Cohesion and migration in Breckland
A Specialist Cohesion Team report
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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions made to the Breckland Specialist Cohesion Pilot by the following organisations and stakeholders:

- Breckland District Council
- Breckland Local Strategic Partnership
- Norfolk County Council
- Norfolk County Strategic Partnership
- Norfolk Community Cohesion Network
- GO East
- Department for Communities and Local Government
- Specialist Cohesion Pilot Steering Group
- Our many local stakeholders.
Map of Breckland
Foreword

Building strong cohesive communities brings great benefits by creating a society in which people from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds can live and work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. Strong cohesive communities are communities which are better able to tackle common problems, to provide mutual support and to work together for a positive future.

Recognising the council’s innovative approach to building stronger integrated communities, Breckland was selected to host the first Specialist Cohesion Team. The aim of this national pilot is primarily to share good practice, identify what is working well in Breckland; where there are gaps in provision; and where sharing good practice from elsewhere might fill these gaps.

This report is the outcome of this collaborative work between the Department for Communities and Local Government and Breckland, and reflects a determination at national and local levels to build resilient communities which are equipped to meet future challenges and are characterised by a shared sense of belonging and purpose. We hope readers find the report helpful.

Community cohesion is not a destination or a fixed concept so much as a dynamic social condition at the heart of our society and our approach to it should include every aspect of a local authority’s service.

Nor is community cohesion a one-off exercise: it is something we all need to keep working at if we are to move forward with confidence in developing areas in which we all have a shared future.

Sadiq Khan
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Communities and Local Government

William Nunn
Leader, Breckland District Council
Introduction, context and methodology

Introduction

This report is written by the first of two Specialist Cohesion Teams in England (the other team is in Barnsley, Yorkshire) and covers the period from July 2008, when the team was first set up, until March 2009.

The report looks at how a range of measures to build community cohesion was established in Breckland – a large rural district in Norfolk – together with some recommendations for further improvement. We hope that a wide range of practitioners delivering cohesion around the country (whether at chief executive or grassroots levels) will find the report useful and interesting. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the many stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary and community sectors who gave generously of their time to contribute to the report.

Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. Key contributors to cohesion are integration and meaningful interaction, which must happen to enable new and existing communities to adjust to one another.

The Communities Group working in the Department for Communities and Local Government aims to build resilient communities which are:

- equipped to meet future challenges; and
- characterised by a shared sense of belonging and purpose.

Communities and Local Government works towards meeting these aims by tackling prejudice and extremism, providing support to areas facing particular challenges to cohesion, delivering race equality and working with faith communities.

Communities and Local Government is also developing Specialist Cohesion Teams to support local authorities facing cohesion challenges, particularly in those areas that are facing rapid change from new patterns of migration.

This report is the outcome of a pilot for this model delivered in Breckland, which was developed with the intention of bringing to life the three key principles that underpin a new understanding of integration and cohesion.
Breckland was selected to host the first Specialist Cohesion Team, in recognition of the council’s innovative approach to building stronger integrated communities. The aim of the national pilot is primarily to share good practice and identify:

- what is working well in Breckland
- where there are gaps in provision; and
- where good practice from elsewhere might fill these gaps.

Breckland welcomed the support and confidence the Communities and Local Government has shown in selecting it to pilot this essential work. The project has been supported by CLG officers, the Government Office for the East of England, a team of Neighbourhood Renewal Officers, and other community experts.

William Nunn, Leader of Breckland Council said: ‘Breckland has an excellent track record of working with all our residents and local groups to build stronger communities but recognises that migration brings about specific challenges that we hope this team will help us better deal with. We are delighted that the Government has recognised the good work already being done in the district. This initiative will enable Breckland Council and key partners to develop a model of best practice that can be shared with other authorities.’

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**Definition of community cohesion**

Community Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community 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.

And three key ways of living together:

- a shared future vision and sense of belonging
- a focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.
The national context

In June 2007 the Commission on Integration and Cohesion delivered their report *Our Shared Future* to the Government. The report was based on in-depth consultation and provided practical ideas for renewed local and national collaboration as well as a number of recommendations for the Government and its partners.

In October 2007, the Communities Secretary gave an initial response to the report and announced a £50million investment over the next three years to promote community cohesion and support local authorities in preventing and managing community tensions. In December 2007, Communities and Local Government set out proposals for distributing £38.5million of this investment in the provisional Local Government Settlement for 2008-11.

Between the initial response in October and the full response in February 2008, work continued to implement many of the commission’s recommendations and to mainstream cohesion across Whitehall.

In February 2008 the Government published a detailed response to the report, setting out how the Government is following up the commission’s recommendations with a new clarity on, and commitment to, delivering cohesive and integrated communities, including the new Public Service Agreement (PSA) for cohesive, empowered and active communities (PSA 21).

Cohesion: understood and built locally

At the heart of the Government’s approach to delivering cohesive communities is the principle that cohesion is something that can only be understood and built locally. The role of central Government is to provide a performance framework, guidance, targeted support and resources to enable local authorities and their partners to deliver cohesion locally.

Guidance for local areas is being brought together under the single banner of our Cohesion Delivery Framework. This will provide local practitioners with flexible, up-to-date, organised guidance covering a wide range of cohesion issues to enable them to deliver tailored responses to cohesion locally. The framework will cover generic cohesion issues as well as elements aimed specifically at particular cohesion issues and challenges.

As part of the new National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy, more targeted support and capacity building for local areas will be driven primarily by the sector itself through the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (which will include the IDeA benchmarking toolkit, see below). However, the Government also intends to target direct support to local areas where necessary, such as in response to particularly challenging local issues or events (for example, piloting Specialist Cohesion Teams in areas facing rapid population changes – Breckland is one such area), or in light of emerging performance data.
Work achieved so far:

- **Guidance on Translation** – aimed to spread existing good practice, and ensure that translation was provided only where it was necessary to act as a stepping stone to speaking English, as per the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC) suggestions regarding efficiency and integration. (December 2007).

- **Citizens’ Day Framework** – launched with the Citizenship Foundation, explored how local authorities can celebrate local achievements, build and renew community cohesion, and develop local engagement. This was in direct response to the CIC’s recommendation that inter-community engagement would be enhanced by the early introduction of a ‘Community Week’. (November 2007).

- **Information Pack for new migrants** – Communities and Local Government, with IDeA (Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government), published guidance on how to produce a model information pack for new migrants. The publication has a strong emphasis on responsibilities as well as rights and encourages local authorities to customise the pack to reflect local needs and culture. In response to the CIC, and in association with the IDeA guidance, CLG also published a short note/pamphlet, suggesting some key factors local authorities might wish to take into account when producing their own guidance.

- **Specialist Cohesion Teams** – were identified and it was agreed which areas would pilot Specialist Cohesion Teams: these are the Norfolk district of Breckland; and Barnsley in the North West of England. Both pilots started in late July 2008.

- **Contingency planning and tension monitoring web-based guidance** – guidance for local authorities on community cohesion contingency planning and tension monitoring was published in May 2008, and can be found on the Communities and Local Government website at: www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/787910.pdf

- **Publication of the All-Party Inquiry into Antisemitism** – *The Government Response One Year on Progress Report* was published on 12 May 2008 in response to the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism. The Progress Report is a review of what the Government has achieved over the past year in response to the Inquiry’s 35 recommendations. Key achievements outlined in the Progress Report include:
  - the commitment that all police forces will collect data on all Hate Crime by April 2009
  - the launch of the Race for Justice Declaration; and
  - the Government’s funding for the European Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism (EISCA) to conduct research on Antisemitic discourse and its impact on the atmosphere of ‘acceptance’.

- **Cohesion Delivery Framework overview** – gives advice to local authorities, such as those working in areas which have just selected cohesion priorities in their Local Area Agreements, on how to analyse the issues for cohesion in their area and develop a plan of action (published July 2008).
Guidance on meaningful interaction and a sense of belonging was published in January 2009. Meaningful interaction and a sense of belonging are two of the three measures of cohesion in Public Service Agreement 21 (see below). These reports, which benefit from contributions from the National Community Forum, are aimed at local authorities and the voluntary sector. The guidance summarises what we already know about the benefits of interaction and a local sense of belonging and how it can be achieved. The guidance will act as a useful starting point for all those looking to build or strengthen bridges within their communities.


The framework aims to:

- facilitate inter-faith dialogue which builds understanding and celebrates the values held in common such as integrity in public life, care, compassion and respect
- increase the level of collaborative social action involving different faith communities and wider civil society where people work together to bring about positive and concrete change within their local communities
- maintain and further develop good relations between faith communities and between faith communities and wider civil society; and
- overcome the perceived and actual barriers faced by young people and women in participating in inter-faith dialogue and activity.

Maximise benefits, manage challenges

Communities and Local Government believes that migration to the United Kingdom brings substantial benefits to our economy and to society as a whole. The Government’s focus is to maximise the benefits of migration while managing the associated challenges, including minimising any transitional pressures experienced by communities and local service providers. The Government is also keen to alleviate any fears about migration within a local population by developing ‘shared sense of values and a shared sense of purpose and belonging’.

In some places it is the pace and scale of change which have the greatest impact on local communities and services. Other places experiencing significant migration for the first time may not have the institutions and programmes in place to help them manage that change. And for some areas, there may be further challenges to face if net migration reduces.

We want to enable all places to share in the positive benefits of migration. But this will take practical action. Local authorities, working closely with their communities and public, private and voluntary and community sector partners, are best placed to manage change.

Newly-arrived migrants are like any other group who needs to be integrated. However, some rural areas, such as Breckland, are just starting to experience diversity.

In areas where migration is an issue, challenging and changing perceptions is crucial to delivering integration and cohesion. It is important to find ways to define, test and then change perceptions of individuals and groups, particularly where perceptions arise out of misunderstandings.
Public Service Agreements underpin the work

Public Service Agreements (PSAs) are the priority outcomes the Government wants to achieve from 2008-11. The PSAs also ensure that the Government is spending money where there is a greater need.

In October 2007, the Government presented its Comprehensive Spending Review where 30 new cross-departmental PSAs were identified, on the basis of which the Government would fund public services. These agreements became effective from April 2008.

