for Joint Governance, using the engagement findings to develop and establish the cross party Community Cohesion Committee, which includes Elected Members and Lay Members;
- The wider results of the Minoritised Ethnic Communities Commissioned work will be available and used to inform this Committee and its terms of reference through a set of recommendations.

#### June

- Training for all Members will be developed and carried out to capture new and existing Members.

## **5. Engagement and Communication**

- 5.1. As detailed above, Bridging Change along with our Officers will be shaping up the additional engagement work with Members and communities to inform this and this will be costed. This will help shape and strengthen the involvement of communities in the formation of this Committee and ensure it has a clearer sense of purpose and terms of reference that are rooted in experiences of minoritised ethnic individuals and groups.

- 5.2. It is also important to note that original MEC commissioned work (Appendix 1) will be connected into this work to help strengthen the involvement of communities in shaping this work and its core priorities.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1. Consideration will need to be given to the financial impact on members allowances. Currently all chairmen receive an allowance for their work which ranges from £2,530 - £5,070. In addition, the vice chairs receive an allowance of £1s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation,<sup>270</sup>. Consequently the establishment of a new committee is likely to cost at least £3,800 with additional costs likely in terms of committee support, member expenses, remuneration for any independent member and the development of the work programme.
- 6.2. The additional work required to engage Members and Minority Communities in the formation of the Working Group is being costed up by Bridging Change. Given the time constraints in reporting to this Committee, these costs will be shared verbally with Members.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1. In extending the Contract with Bridging Change, regard must be given to the Councils' Contract Standing Order procedures found at Part 4 of the Constitution.
- 7.2. s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation
- 7.3. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 7.4. Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 7.5. In preparing the terms of reference for the working group and for the proposed Committee, Officers will need to consult with Democratic and Legal Services for governance and constitutional advice.

**Background Papers**

None.

## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

Supports the development of more inclusive economies that support and enable minoritised communities.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

This builds social value within our communities with minoritised ethnic individuals and communities

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

Report supports the Councils' equalities obligations through involving and enabling participatory approaches to how we understand and work with minoritised ethnic communities.

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

Supports community safety issues by reaching out to different communities.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

Matter considered and no specific issues to raise/address

### **3. Environmental**

Matter considered and no specific issues to raise/address

### **4. Governance**

- There are implications for Councils in terms of using this work to establish a new Committee as set out in the report.
- This work will influence and improve the Councils' Equalities work
- There are implications around resourcing for Officers in terms of carrying out this work and the work to resource this committee which will need to be considered.

## Appendix 1

### Minoritised Ethnic Communities in Adur and Worthing, COMF Project Brief

#### 1. Purpose

1.1. This is a brief for Adur and Worthing Councils to secure a research and community development partner to work with us to start to bridge the gap between the Councils and our minoritised ethnic communities.

1.2. This project is being commissioned as part of the COMF programme to support vulnerable people and communities and improve public health outcomes for those impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### 2. Project objectives and anticipated outcomes

##### 2.1. Short-term

- a) To connect Adur and Worthing Councils with Minoritised Ethnic Communities.
- b) To collect qualitative data on minoritised ethnic communities' local experiences before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- c) To facilitate inter-community connections between minoritised ethnic communities in the spirit of ABCD.
- d) To identify community strengths and assets as a platform from which to build future collaboration.
- e) To identify future collaborative partners and partner organisations.
- f) To recommend future collaborative 'ways of working' with minoritised ethnic communities.
- g) To facilitate deep listening and internal reflection on the part of A&W Councils that will inform new ways of working with minoritised ethnic communities.

##### 2.2. Medium term

- a) To start to develop collaborative working relationships with minoritised ethnic community partners and organisations that will enable project outcomes to inform the development of the Councils' policies and services.

##### 2.3. Long term

- a) Collaborative partnership with minoritised ethnic community groups and organisations.
- b) More equitable services and ways of working.
- c) Greater participation of minoritised ethnic communities in local decision-making.

### **3. Background**

#### **3.1. Policy Context**

##### **3.1.1. Equalities**

A&W Councils humbly recognise the ways in which the Covid-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the significant and long-standing social and economic inequalities experienced by people living in the UK.

Among those groups disproportionately affected by the pandemic, The Marmot report has identified minoritised ethnic communities as at greater risk of unemployment and financial hardship due to long-standing systemic and structural inequalities.<sup>1</sup>

In this context, A&W Councils are determined to address local inequalities by listening hard to our communities, making better use of better data and working in strategic partnership (both internally and with community partners).

Central to this endeavour is the Councils' commitment to develop qualitative, participatory approaches to working with minoritised communities AND to grow participation capabilities and practices across Council teams and departments.