Each PSA is underpinned by a single delivery agreement which is shared by all the government departments responsible for that PSA’s delivery. These agreements also describe the performance indicators which measure progress towards each PSA.

PSA 21

PSA 21 addresses building more cohesive, empowered and active communities:

- that maximise the benefits of diversity rather than fear it
- where individuals are empowered to make a difference to their lives and the life of their communities and the environment; and
- where individuals live active and fulfilled lives

PSA 21 will be primarily measured via six national indicators. Of these indicators, two particularly are viewed as top level outcome indicators of community cohesion, and are in the national indicator set. These are:

- **National Indicator 1** – the percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local areas; and
- **National Indicator 2** – the percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood.

They will be monitored by means of the Places Surveys and areas will also be assessed against them through the Comprehensive Area Assessment.
The Breckland context

The focus of the Specialist Cohesion Pilot has principally been on the impact of migration.

However, Breckland Council believes that cohesion is relevant to all sections of its local communities and should not be solely focused on new and migrant communities. This work and its associated findings are, therefore, placed within a broader understanding of what needs to take place to improve cohesion for all communities.

People want to fulfil their potential and feel that they belong and contribute to their local area. Breckland Council, together with its partners, has a pivotal role in providing services that are fair and equally accessible to everyone. It also has an increasingly important function in developing positive relationships, meaningful interaction, delivering community leadership and place-shaping agendas.

Building cohesion involves defining the positive aspects of our local communities and promoting local pride and belonging, something we are actively trying to achieve through our partnership-led Pride in Breckland campaign.

In Breckland, we strongly believe that:

- policies and practices on migration, cohesion and integration need to be targeted at the whole of society, not just at migrants and minority groups
- there is a need for strong local leadership. Diversity needs to be welcomed and celebrated not just for its economic impacts but also for wider social benefits. Effort should be spent on building links between existing communities and developing a ‘sense of belonging’ among our new communities; and
- a partnership approach is essential to achieve strong coordination between the public/private/voluntary sector bodies in delivering key services and in taking the lead on migration issues. Responsibility for cohesion issues should be part of a shared agenda.

This position is closely aligned with recent Communities and Local Government publications, which suggest that:

- building cohesion has wider benefits to individuals, groups and communities
- solutions are local and one size does not fit all
- cohesion is about issues that involve all parts of the community, not just about race and faith issues; and
- improving cohesion is about multiple actions to tackle a range of causal factors.
Specialist Cohesion Teams

The Specialist Cohesion Teams (SCTs) aim to:

- offer face-to-face coaching and mentoring to local authorities and partners on problem solving on cohesion-related issues
- develop capacity within partnership arrangements
- support engagement with community stakeholders and groups; and
- offer support for conflict resolution.

SCTs are made up of experts, including Neighbourhood Renewal Advisers, regional and local practitioners, who seek to identify the key challenges and solutions for improving perceptions of cohesion and tackling issues surrounding migration.

SCTs aim to change perceptions by working across the entire cohesion delivery chain. The approach of SCTs is, therefore, to:

- help to deliver PSA 21; and National Indicators 1 and 2
- work with local stakeholders and communities to identify key challenges or issues
- influence strategic leaders and partners across the delivery chain
- develop and agree a work plan
- draw on and highlight good practice locally and nationally
- develop creative problem-solving strategies
- share the lessons learned with other areas facing similar challenges or issues; and
- promote a clearer understanding of cohesion across the whole community.

The SCTs will also road-test the draft IDeA cohesion benchmarking tool. This is being developed to support local authorities in identifying how performance on cohesion and migration policy and practice can be improved.
Specialist Cohesion Pilot

Communities and Local Government piloted the Specialist Cohesion Team approach in Breckland because Breckland has the thirteenth lowest level of community cohesion nationally (out of 387) based on the percentage score of people who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (National Indicator 1: 62.8 per cent compared with the national average of 79 per cent).

In addition, it is recognised that Breckland Council and its partners have taken an innovative approach to building stronger integrated communities.

The aims of the pilot are primarily to:

- share good practice
- identify what is working well in Breckland; but also
- identify where there are gaps.

The outcome of the pilot is a series of clear and collectively-owned actions and improvement recommendations that are needed to build on recent achievements and to impact in a positive way on the outcomes under National Indicator 1.

An independent evaluation of this pilot will be carried out in Spring 2009.

Methodology

The methodology for this report involved a number of key activities:

- document review
- interviews with strategic leaders
- interviews with key officers/managers
- interviews with community representatives and principal stakeholders; and
- workshop with public, voluntary and community sector.

This approach was taken in order to understand:

- what work is currently being carried out on cohesion and migration
- where there are gaps in provision; and
- what scope there is to develop capacity across and within agencies to enhance cohesion and migration practice.

The evidence collected from this review was used to inform the subsequent interview process, and provided the context for further investigation of key decisions, strategic approaches and delivery.
**The Document Review**

An analysis was carried out of:

- Breckland District Council
- Breckland Local Strategic Partnership
- Norfolk County Strategic Partnership and Norfolk County Council strategies/plans/meeting papers including:
  - Breckland Sustainable Community Strategy
  - The Norfolk Local Area Agreement
  - Norfolk Ambition
  - Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategy; and
  - District, county, cabinet and scrutiny meetings from the past 12 months.

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**IDEA benchmark toolkit**

The Specialist Cohesion Team (SCT) used the draft IDEA benchmark toolkit which focuses on the attributes of an ideal local authority in terms of community cohesion, as developed by the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDEA). It was designed to enable local authorities to carry out self-assessments.

The IDEA benchmark has four key themes:

- building trust through effective leadership
- effective community interaction
- service design and delivery to support and build cohesion; and
- effective performance and resource management.

The tool examines these elements within the wider local government policy context in terms of the ‘choice’ agenda, place shaping and devolved neighbourhood management.

**Informing future development of the tool**

The pilot will help inform the development of the toolkit through practical application. Further consultation on the tool will take place.
The Interviews

Interviews with leaders, managers and officers

The strategic stakeholder review was gathered through interviews with a range of key strategic stakeholders, identified by officers from Breckland Council and Norfolk Council.

The IDeA benchmarking tool (see box) was used as the framework for developing all the interview questions.

The following stakeholders were interviewed:

- Norfolk County strategic partners
- Breckland local strategic partners
- Breckland Council corporate management team; and
- officers from local authorities and partner agencies.

Interviews were also carried out with a range of representatives from the voluntary and community sector, again using the IDeA benchmarking tool.

A one-day workshop focused on the following objectives, to:

- determine the range of services that are currently being delivered for migrants across Breckland
- highlight good practice and gaps in service design and provision; and
- identify opportunities and solutions using a process of participatory action planning.

All the evidence was gathered to inform the development of an action plan and improvement recommendations to move forward. (See Section 5)
Migration and cohesion in Breckland

This section of the report gives a brief outline of the Breckland local authority district and looks at some of the key cohesion, migration and related issues highlighted by statistics and research carried out locally and regionally.

Background

A snapshot of Breckland

Breckland is a large rural district in central Norfolk covering an area of over 500 square miles. It takes its name from ‘The Brecks’, which is a unique landscape with a habitat of sandy heath, forest and arable farmland found in the west and south of the district.

Breckland contains 21 per cent of all Sites of Special Scientific Interest found in the East of England; and over 50 separate conservation areas.

Just under half of the population lives in the many dispersed villages and hamlets found in the 108 rural parishes, with the remaining 53 per cent of the population living in the district’s five towns of Thetford, Dereham, Attleborough, Swaffham and Watton.

According to the 2001 census, the population in Breckland was 121,418, with a predicted aggregated population growth of five per cent by 2012.

In the 2001 census, 95.27 per cent of residents in Breckland classed themselves as White British. The largest other ethnic group identified in the census was the Other White group at 2.67 per cent (3,242 people) with all other ethnic groups recorded as being well below one per cent.

The latest Office of National Statistics population estimates (June 2006) suggest an increase in population in Breckland to 128,300, with the share of the population who are White British decreasing to 92.1 per cent and the Other White population increasing to 4.1 per cent (5,200 people).
Cohesion in the wider East of England

Levels of community cohesion in the wider East of England are generally lower in those areas that are traditionally not accustomed to migration from outside the UK, particularly across the wider Fens and in urban areas such as Peterborough and Great Yarmouth; and in commuter belt areas like Thurrock, Southend and parts of Essex and Hertfordshire that have faced smaller levels of non-UK migration (although there has been some in-UK migration from London).

In the wider Fens area, there appears to be a strong correlation between cohesion levels and levels of A8 community (and Portuguese) migration.

The A8 countries

The A8 countries are the eight countries from Eastern Europe that joined the EU in May 2004:

- The Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Hungary
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Poland
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
A number of rural areas traditionally not accustomed to migration have particularly low levels of cohesion; these include the local authorities of: Fenland (57 per cent), Breckland (63 per cent) and King’s Lynn and West Norfolk (64 per cent) and up into parts of Lincolnshire.

Similarly, geographically-close urban areas, where many migrant workers have chosen to live or work, also have lower levels of cohesion, such as Great Yarmouth (58 per cent) and Peterborough (65 per cent).

There also appears to be a strong correlation between levels of cohesion in four of these areas – Fenland, Great Yarmouth, Breckland and King’s Lynn and West Norfolk – and levels of White British residents. The 2001 census returns for these four districts record very high levels of White British residents:

- Fenland at 96.88 per cent
- Great Yarmouth at 97.08 per cent
- Breckland at 95.27 per cent; and
- King’s Lynn at 96.08 per cent.

Local estimates and analysis by country of non-UK-national National Insurance number (NINo) registrations suggest that A8 and Portuguese communities are settling in particular market towns and their surrounding rural hinterlands; with significant settled Portuguese communities in at least three of these areas, in addition to significant Polish and Latvian communities across the four Fens districts.

As the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC) report, Our Shared Future, and the Government’s response to it have shown, cohesion levels rely heavily on local circumstances and are closely linked to, but not the same as, equality issues. Both the CIC and the Government stressed the need to address cohesion in a coordinated way, by building positive relationships between new and existing communities.

An important first step is to look more closely at local intelligence, local demographics and local indicators to see whether these provide evidence for a co-ordinated action and response.

This section of the report now looks in more detail at migration patterns before looking at some of the core cohesion issues.
Migration in Breckland

Recent migration patterns and estimates

Migration from Portugal and portuguese-speaking countries

Portuguese nationals began working and later settling in Breckland, particularly in Thetford and Swaffham, in the late 1990s/early 2000s.

One report notes that although there were higher levels of economic growth in Portugal throughout the 1990s compared to the rest of Europe, growth in the Portuguese economy slowed in 2001-03.

The authors of the report also noted that in Portugal there were:

- much higher unemployment rates at 11 per cent compared to the East of England at 2 per cent to 3 per cent
- lower wage rates; and
- GDP per capita in Portugal was 70 per cent of that of the main EU economies. The East of England (and UK) economy was, by contrast, relatively stable during this period.¹

Another report quotes a ‘reliable’ but ‘anonymous’ source that in late 2003 there was ‘a population of about 6,000 Portuguese temporary workers in the Thetford and Swaffham areas.’² The authors arrive at a ‘conservative estimate of 6,000 Portuguese nationals in the area … made by some agencies’ in August 2005, but ‘rising to 15,000’ if one takes into account Defra’s 2003 ERDP Annual Report published in 2005.³

The BME Communities Inclusion Project⁴ notes the Portuguese Consulate’s estimate of 50,000 Portuguese nationals in Norfolk and Suffolk and concludes from this a ‘separate and very rough estimate of 25,000+ Portuguese nationals in Norfolk.’⁵

One report noted that Norfolk as a whole is home to ‘a more established Portuguese community with significant numbers residing, working, and running small businesses in the country.’⁶

All the studies report that the Portuguese and other migrants faced similar issues to those that were highlighted in the TUC report, Overworked, Underpaid and Over Here, namely:

- long hours, low pay, poor living conditions and working practices; and
- significant evidence of exploitation by agencies or gangmasters.

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³ Schneider and Holman, A Profile of Migrant workers in the Breckland Area, 2005. It is not clear whether this refers to the eight CER (Community Economic Regeneration) wards the study focused on: Barnham Cross (Thetford Castle); Saxon; Guildhall (part); Abbey; Weeting; Conifer; Mid Forest; Swaffham.
⁴ Published by Norwich and Norfolk Racial Equality Council, n2006.
⁵ Kennedy, BME Communities Inclusion Project, Norwich and Norfolk Racial Equality Council, 2006.
⁶ Schneider and Holman, Ibid.
Migration from A8 countries

A main finding from one report was that there was ‘a clear polarisation’ between a more established Portuguese migrant worker community (who started to arrive in or around 2001) and the newer A8 communities who started to work and live in Breckland and the wider region from early 2004 onwards. Portuguese migrants who arrived before 2004, tended to be older and had ‘lower levels of education and generic skills.’ More recent migrants coming to Breckland were ‘increasingly Eastern European’ and tended to be ‘young, middle class, well educated and skilled.’

The NINo figures show that from 1 January 2002 to June 2008, there were 6,690 National Insurance number registrations in Breckland, with:

- 2,110 registrations from Poland
- 1,950 registrations from Portugal
- 710 from Lithuania; and
- 290 from Latvia.

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Table 1: NINo registrations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK

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7 Schneider and Holmann, Ibid.
Cohesion in Breckland

Breckland’s cohesion levels must be seen in the context of its rurality, economy and changing demographics.

Our report now looks in more detail at the key and inter-related areas that are crucial to everyone’s lives and which so strongly influence cohesion:

- the local economy
- housing
- health
- crime and disorder, community tensions and racism.

The local economy

There are a high number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Breckland: with around 72 per cent of businesses employing less than four people. According to Office of National Statistics figures, key sectors by broad industry group are:

- property and business services
- agriculture
- construction; and
- retail.

The manufacturing sector in Breckland is in decline, as it is generally unable to compete with lower cost imports. However, there is a concentration of small and medium-sized companies in specialist manufacturing, predominantly in Thetford and Attleborough.

There is also a strong regional and local distribution sector in Breckland, mostly based in Thetford and Snetterton which capitalises on being able to connect to the A11 corridor.

There is also a small, but growing banking, finance and insurance sector with a significant local presence in Dereham and Swaffham. The farming and related food preparation sectors have and continue to undergo restructuring but remain strong, particularly in the rural parts of the district for the production of meat products, including poultry.
Rurality and transport

Given the rural nature and dispersed pattern of settlement, movement in the district is mainly by private car. Two trunk road routes run across the district:

- the A47 links Dereham and Swaffham with Norwich in the east and King’s Lynn in the west; and
- the A11 links Attleborough and Thetford with Norwich to the north and Newmarket and Cambridge in the south-west.

The remaining parts of Breckland are served by a network of smaller roads. The A11 is dual-carriageway from the Norfolk county border to Norwich, but delays from congestion (and accidents) on the five mile (eight kilometre) stretch from the south-west end of the Thetford bypass to the Barton Mills junction, adversely impact on access to and from the district from the south-west.

Thetford and Attleborough are connected to the national rail network with regular services to Norwich and Cambridge. Public transport services in the district are principally provided by bus and focus on linking the district’s market towns with shopping and employment destinations at Norwich, King’s Lynn and Bury St. Edmunds.

Accessibility Action Areas

Because of the steady rise in car owners, services, shops and public transport have declined or disappeared altogether in some rural areas. This has resulted in three rural areas being identified as Accessibility Action Areas by Norfolk County Council.

Migrant workers and the local economy

One report estimated that migrants contributed in excess of £360 million to the region’s economy. In interviews with Breckland employers, one report found that many of the large employers said they could not operate without migrant workers, noting that their adaptability and reliability increased productivity.

Migration patterns are, not surprisingly, largely connected to the make-up of the local economy. For example, migrant workers in the wider West Norfolk area are employed in horticulture, food packing and processing, although many are also in higher-skilled employment. This pattern of employment fits in with the wider regional and national context.

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9 Schneider and Holman, A Profile of Migrant Workers in the Breckland Area, 2005.
The Workers’ Registration Scheme figures, May 2004 – September 2008, Accession Monitoring Report show higher rates of workers in agriculture in the Anglia region than others, a majority working in administration, business and management, but a wider cross-section across sectors, including retail, hospitality and catering, manufacturing, and health:

### Table 2: Top 10 Sectors – geographical distribution of employers of registered workers in the Anglia region, cumulative total, May 2004 – September 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Number of registered workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration, business and management</td>
<td>60,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality and catering</td>
<td>14,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>22,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food/fish/meat processing</td>
<td>3,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>5,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and medical</td>
<td>5,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction and land</td>
<td>3,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>3,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment &amp; leisure</td>
<td>1,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total in top ten sectors</strong></td>
<td><strong>128,785</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sectors</td>
<td>3,435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One report emphasises the ‘insufficient number of British nationals’ willing to fulfil demand in the agriculture and food processing sectors, and the effects of a seasonal supply and demand cycle.\(^\text{10}\)

The wide range of migrant skills levels has already been noted. However, it is important that these skills are better utilised and there is a better match with labour shortages: women especially tend to downgrade their employment.

Younger migrant workers, often working in low-skilled employment had high levels of educational qualifications; including good IT and English skills, had often been in medium or highly-skilled jobs in their home country.

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High economic activity but lower weekly wages

Economic activity is generally high and unemployment low, with the Breckland district area having a working age employment rate of 79.7 per cent in March 2008, which is above the regional average of 77.9 per cent. However, wages are also relatively low in comparison with the national and regional averages, with average gross weekly pay of £391.70 in 2008, compared to £420.30 in Norfolk as a whole and £468.10 in the East of England.\(^{11}\)

Migrant workers often faced lower wages, sometimes being paid at or even below the national minimum wage; while some also had large deductions taken out of their pay for accommodation, uniforms and transport to and from work. These deductions make it harder for migrants to save or send money to dependents. Working hours and shift patterns are often a barrier to migrants’ ability to improve their language skills.

\(^{11}\) ONS Annual survey of hours and earnings – workplace analysis, December 2008.
Low skills levels

These figures also reflect the low level of skills and qualifications in the district.

A Learning and Skills Council report in 2004 on Adult Learning in Norfolk noted that 34 per cent of Breckland residents aged between 16 and 74 had no qualifications compared to 28 per cent in East of England as a whole.\textsuperscript{12}

Skills levels are generally lower in comparison to regional and national averages:

- only 53.4 per cent of the working age population have a Level 2 qualification or above, compared to 59.9 per cent in Norfolk and 62.2 per cent in the East of England
- 29.6 per cent of the population have a Level 3 qualification or above, compared to 41.2 per cent and 43.4 per cent respectively for Norfolk and England; \textit{and}
- 16 per cent of the population have a Level 4 qualification compared to 22.3 per cent and 26 per cent in Norfolk and England.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} Bainbridge and Donaldson, \textit{Adult Learning in Norfolk: A Report for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC, 2004).}
\textsuperscript{13} ONS Annual population survey, Jan 2007 – Dec 2007.
There are also some low employment and low education, skills and training levels (based on the Indices of Deprivation, 2007) within parts of Breckland, particularly within Thetford, Swaffham and parts of Dereham.

One study noted a particularly poor literacy and numeracy levels for Thetford, estimated at 29 per cent and 31 per cent for the 16 to 60 age group.\textsuperscript{14}

Given its rural nature, it is not surprising that parts of Breckland (and the wider Norfolk area) score relatively highly on the Barriers to Housing and Services domain in the Indices of Deprivation 2007.

A 2006 report, *Deprivation in Rural Norfolk*, also estimated what it called a significant ‘rural share of deprivation’ in Norfolk using a re-modelled version of output areas based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004. It identified 45 non-urban hidden pockets of deprivation across the county, with six in Dereham, two in Swaffham, one in Attleborough and a further three in smaller settlements in Breckland.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{index_of_multiple_deprivation_2004_map}
\caption{Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004}
\end{figure}

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Region} & \textbf{Score} \\
\hline
Breckland & 1234567 \\
\hline

\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{14} Schneider and Holman, *A Profile of Migrant workers in the Breckland Area* (Keystone Development Trust, 2005).
\textsuperscript{15} *Deprivation in Rural Norfolk* (December 2006), Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OSCI), commissioned by Norfolk Rural Community Council on behalf of Norfolk Investing in Communities partnership/EEDA
Housing

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) carried out by the Rural East Anglia Partnership (which includes Breckland) suggested that Breckland had seen house prices rise much faster than incomes.