##### **3.1.2. Health and Wellbeing**

A&W Councils recognise the key role local government has to play in shaping thriving communities by influencing actions that can address health and social inequalities deepened by the pandemic.

Accordingly, the Councils' strategic priorities will focus on improving those conditions which we know have the greatest influence on people's health and wellbeing, including quality of housing, access to healthy food and open spaces, income and meaningful employment, community involvement and safer environments.<sup>2</sup>

The Councils have identified a number of key levers for improving these conditions including our community assets (parks, open spaces and community buildings), community infrastructure (support for the local voluntary and community sector as well as business), strategic partnership (e.g. A&W Safer Communities Partnership), and through promoting Good Work (jobs that promote wellbeing, that grow and develop skills and capabilities and provide financial security).

### **4. Project Research and Development Focus**

#### **4.1. Bridging the knowledge gap**

Within the policy context outlined above, it is hoped that this project can start to bridge the gap between the status quo and the Councils' ambition to work in

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<sup>1</sup> [Build Back Fairer: the Covid 19 Marmot Review; December 2020](#)

<sup>2</sup> HealthAW 2021-24 Health and Wellbeing Strategy Adur and Worthing Councils p2-3

partnership with minoritised ethnic communities to address local health, social and economic inequalities.

The Councils are keen to learn from minoritised ethnic communities' experiences and for the project to lay the groundwork for future relationships and partnerships which will enable inclusive approaches to developing access to and participation in our community assets, community infrastructure, community partnership and good work programmes.

The Councils also recognise that for this to happen, there needs to be a shift in ways of working internally. It is hoped that this project can offer insight into the kinds of behaviours, practices and knowledge that will enable council officers and teams to work collaboratively with each other and with minoritised communities.

#### **4.2. Demographic groups**

Councils are keen to learn about experiences from different demographic groups within our minoritised ethnic communities including:

- Women
- Carers
- Young People
- People working in those sectors impacted significantly by the pandemic (retail, hospitality, healthcare)
- Unemployed people and people claiming benefits.
- People with disabilities.

#### **4.3. Community groups, associations and future partners**

Additionally, Councils intend this project to reach out to those community groups and associations which are led by and/or serve our minoritised ethnic communities to help us identify future partners.

### **5. Project roles and responsibilities**

#### **5.1 Consultants**

A&W Councils are keen to work with consultants, who share our commitment to participation / Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) and have a track record of working successfully with participatory methods and approaches with minoritised ethnic communities. In delivering on the project brief, consultants will help A&W councils start to bridge the gap between local government and minoritised ethnic communities by:

- Beginning the process of relationship-building with minoritised ethnic communities in A&W

- Upskilling internal and external participants and partner organisations on participation / participatory and ABCD methods
- Offering critical friendship to A&W Councils

### **5.2 Project lead**

The project lead will be Ruth Pineda, Communities Participation Co-lead. The Project lead will be responsible for:

- Commissioning the Project
- Facilitating internal participation at A&W
- Supporting consultants through regular check-ins

### **5.3 A&W Inquiry group**

The Project lead will invite Council Officers (including Equalities Leads and Communities and Wellbeing Leads) and our elected members for Health and Wellbeing to participate in an inquiry group which will contribute to co-designing a process by which to achieve the project's medium and long term objectives.

## **6. Project deliverables**

### **6.1. A written report**

A written report on the findings of the project in relation to the short term objectives and outcomes outlined in section 2.1.

### **6.2. Facilitated internal critical reflection and co-design work with internal inquiry group**

This is likely to be in the form of a workshop where consultants facilitate the inquiry group to reflect critically on the project findings and co-design a process whereby the findings can inform policy planning and future programmes of work.

### **6.3. Facilitated dialogue and co-design work with internal and external project participants.**

This is likely to be in the form of a workshop or workshops where participants from the community and from A&W Councils can explore what future relationships / collaboration might look like and what steps will be taken to achieve this.

## **7. Timeframe**

The project will commence in November 2021 and be completed by 30 March 2022.

## **8. Budget**

A final budget will be agreed following the project proposal by the appointed consultants. It should be noted that there is a £40,000 allocation in the COMF programme for this project.

Consultant's proposal will detail:

- The daily rate of all researchers involved in the work
- The number of days to be worked by each researcher in delivering the project
- Additional incidental fees for venue costs, travel, translation and remuneration of 'experts by experience' and community groups who participate in research training and activities.

### **9. Submission**

Consultants will provide a response to this brief for consideration by Adur and Worthing Councils' by 29th October 2021. The proposal will include:

- Project delivery strategy
- Methodology and methods
- Budgeting
- Reporting