At present, the average two-bedroom property costs over five times the average income. Despite some variations across the district, prices in Breckland are relatively consistent: catchment areas overlap and the difference in prices recorded between the towns remain fairly small, although Swaffham is the most expensive area to live in and Thetford the cheapest.

Prices in some of the villages between the towns are, however, more expensive. Estimated entry-level prices for the property market ranged from £86,500 for a one-bedroom property up to £167,500 for four bedrooms. Average prices were generally around 20 per cent higher than the minimums.

Giving migrant workers information, advice and guidance about the United Kingdom

Although there is some helpful information for migrant workers, many studies highlighted the fact that there is not enough to help them before they arrive in the UK – and once they are living in the UK.

The findings suggested a need for clear information about:

- housing, employment and health services in the UK
- entitlements and responsibilities
- greater awareness of skills shortages and vacancies before arrival; and
- skills training and awareness of local vacancies for migrants once in the UK.

The reports also looked at the best ways and places to communicate with migrants and these included local libraries, the workplace, CABs and community centres.

An information pack produced in English and Portuguese by the Keystone Development Trust was cited as being useful; as were the services of:

- INTRAN (Norfolk’s multi-agency translating/interpreting service)
- Norfolk Constabulary’s Minority Ethnic Liaison Officers; and
- community development workers.
Lettings market

The SHMA noted that the size of the lettings market was identified as growing across the district, with agents in Dereham saying that around 10 per cent to 20 per cent of homes are being bought for buy-to-let purposes. The growth in lettings is being driven by the increasing number of young couples unable to buy in the area as well as by migrant workers. In Swaffham, demand for rented property was from servicemen/families from the airbase. The SHMA also noted a lack of good-quality affordable housing.

Housing and migrant workers: two key issues


There are two key issues for migrant workers with housing needs (and these apply at national level as well as regional and local):

- quality of accommodation, which can be poor, leading to overcrowding and isolation
- issues on ‘tied’ accommodation (when housing is tied into employment arrangements).

The study suggests that the ties between accommodation and employment make migrant workers: ‘doubly vulnerable, and can leave migrant workers open to exploitation and abuse’. Actions include:

- deductions from wages
- forced eviction; and
- being made homeless.

A report into *The Housing and Support Needs of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities*, found that of the 243 Portuguese and A8 migrant workers sampled, 10 per cent owned their own home and only 4 per cent were in socially-rented accommodation. This supports the claims made in *Workers on the Move* (and elsewhere) that:

- ‘few workers apply for or are given social housing’; and
- there is no or little evidence of migrant workers being ‘a drain on social housing.’

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16 ‘Migrant Worker Housing Survey 2007,’ *Workers on the Move: Migrant workers, housing and growth in the eastern region*, Colin Wiles, Neil Stott, Deborah Holman, Claudia Schneider and Alex Collis (Keystone Development Trust, [2008]).

17 Produced by Fordham Research, August 2007.
Health

A recent health profile of Breckland,\(^{18}\) notes that the general health of people living in Breckland is significantly better than the England average. But it also notes health inequalities within the area by location, income and gender. Swaffham and the Thetford wards of Abbey and Saxon are, relatively, the most deprived and life expectancy for men from the most deprived areas is nearly three years lower than for men from the least deprived areas.

Health and migrant workers

One report\(^ {19}\) noted that the health services had only a limited understanding of the health needs of the migrant worker communities. There was also:

- a lack of resources to target migrant communities
- a need to ensure that staff and management dealt effectively with non-English speaking patients’ needs; and
- under-registration of Portuguese nationals with GPs.

The report also highlighted the concern that many migrant workers were either not accessing medical care or leaving chronic health conditions such as ulcers, asthma and heart and back problems, as well as sexual and mental health issues until they reached crisis point before seeking help.

Good practice: Intran and NHS Norfolk

Through the Intran Partnership, NHS Norfolk have arranged for interpreter sessions to be held at two GP surgeries in Thetford (School Lane and Grove Surgery) since 2004.

This started as a three-month project to address the health needs of the Portuguese-speaking population. At this time, there were a large number of migrant workers coming into the area and there were issues around patients accessing and understanding the local health services, and also a lack of understanding from health professionals as to how to make adjustments for people who could not speak or understand English.

Through the Intran Interpreting and Translation Service, an interpreter was booked for two days a week in one surgery and for one day a week in the other. The interpreter helps with new registrations, immunisations, midwifery services, etc. These sessions were advertised widely in Portuguese. Five years later, take-up is still high and interpreting services are very important to both the practices and the patients.

While initially this did lead to an increase in costs for NHS Norfolk in terms of meeting the public duty about access to services, the benefits far outweigh the costs of booking interpreters on a case by case basis.

Some of the comments received from the practice staff have been really positive:

One practice manager said: ‘It works more smoothly. Without the interpreter, they do treble the time spent by the doctor on the appointment.’

One doctor advised that: ‘My patient was more relaxed, and not so tense … With the interpreter, we are saving lots of time’.

\(^{18}\) Produced by the East of England Public Health Observatory, 2008

\(^{19}\) Taylor and Rogaly, Report on Migrant working in West Norfolk, 2004
English for speakers of other languages

Although initiatives such as that undertaken by NHS Norfolk to provide translation and interpreters can have great value in helping specific hard to reach groups, the ability of migrants to speak English is critical to their ability to interact meaningfully with others, to find work and to appropriately access public services. Following a consultation in 2008, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) is developing ESOL policy to re-prioritise provision and strengthen its role in supporting community cohesion.

By providing more targeted, flexible and effective services, isolated and excluded people in settled communities who have English language needs can be encouraged to access ESOL and progress their learning, as well as achieving their goals for employability, supporting their families and being part of their local communities.

Key to the success of this policy is that priority groups are identified at the local level.

Crime and disorder, community tensions and racism

Levels of crime within Breckland are similar to those across the rest of Norfolk and low compared to the region and national figures.

December 2008 figures show that compared to the previous year, crime across the district fell by 17.5 per cent, with:

- burglary falling by 18.3 per cent
- robbery falling by 50 per cent
- vehicle crime falling by 14.3 per cent; and
- violent crime falling by 13.8 per cent.

However, there was an increase in anti-social behaviour of 3.9 per cent.

In Thetford, where levels have traditionally been higher, crime has also fallen considerably.

Migrant workers are far more likely to be victims of crime than to perpetuate it. The same report outlines several incidents of racially-motivated crime perpetrated against the Portuguese population and an increase, between 1995 and 2002, in the number of reported incidents of race crime in Norfolk, from 12 to about 400.

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20 Taylor and Rogaly, Report on Migrant working in West Norfolk, 2004
21 Ibid.
Figures from Norfolk Constabulary show that arrest rates for A8 nationals and non-UK nationals are at much lower levels in comparison to UK nationals, than the arrest rates in Cambridgeshire, with respectively:

Of all arrests in 2006-07:
- 2.8 per cent were arrests of A8 nationals and 5.9 per cent were of non-UK nationals.

Of all arrests in 2007-08:
- 2.7 per cent were arrests of A8 nationals and 4.7 per cent were of non-UK nationals.

These figures from Norfolk suggest, therefore, that the levels of A8 nationals are in line with the percentage of their share of the national population.

**Conclusion**

Migrant workers in Breckland have general characteristics which reflect a wider national and European trend.

The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) briefing paper on *A8 migrants in rural areas*[^22] published in January 2007 found that while the scale of migration in rural areas was similar to that in urban areas, the arrival pattern was more seasonal and concentrated in particular rural areas (including the wider Fens) and in particular employment sectors – manufacturing, distribution and agriculture.

The CRC also noted the distance, transport and time compound rural services, and the often differing nature of housing tenure in rural areas – caravans, caravan sites and converted farm buildings – and of the closeness of schools and colleges.

To some extent, these findings dovetail with the experience in Breckland and all these issues need to be taken into account when considering the response Breckland (and Norfolk) make to cohesion and migration issues.

**Building cohesion into future development plans**

Cohesion needs to be built into the future development and growth of the district. Breckland’s Local Development Framework (LDF) is required by the draft East of England Plan (or Regional Spatial Strategy) to deliver 15,200 new homes and 6,000 net new jobs over the next 13 years. At least one-third of new homes are required to be affordable, of which 6,000 will be delivered in Thetford as a key centre for growth.

Breckland’s core spatial strategy suggests that employment growth areas are likely to be in service and office-based work and in the retail, health, leisure and tourism sectors. The commercial property market in Breckland is concentrated around Thetford, largely due to good accessibility from the A11 and its rail links to Norwich and Cambridge. Strategic improvements to the A11 will enhance accessibility for Thetford, Attleborough and Snetterton.

Specialist engineering and manufacturing sectors are also outlined within Breckland’s LDF as providing a potential for well-paid and highly-skilled jobs.
Local and strategic arrangements in Breckland and Norfolk

Norfolk currently has a two-tier system local government structure in place with a County Council and seven District Authorities. This tiered structure is replicated in the Local Strategic Partnership structures.

This means that there are complex partnership arrangements in place involving all of the District Authorities, the County and Local Strategic Partnerships as well as countywide organisations including:

- Norfolk Constabulary
- NHS Norfolk
- Voluntary Norfolk
- Norwich and Norfolk Racial Equality Council
- Norfolk Coalition for Disabled People; and
- other local community and voluntary sector organisations.

Improving community cohesion has been identified as a key priority for the whole county Sustainable Community Strategy, *Norfolk Ambition*.

The Norfolk Local Area Agreement also includes National Indicator 1 (the percentage of people who believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together), with countywide and local authority performance targets set each year.

The current Norfolk target is to achieve a four per cent point increase, over three years, from the baseline BVPI score (80.7 per cent to 84.7 per cent).

This will be supported by the district targets listed below: (Please note the figures are subject to change, depending on outcomes of the 2008 Place Survey).
The Norfolk Community Cohesion Network

The Norfolk Community Cohesion Network was formed in 2006, before the inclusion of National Indicator 1 in the Local Area Agreement. It was created following the merging of the Norfolk Migrant Workers; Group and the Norfolk Equalities Officer Network (NEON).

The network now has overall responsibility for ensuring that the county meets the targets outlined above and that local authorities and other partner organisations within the statutory, voluntary and community sector have the opportunity to share practice and pool resources to develop a sustainable and robust response to issues around community cohesion, both at the strategic (countywide) level and through local delivery.

The Community Cohesion Network sits under the umbrella of the Norfolk County Strategic Partnership (CSP) which has overall responsibility for the delivery of the Local Area Agreement. The network has two key groups to oversee the work:

- the Community Cohesion Strategic Group; and
- the Community Cohesion Network Steering Group.

The network is open to all organisations across all sectors, and Statutory Sector members pay an annual fee of £1,000 for membership to provide a discrete budget for partnership projects.

### District Cohesion Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>% Score (Place Survey)</th>
<th>% increase over two years</th>
<th>% Score (Place Survey 2010-11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Yarmouth</td>
<td>64.8 (3.5)</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breckland</td>
<td>68.4 (3.3)</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings Lynn and West Norfolk</td>
<td>69.7 (3.3)</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>73.4 (3.1)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Norfolk</td>
<td>80.7 (2.8)</td>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Norfolk</td>
<td>83.0 (2.7)</td>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadland</td>
<td>84.5 (2.6)</td>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Community Cohesion Strategic Group

This group is currently chaired by a member of the Norfolk County Council Senior Management team, and is primarily attended by senior management from all statutory sector organisations. Also represented are:

- The Norfolk Coalition for Disabled People
- The Norwich and Norfolk Racial Equality Council
- Voluntary Norfolk
- The Norfolk Police Authority, and
- Norfolk Association of Local Councils.

Membership is also open to Local Strategic Partnership officers and members.

This group is primarily responsible for:

- defining the overall strategic direction for community cohesion and equality in Norfolk
- recommending priorities and actions to the Norfolk County Strategic Partnership (Management Board) that will best promote cohesion and equality and address persistent inequalities and emerging trends
- ensuring that priorities and actions are embedded within the participating organisations.

The Community Cohesion Network Steering Group

The group is currently chaired by a member of the District Authority's senior management team, and is attended by officers with responsibilities for delivering equalities/cohesion, and policy and performance. Other staff from partner organisations, including representatives from the Community and Voluntary Sectors, are also members of the Steering Group.

The group acts as the ‘business end’ of the network and is primarily responsible for:

- the delivery and implementation mechanism for the Strategic Group (see above)
- facilitating the partnership approach to implementation of the PSA to promote equality; and
- delivering projects to support outcomes for National Indicator 1.

Breckland Council is represented on the Steering Group by a member from the housing team.

Breckland LSP is represented on the Strategic Group by a member of the Norfolk Police Authority.
The Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan

The Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategy was developed by the Community Cohesion Network to coordinate the delivery of activities under National Indicator 1. It was formally agreed in July 2008 and is refreshed annually to coincide with the review of the Norfolk Local Area Agreement.

The strategy is framed around Norfolk Ambition Key Theme 1 ‘Inclusive and Diverse’ which, in turn, identifies four key themes around which activities will take place:

- developing a shared strategic approach
- accommodating growth and migration
- achieving equality; and
- managing community tension and tackling hate crime.

Current partnership activities under the strategy include:

- commissioning peer action through Community Cohesion Research
- developing a community tension monitoring process and contingency plans
- developing and delivering the Norfolk Disability Equality Scheme
- developing and delivering the Norfolk Multi-agency Protocol – Tackling Hate Crime Together
- supporting community-led Black History Month, Gypsy and Traveller History, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History Month, Pride events and other awareness-raising and diversity events
- developing processes for improving communications, engaging the media, providing advice and signposting to service users.

County Community Cohesion Officer

The Community Cohesion Officer works on behalf of all participating organisations, and is currently hosted by North Norfolk District Council. This post is funded by the Norfolk County Strategic Partnership.

The Community Cohesion Officer is responsible for:

- negotiating LAA targets and leading on work under National Indicator 1’
- coordinating the development and delivery of the County Community Cohesion Strategy
- engaging and supporting all stakeholders to participate actively in the delivery of key outcomes
- supporting the Strategic and Steering Groups; and
- developing projects (including obtaining funding) to achieve partnership objectives.
Good practice: Leadership

Leadership on cohesion issues is well developed across Norfolk.

The County Community Cohesion Strategic Group is made up of senior representatives from a range of relevant organisations (including the County Council, the seven District Authorities, LSPs, Norfolk Association of Local Councils, and other public sector agencies (including Norfolk Constabulary and NHS Norfolk), as well as voluntary and community sector groups (including Norwich and Norfolk Race Equality Council, and Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People); leads on delivering the County Community Cohesion Strategy.

The group has clear terms of reference and meets every quarter. The Strategic Group reports directly to the County Strategic Management Board.

Operational work is driven by Community Cohesion Steering Group, chaired by a senior officer from one of the districts, who also sits on the Strategic Group. Both groups make up the Community Cohesion Network.

The Chief Executive of Great Yarmouth Borough Council is the County Strategic Partnership/LAA’s ‘Cohesion Champion’ and ‘Stronger Communities’ and is thus the county’s champion for National Indicator 1.

The Deputy Leader of Norfolk County Council is the Cabinet member with responsibility for community cohesion and equalities issues and is also the Chair of the County Council’s Strategic Equality Group, which includes representation from all political parties, and service directors.

The County Council has a senior manager (the Head of Norfolk Youth Justice) with overall responsibility for championing cohesion and equality across the County Council. The Head of Norfolk Youth Offending Team is also the Chair of the Community Cohesion Strategic Group.

Norfolk County Strategic Partnership has also appointed a County Community Cohesion Officer, (funded through Second Homes Council Tax) who is integral to the co-ordination and implementation of the Community Cohesion Strategy and works closely with the District LSPs/Authorities and all other partner organisations.

Area Based Grant for Breckland

Breckland was one of three District Authorities to receive an Area Based Grant which was designated to achieve a significant improvement about perceptions of cohesion in the area: a six per cent increase over three years.

While overall responsibility for this target sits with Breckland District Council, a significant proportion of this funding has been passed on to the Local Strategic Partnership to coordinate projects which involve all local stakeholders to achieve the overall outcome.

The Sustainable Communities Manager is responsible for coordinating this work.
Both the LSP and the Breckland Council are members of the Community Cohesion Network.

**Pride in Breckland**

Launched in 2008, the Pride in Breckland campaign is designed to increase a sense of belonging and pride across all communities in the district. Such projects are well established in other parts of the UK and the Breckland campaign is informed by best practice.

The Pride campaign is being delivered by the Local Strategic Partnership and significant Area Based Grant funding was committed by Breckland Council over a three-year term. Similarly, resources were committed financially, and in kind, by:

- Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service
- Norfolk Constabulary
- Norfolk County Council; and
- local voluntary and community sector.

The aims of the campaign are to:

- bring together communities in meaningful interaction around a shared issue or locally identified priority
- engage communities in shaping and improving public service delivery.

The Pride campaign takes place at street, neighbourhood, parish, village, town and district level.

The campaign is not targeted at a single community or demographic group. Such a focus would be unlikely to deliver the success that can be achieved when communities mobilise around an issue that is important to them.

Anything can be included under the Pride banner that encourages meaningful interaction, a sense of belonging or pride in local communities. This could be a youth engagement project or an environmental clean-up. Likewise, it could be an event that celebrates diversity or increases volunteering.

In its first year the campaign has had some notable success, including:

- 20% of all secondary school-age young people voting in a democratic election for the first Breckland Youth Council
- the inaugural Pride in Breckland Awards, held to celebrate the district’s unsung heroes, received over 200 nominations for 10 different categories
- Community clean-ups were supported across the district
- an important campaign launched to support and promote local independent shops
- successful ‘grot spots’ campaign; with elected members, using disposable cameras, highlighting areas that need improvement
- Breckfest music and cultural event attended by 2,000 people to mark handover of Olympic Games to London 2012.
County Strategic Partnership

CSP Management Board

Norfolk Ambition “Community Strategy”

Community Cohesion Strategic Group & Community Cohesion Steering Group

COHESION NETWORK

Norfolk Local Area Agreement “Performance Indicators”

Other Thematic Partnerships e.g. County Crime Reduction Shaping Norfolk’s Future

Countrywide Public Sector Voluntary Sector Private Sector

Local Authorities

Local Strategic Partnerships

Local Public Sector Voluntary Sector Private Sector Communities
Breckland – voluntary sector arrangements

There are a number of voluntary and community organisations in Breckland supporting migrant worker communities by giving advice, information and support services.

The district is covered by three large umbrella support organisations:

- Voluntary Norfolk
- West Norfolk Voluntary and Community Action; and
- Norfolk Rural Community Council.

These organisations offer support services to smaller voluntary and community organisations operating within the district and across the county.

A number of voluntary organisations, partnerships and development trusts provide services to migrant communities as part of their wider community remit. These include the:

- Keystone Development Trust in Thetford
- Iceni Partnership in Swaffham
- Wayland Partnership in Watton; and
- Dereham Area Partnership.

These organisations have been successful in attracting significant funds and delivering sizeable projects to support migrant worker communities within their given locality.

At a grassroots level there are a plethora of small community organisations established specifically to support migrant worker communities. These include the:

- Mid-Norfolk Association
- META (Multilingual and European Thetford Association)
- SIMPLE (Support and Integration of Migrants Promoting Legal Equality; and
- Project Amigos.

Each of these organisations covers a tightly-defined geographic area and together they cover the entire district. Given that these organisations have received little external funding and are relatively low capacity, they deliver a significant and valuable service for the local communities they represent.

The voluntary and community sector arrangements are complex in Breckland and this can place significant logistical challenges in communications and engaging with new communities.
Community perspectives

As outlined earlier, in talking to a range of community activists and organisations, we focused on a review of *Community Engagement and Involvement and Equality of Access to Information, Advice and Services* using the IDeA draft benchmark tool.

The review was framed by the perceptions of migrant workers and the impact of these perceptions on community cohesion.

We arranged interviews and a workshop with a sample of people from different organisations across Breckland. These included:

- migrant-run support organisations (Simple, Project Amigos, International Friendship Group, Mid-Norfolk Association, Welcome Centre)
- development agencies providing support to migrant workers (Keystone Development Trust, Wayland, PACT, Iceni, Meta)
- youth organisations (Norfolk Youth Service, Connexions, Zone for Learning) and the Thetford Youth Council
- faith organisations (including the Church of England and Baptists)
- tenant representatives/Community Support Group (Thetford)
- Sustainable Communities team, Breckland Council
- Housing Manager, Breckland Council
- Community Liaison Officer, Breckland Council; and
- Citizens Advice Bureau.

And we also received written feedback from a number of other A8 migrants – Polish, Bulgarian, Slovakian and Hungarian.

Our interviews focused on their understanding of Breckland’s policies and cohesion and migration strategies as well as the impact of migration on social cohesion.

Although Breckland officers had a good understanding of what the Council’s policies and strategies were, this understanding was less evident among partners and communities. However, they all had a range of views about the effect of services (or lack of services and support) on migrants; and how migration into Breckland affected social relations.
It struck us that the main message was that there was a lack of overt tension about migrant workers. Most issues were at the level of relations between neighbours, can be exacerbated by a lack of licensing over the issue of Houses of Multiple Occupation (see box) and misperceptions about the allocation of social housing. The department for Communities and Local Government are minded to support the implementation of a discretionary licensing service in Breckland’s five market towns. If this scheme proved successful it could be rolled out to other areas within the district. There were also some generational differences. Both adults and youth expressed a perception that relations among younger people from different backgrounds were better than those between adults.

Other key messages were about the support given to migrant workers and their organisations and their capacity to sustain support to their service users.

**What is a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO)?**

The following types of accommodation are often described as an HMO:

- some shared houses or flats
- a house converted into bed-sits
- some hostels
- some guesthouses
- some bed and breakfast establishments and hotels; and
- some types of houses converted into flats.
Capacity-building support for migrant organisations

All of the development agencies (Keystone, Iceni, Wayland and PACT) reflected that the resources for services to migrants were limited and depended on the funding cycles. This meant that it was hard to provide consistent services to meet the continuing needs of migrants with respect to learning English and advice on a range of services such as housing, employment rights and immigration issues. Self-organising migrant worker support groups also said that the lack of resources limited their ability to provide a range of services.

Breckland Council has agreed to expand the role of the Sustainable Communities Team to give capacity building support to migrant organisations. This should help to develop their ability to bid for funding.

All the migrant organisations, and people from the agencies supporting them, talked about a threshold for access to services being characterised by the ability to have functioning English language skills.

Breckland Council employs Portuguese-speaking workers at its reception points and uses Language Line to facilitate conversations with non-English speaking service users.

There are many English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and pre-ESOL schemes provided across the district by a range of providers, but their regularity and accessibility is conditioned by access to funds and the times at which the classes are offered. Migrant workers often work shift patterns and may also have limited access to transport, all of which can limit workers’ ability to improve their English.

District-wide youth council

Breckland Council is developing a district-wide youth council, launching in February 2009, to engage young people from across the area in local decision making. The Youth Council will build on existing youth forums in the schools and market towns.

We suggest it would also be good practice to allocate small funds to the Youth Council, as is the practice with Youth Parliaments and Councils in other parts of the country.

The Breckland Youth Council is part of a youth engagement programme introduced by Breckland Council in 2008. Councillors are now regularly attending school assemblies and young people have taken part in youth Select Committee days, Design Your Own Position days and Political Speed-dating. All these activities engage young people in developing an understanding of how local democracy works and what the roles and responsibilities of district councillors are. For example, at the Youth Select Committee Day, 50 young people took part in a theatre production about the rights and responsibilities of young people, before questioning councillors and council officers about the key local issues. A week of youth activities is planned for February 2009 to coincide with the launch of the Youth Council.
Impact of migration locally

There are few incidents of overt hostility towards migrants in Breckland. Officers and community workers working with migrants and the local British population reported some local neighbours’ disputes.

The Breckland Council Anti-Social Behaviour officer said that in two years, she had mediated in two disputes involving migrants; while some of the community workers reported a misunderstanding in the community about the allocation of social housing.

On some social housing estates, homes that are now in private ownership, via the Right to Buy scheme, are let to migrant workers. This causes some minor resentment because there is an assumption that the properties have been let via the local housing association. However, it is important to note that these incidents are limited.

We suggest considering Peterborough’s scheme (New Link and the local mediation service) to work with new arrivals and host communities to enable integration.

We suggest that Breckland Council and the local housing associations review the effectiveness of estate-based action committees and regeneration work – and particularly to aim to include local migrant residents on these committees.

Housing in multiple occupation (HMOs) also causes some issues. This is because HMOs may often have people living in the properties for short periods of time – which tends to militate against building an enduring engagement with neighbours – and because occupants may not have an appreciation of the social practices about rubbish disposal and recycling. HMOs can also pose a health and safety risk for migrant workers.

The housing officers in Breckland Council are restricted in registering HMOs because of the operational limits of special licensing schemes. There has been an increase to around 528 HMOs in 2008 from 12 HMOs in 1996. However, Breckland Council has been able to license only a handful of these dwellings as being registered HMOs. Informal or voluntary registration is also hindered by the range of small estate agents and the tied nature of some of the accommodation. It is often hard to know how many occupants are living in a particular dwelling and how much the ‘tenancy’ depends on employment in local workplaces.

We suggest that the department for Communities and Local Government give the go ahead to the discretionary licensing arrangements outlined as follows.
Migrant needs – English skills essential

Most of our interviews highlighted the need for better co-ordination of English classes across the various agencies that provide them – local partnership bodies, migrant groups and Adult Education. There was also the need to provide pre-ESOL, ESOL and non-accredited English classes. For the latter, the issue of funding becomes critical, as without a route to a qualification many funders are reluctant to give funding. However, it is often the informal English classes that are more accessible to migrants and which offer them context-specific English.

We suggest a review of provision looking for overlaps, the spread of provision, access and appropriateness.

Breckland Council should publicise grants scheme

We suggest that Breckland Council publicise their grants scheme to migrant support groups directly, and capacity build to enable successful grant applications.

Breckland Council has already taken some steps to develop its service to support the development of migrant support groups.

Breckland Council Community Liaison Officer has supported and created a large network of migrant workers and migrant organisations. We suggest that additionally capacity should be found within the organisation to share this work.

We also suggest that Breckland Council officers across the departments need to know about, and be able to refer to, all migrant support groups – not just the bigger ones. One method would be to develop their intranet site to include listings for all migrant support organisations.

Although a wide range of self-organised migrant organisations currently exist, they exist with little or no funding and mainly act as conduits to other key services.

Several stakeholders have suggested that a type of consular support or something similar would enhance migrant workers’ access to services and help them know about their rights and entitlements on employment issues, visas, benefits, food parcels, money management and moving away from a dependency on small organisational support.

The difficulty with this approach is the plurality of migrant workers’ nationalities. Broadly speaking, we observed that the Portuguese community are more established than other migrant groups and seem to be in Breckland for the long term. Workers from A8 countries tend to be more transient.
Developing its community engagement

As we outline in this report, Breckland Council is developing its community engagement practice. It has:

- a Community Liaison Officer
- community workers in its Sustainable Communities team
- engages in estate-based action committees; and
- started to host town forums and a Youth Council. At the end of 2008, only a Thetford Forum was in place, but there are plans to roll-out to other towns.

We suggest that Breckland Council consider setting up a migrant forum to review services across all partners – including Breckland Council, partnership bodies and migrant support organisations – aiming for better coordination, allowing migrant workers to influence policy and enhancing links with other community engagement practice.

In its Statement of Community Involvement, Breckland Council already has a good model to assess the need for different types of engagement. We suggest a similar model could be used for engagement with service users to develop and measure the impact and effectiveness of other council services. Portsmouth’s Community Involvement Directory, which helped to raise both satisfaction with services and perceptions of influence over local decisions, might be a useful benchmark.

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**Good practice: Minority Ethnic Liaison Officers in Norfolk police force**

Norfolk Constabulary has a number of Minority Ethnic Liaison Officers (MELOs) working with diverse communities across the county.

The Breckland MELO works closely with a range of voluntary and community sector organisations in the district, and plays an important role in linking local minority ethnic and migrant communities with the five Safer Neighbourhood Teams in the area, and has regular dialogue with the Breckland District Superintendent on issues relating to these communities and organisations.

The Breckland MELO has also established close working links with the Breckland Council Community Development Officer, to ensure that their work is joined up and driven by the needs of the local communities.
Better ethnic monitoring for grants

Currently, there is a lack of ethnic monitoring for grants – whether for applicants or for the beneficiaries of grants.

We suggest that all grant applicants are asked to disclose monitoring data and to produce a short feedback form, which highlights how grants have been to the benefit of all in the community.

We also suggest that Breckland Council uses the existing data on ethnicity from housing benefit claims and other service applications to map local needs and develop a coordinated monitoring of this data.

The Breckland Council Sustainable Communities Team could review its grant funding offer to ensure that it is fully accessible to the small organisations that represent migrant communities.

All communities are affected by a relative lack of public transport. For low income households this restricts mobility across the district.

Action Plan

The actions outlined below came out of the interviews and workshop.

The workshop developed the ideas that came out of the interviews about the issues being faced by migrant workers and their support organisations, the workshop then further developed the ideas and identified further issues. The other actions are, therefore, less well developed, but we recommend Breckland Council takes a similar co-development approach to address and meet these other needs.
## Interview outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Short, medium, long term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Capacity to develop services for migrants</td>
<td>Breckland Council Sustainable Communities team to provide support to migrant organisations.</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All partners to review English language teaching provision and identify ways to improve access.</td>
<td>Short</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Youth</td>
<td>Breckland Council to ensure participation of migrant communities in development of Youth Council and youth activities.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Impact of migration</td>
<td>Review Peterborough’s New Arrivals scheme to identify actions to ‘induct’ new arrivals in the district.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify and recruit local migrant workers to estate-based action committees.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>CLG to review decision to turn down Breckland Council’s application for special licensing scheme on HMOs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Migrant needs</td>
<td>Breckland Council to publicise grants scheme to migrant groups.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Co-ordinate engagement activities to enhance access for low income families, migrant workers and young people.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Enhance awareness among Breckland Council staff of all migrant support organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Community engagement</td>
<td>Explore the possibility of a migrant forum, along the lines of town forums and the Youth Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop an engagement plan for all different types of communities, using the existing SCI as a template for differentiating degrees and depth of engagement.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review data from languages uses, housing benefit claims etc to draw up a map of BME and migrant communities in the district.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Equalities</td>
<td>Introduce a scheme for all grant applicants to show how they will ensure the money is used for activities that are open to all. Require a feedback form to demonstrate this.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breckland Council Sustainable Communities team to develop the capacity of migrant support organisations (especially self-organised groups) to raise funds, apply for grants and enhance their services.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identify ways to enhance the mobility across the district for all low income households.</td>
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## Workshop outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Short, medium, long term</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Organisational challenges for migrant support groups</strong></td>
<td>Produce a one-page document in different languages about the services offered in Breckland Council market towns.</td>
<td>Short</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design a web page for Breckland Council website with links to other organisations that provide a service for migrants.</td>
<td>Short</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A translated page in every issue of <em>Breckland Voice</em>, capturing what's going on in migrant communities, and highlighting access to services and support.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Through targeted community development work, enable migrant communities to become sustainable and work in partnership across communities and sectors.</td>
<td>Long</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **2. Good Practice Models** | At a local level, to:  
- Assess the needs of different migrant communities  
- Identify partnership bodies and support groups that provide services to migrants  
- Bring groups and individuals together to begin the identification and assessment process for developing services and co-ordination. | Short |
<p>| | At a wider district level, to begin a partnership process either through an existing service provider or the creation of something new if there is a gap, to meet the needs identified in the initial assessment. | Medium |
| <strong>3. Media and migrants</strong> | To address the myths that may exist about migrant workers and communities; and the perceptions that may fuel community tensions regarding migrants. | Short |
| | Assess and use all media that are effective in getting positive messages about migrants and social cohesion across to different communities. | Medium - Long |
| | Ensure that key information is available in the relevant languages. | |
| | Use real-life experiences to promote positive stories of community cohesion. | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Short, medium, long term</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Challenges for Breckland District Council</td>
<td>Proposals to support migrant groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evaluation of existing migrant services across Breckland. Feedback to communities on what services are available and where.</td>
<td>Short</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback to groups about what resources are available and where they are located.</td>
<td>Short</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collate generic advice that is available to migrants across Breckland and make available through the appropriate channels.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support migrant/community groups to run more efficiently, in terms of accountability, transparency and legality.</td>
<td>Med-long</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop district-wide good practice seminars to inspire and support other groups and individuals.</td>
<td>Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustaining the support</td>
<td>Breckland Council to offer an independent review of groups and organisations? If not is there the need for external third party support?</td>
<td>Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Through greater communication between partners and support groups can the barriers to accessing information and services be broken?</td>
<td>Long</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish a team of mentors to support Breckland Council to develop the actions into examples of good practice.</td>
<td>Medium - Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breckland Council Sustainable Communities Team to continue working with the housing team to explore joint working opportunities and community outreach work.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist cohesion team to continue supporting Breckland Council Sustainable Communities Team in developing action.</td>
<td>Medium - Long</td>
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</table>
Strengths, challenges and improvement recommendations

This section of the report highlights the good practice, challenges and improvement recommendations associated with the strategic and service delivery activities of Breckland Council/Local Strategic Partnership and Norfolk County Council/County Strategic Partnership around cohesion and migration.

The findings are presented below using the following key documents and governance arrangements:

- Norfolk Local Area Agreement (LAA)
- Breckland Sustainable Community Strategy and Norfolk Ambition
- Breckland LSP and Norfolk County Strategic Partnership
- Breckland Council
- Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategy.
Norfolk Local Area Agreement (LAA)

Strengths

- Norfolk’s LAA appears to have a well-rounded set of indicators that focuses attention on cohesion and the integration of new and existing communities.

- The inclusion of the cohesion indicator National Indicator (NI) 1 in the LAA with specific improvement targets for each of the districts located in Norfolk is a positive feature. Furthermore, at least two other LAA indicators: NI 4 (empowerment) and NI 110 (Positive Activities for Young People), also provide good supplementary proxies for cohesion.

- A cohesion question was included within the LAA ‘Equality and Diversity’ proofing checklist: ‘Have you considered whether the improvement planned for this measure will lead to improved community cohesion in the county?’

- Additionally, rural and voluntary sector proofing of the LAA has been undertaken and the LAA recognises the importance of engagement with the voluntary and community sector.

- There is regular dialogue between the Breckland LSP and Norfolk CSP about priorities for the LAA, specifically around cohesion and migration issues.

- Breckland Council Leader and Chief Executive are part of the wider decision making process for the LAA.

- The Breckland Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) makes good links between district and county priorities identified in the LAA.

Challenges

- To embed findings from equality, cohesion, rural and voluntary sector proofing exercises in the governance arrangements around all LAA indicators to ensure that action plans are cross-cutting.

- To increase opportunities for local communities to identify priorities and feed this into the development/delivery of the LAA.

Improvement recommendations

- The results from the proofing question: “Have you considered whether the improvement planned for this measure will lead to improved community cohesion in the county?” should inform the development of cross-cutting action plans and could further strengthen the LAA and help aid delivery.

- Involvement of local communities in the design and delivery of the LAA to ensure that the action plans reflect local priorities. National Indicator 4 will drive this work.

- Linkages between district and county priorities around cohesion and migration need to be maintained through strong performance management locally and on a countywide basis.
Breckland Sustainable Community Strategy and Norfolk Ambition

Strengths

Breckland Sustainable Community Strategy

- Provides a clear vision that welcomes new arrivals and supports existing communities: ‘We want everyone who chooses Breckland as a place to live or work, to meet their aspirations and enjoy an excellent quality of life’
- Cohesion is identified as a cross-cutting theme within the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)
- The Breckland Local Strategic Partnership has recently put in place performance management arrangements for the SCS. These arrangements align district and sub district performance with LAA targets.

Norfolk Sustainable Community Strategy (Norfolk Ambition)

- Norfolk Ambition has a clear vision that includes a positive welcome to new arrivals. Norfolk will be a place where ‘all individuals have the opportunity to achieve a good quality of life…where individuals from all backgrounds can play an active part in community life…which is renowned for its culture, creativity and spirituality’
- All key themes in Norfolk Ambition reference issues of cohesion and migration. In particular, key theme one (Inclusive and Diverse) provides the overarching context for addressing these issues. It outlines five key challenges within this context:
  - a cohesive county
  - accommodating growth and migration
  - focusing on Disability Equality
  - focusing on Race Equality
  - managing community tension and tackling hate crime.

Challenges

Breckland Sustainable Community Strategy

- Currently in the SCS, there is a single theme around ‘building Safer and Stronger communities’. The challenge to the Local Strategic Partnership is to treat these as equally weighted issues which require distinct responses, although there remain several cross-cutting issues
- Within the SCS and associated Development Framework, cohesion needs to be embedded as it will have a significant impact on plans around significant growth and development, particularly in Thetford.
Norfolk Ambition

- Currently within Norfolk Ambition and the ‘Inclusive and Diverse’ theme in particular, there is no direct reference to the county’s Community Cohesion Strategy and associated Action Plan. The challenge is to clearly demonstrate how the outcomes for this theme will be achieved.

- Norfolk Ambition does not reflect broader cohesion issues specifically those impacting on local White British members of the community.

- The key theme of ‘Knowledgeable and Skilled’ could make more explicit links between the need for skilled workers and migration, particularly in terms of maximising the often unutilised skills of migrants.

Improvement recommendations

Breckland Sustainable Community Strategy

- Future iterations of the Breckland Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) should differentiate between key safer and stronger issues and focus resources accordingly.

- Within the Breckland SCS, the ‘Safer and Stronger Communities’ priority would further benefit from being linked explicitly to the Local Development Framework. The LSP could set up a Project Board to oversee the growth and development of the district including pertinent cohesion and migration issues.

- Breckland LSP should build on recently introduced performance management arrangements to ensure that localised delivery is making a tangible difference to SCS and LAA priorities. (Also linked to LAA recommendations).

Norfolk Ambition

- Future iterations of the county’s Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan should make the link between all key themes in Norfolk Ambition clearer and show how county and district activity supports delivery of LAA priorities.

- The qualitative peer action research being undertaken across Norfolk as part of the Community Cohesion Strategy should show how cohesion and migration cuts across all Norfolk Ambition themes.

- When refreshed, Norfolk Ambition should articulate the aim of improving perceptions of cohesion across all communities, and related actions, which seek to build positive relationships between local White British people and other diverse communities; and should then also be incorporated into the county Community Cohesion Strategy.

- To develop more actions under the theme of ‘Knowledgeable and Skilled’ to harness the skills of new migrants and support integration.
Breckland Local Strategic Partnership and Norfolk County Strategic Partnership

Strengths

Leadership and Governance

- Governance arrangements across the Norfolk County Strategic Partnership (CSP) and Local Area Agreement (LAA) are well developed with key partners engaged
- Breckland Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) currently regards cohesion and migration as a high priority, with two of its four Project Boards (Pride in Breckland and Economic Prosperity) addressing areas of migration and cohesion
- Breckland LSP regularly considers cohesion and migration issues and the partnership’s members have a broad understanding of the relevant issues
- Norfolk CSP has demonstrated a clear understanding of the key community cohesion challenges facing the county, through the publication of the Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan
- There is clear leadership at the county level on community cohesion issues
- There is an active Cohesion Network across the county supported by a Partnership Community Cohesion Officer, which is funded by Norfolk CSP through the use of Second Home’s Council Tax.

Communications and reputation

- The County Community Cohesion Strategic Group has recently formed a working group to develop a proactive cohesion communications strategy. This will include a cross-county communications protocol and a plan for engaging with local journalists
- Breckland LSP’s membership includes a representative from the Eastern Daily Press. This arrangement provides an opportunity for the LSP to develop positive relationships with the local media on issues and reporting with regard to community cohesion/migrant communities.

Voluntary and community sector: engagement and capacity

- The voluntary and community sector is well represented at the Breckland LSP (there are seven places on the LSP board for voluntary and community sector representatives)
- Breckland LSP has funding in place to provide advice and guidance training to less formal ethnic minority/migrant worker organisations based in Breckland
- Membership of the Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategic Group is open to all voluntary and community sector partners on a subsidised basis. While public sector partners within the county are required to pay a membership fee of £1,000 a year, places on the group for voluntary and community sector groups are free of charge. Income generated from membership fees is used to support voluntary and community sector involvement.
Business sector engagement

- Local business interests are represented on Breckland LSP through the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
- Poultec Training was recently commissioned by the Breckland LSP to deliver training for new and micro businesses.

Community engagement and involvement

- A Community Engagement Framework is being developed by partners across the county, led by Norfolk County Council and supported by the Community Cohesion Network, which will outline principles and good practice for engagement across Norfolk.

Intelligence and analysis of need

- The Norfolk Community Cohesion Network has recently commissioned a specific ‘Community Cohesion Research Project’ which seeks to gather evidence relating to the views of Norfolk residents who have been under-represented in previous Citizens Panel surveys23, (including minority ethnic, migrant workers, and disabled people). It is intended through a research project to gather qualitative data regarding the personal experience of life and work in Norfolk from a fresh perspective, to identify links between life experiences and perceptions of community cohesion. Community researchers from a range of backgrounds and experience will be used across Norfolk and trained to collect evidence from the community they affiliate with. It is anticipated that the research work will be completed in March 2009

- There is a significant amount of qualitative research across Norfolk regarding the position and views of ethnic minority and migrant communities which informs decision making and resource allocation

- A Norfolk ‘Multi Agency Protocol (MAP), tackling hate crime together’ has been developed. The MAP provides a common standard for reporting, recording, monitoring and responding to hate crime across Norfolk. The Norfolk County Strategic Partnership (CSP) has allocated £20,000 to facilitate the roll-out of the MAP across all districts in the county. Breckland Council is a partner in MAP.

Equality of access to information, advice and services

- The Intran Partnership Interpreting and Translation service has been identified nationally and internationally as a model of best practice with regard to improving access to services for people (particularly people from migrant communities) whose first language is not English. The Intran Partnership should be commended as this approach ensures consistency in the range and quality of interpreting and translation services available to migrant communities across Breckland and Norfolk.

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23 The membership of Norfolk Citizen’s Panel is broadly representative of the population profile of Norfolk as a whole. 3 per cent of the Citizen’s Panel membership is from Black and minority ethnic groups (compared with a 2001 census figure of 1.52 per cent).
Challenges

Leadership and Governance

- Community cohesion as a concept is interpreted and understood from a range of perspectives within and across all organisations in Breckland and the county. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the term is open to different interpretations by local residents across Norfolk. Concerns have been expressed that ‘community cohesion’ in Breckland may be perceived as being too closely aligned to the specific needs of minority ethnic and migrant communities – which runs the risk of excluding other Breckland residents

- There has been an absence of Registered Social Landlords (RSL) representatives on Breckland LSP and Norfolk Community Cohesion Network, who could provide significant information and links to communities

- Breckland’s strategic plans for tackling cohesion and migration issues should be fed into discussions with the Community Cohesion Network to inform joined-up working

- Although membership of Norfolk Citizen’s Panel is broadly representative of the population profile of Norfolk as a whole, it is recognised that there is a need to increase the number of minority ethnic residents on the panel to keep pace with Norfolk’s changing demographic, and to ensure that the data is locally representative.

Communications and reputation

- Work needs to be done across the county and at district level to develop more formal mechanisms for addressing local media coverage which may reinforce negative stereotypes of local migrant communities. In addition, there is currently no consistent or systematic approach in place for challenging negative myths and misinformation concerning migrant communities.

Performance and resource management

- There is a need to identify where there are opportunities for developing shared practice and pooled projects between the three Norfolk districts in receipt of a community cohesion-focused Area Based Grant.

Commissioning and procurement

Voluntary and Community Sector: engagement and capacity

- There is an issue in relation to the capacity of voluntary and community sector groups to participate in promoting community cohesion locally, because of the limited availability of funding streams both nationally and locally

- There is currently no active and organised network or forum in Breckland which includes voluntary and community sector representation, specifically for the discussion of community cohesion and migration issues

- There is an opportunity for Breckland to explore developing formal relationships with key voluntary and community sector organisations (which have expertise in cohesion issues in the county) through the development of Service Level Agreements
Breckland Council has an established Service Level Agreement with the Citizens’ Advice Bureau, which includes the delivery of advice and support to migrant workers and communities in the Breckland area.

**Business sector engagement**

Breckland LSP and Norfolk CSP could put in place explicit arrangements to enable direct engagement with business sector interests (employers, employment agencies) linked to migrant workers.

**Community engagement and involvement**

Breckland Council’s LSP’s outreach and engagement activities with minority ethnic and migrant communities largely depend on the work of its Community Liaison Officer. Greater emphasis should be placed on developing the capacity of local ethnic minority and migrant communities to engage directly with the Council’s various services.

The available evidence suggests that there are no specific migrant community forums that are directly linked to Breckland LSP and Norfolk CSP and their respective councils. However, at the county level significant amounts of research and consultation have been done with regard to migrant communities.

**Intelligence and analysis of need**

The mobility and flux associated with the size and profile of Breckland’s (and Norfolk’s) migrant community population, together with the limited resources available to commission up-to-date research, means that it is difficult to maintain an accurate picture of the profile and needs of local migrant workers.

While data is gathered by Breckland Council and its partners regarding the take-up of INTRAN services, it is not clear as to whether this information is used by local partners to monitor across the district:

- the range of INTRAN users (by language and nationality) within the district
- changes and trends in the language profile of service users over time within the district; and
- the types of services that are being accessed by INTRAN users within the district

There is a need to:

- improve the extent of ethnic and diversity monitoring of key agency service take-up and users within Breckland Council and across its LSP statutory partner agencies
- ensure that there is consistency in the ethnic and diversity classifications used across Breckland Council’s various departments and across the key partner agencies
- ensure that the data captured is used to inform service development and delivery
Breckland LSP and Norfolk CSP currently do not have formal mechanisms in place to monitor community tensions. Tension monitoring in Breckland currently depends on intelligence gathered and analysed by Norfolk Constabulary. There are also no formal mechanisms for sharing the tension monitoring data (gathered from the police) with LSP partners at a senior management level. Information sharing across agencies largely depends on the informal reporting provided by the Breckland Minority Ethnic Liaison Officer to other front-line staff based in partner agencies. Furthermore, there is a lack of clarity as to which agency should lead on gathering and sharing data. The development of effective tension monitoring systems across Norfolk is a priority issue for the Community Cohesion Network in 2009.

**Improvement recommendations**

**Leadership and Governance**

- There needs to be a wider debate amongst all partners across the county and with communities as to what cohesion means
- Work should be carried out with Breckland LSP’s partner agencies to ensure that robust and appropriate arrangements and systems are put in place within the key agencies to cascade community cohesion priorities though their respective management and service delivery structures
- A representative from local Registered Social Landlords should be included in the membership of Breckland’s LSP and the Norfolk Community Cohesion Network
- There is a need for greater linkages between county and district plans; and a greater sharing of information and intelligence between all partners would help strengthen delivery
- Some of the suggestions made in recent Breckland LSP Board discussions around the SCS and cohesion and migration could be re-visited including:
  - the need to ‘brand’ Breckland
  - working through employers
  - addressing the needs of all sectors of the community; and
  - promoting healthy living in migrant communities.

**Communications and reputation**

- Breckland should consider reviewing its activities around ‘myth-busting’ associated with migrant communities
- *Breckland Voice* (which is delivered to every household in Breckland) by the local authority should be used more explicitly by the LSP as a vehicle for promoting community cohesion across the district.
### Commissioning and procurement

- Breckland LSP should consider establishing a representative steering group to manage its Area Based Grant and actions relating to improved cohesion, which includes voluntary and community sector organisations. This group would provide greater financial accountability and transparency across the LSP’s partner agencies.

### Voluntary and community sector: engagement and capacity

- Breckland LSP should develop a complete action plan including identified funding available for planned workstreams and work with voluntary and community sector partners to identify where there are opportunities for the sector to deliver against the identified actions.

- Breckland LSP and its partners should seek to broaden its engagement mechanisms with ethnic minority/migrant communities through:
  - encouraging greater mainstreaming of engagement with ethnic minority/migrant communities across the council’s various services
  - promoting closer working links with local voluntary and community sector groups; and
  - improving joint working with outreach workers and frontline community development officers attached to partner agencies.

### Business sector engagement

- There is an urgent need for Breckland LSP and Norfolk CSP to develop direct working links and liaison with major local employers and employment agencies linked to migrant workers. Business engagement, involvement and encouragement (both at the LSP and in a wider forum) could help manage the impacts of migration particularly given Breckland’s desire, through its economic prosperity group, to develop ESOL and pre-ESOL courses for new migrants.

### Community engagement and involvement

- Breckland LSP and its partners should look to incorporate community cohesion into wider engagement plans, and particularly to consider how younger people could be involved through activities and programmes focused on local schools, youth clubs and youth workers.
Intelligence and analysis of need

- Breckland LSP and its partners should consider commissioning a booster sample as part of the ‘Community Cohesion Research Project’ (recently commissioned by Norfolk Community Cohesion Steering Group)

- The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) should consider funding and working with Breckland, as part of the national pilot of migrant worker data collection, to examine and establish a best practice approach with regard to monitoring migrant worker populations in a rural two-tier local government context

- There is a need for a clear, systematic and proportional process for gathering and sharing tension monitoring information across Breckland and Norfolk CSP’s partners. There is an opportunity for the CLG to fund a pilot project with Breckland and Norfolk LSP in order to develop a proportionate and cost-effective tension monitoring approach that could be tested as a ‘good practice’ model that could be applied to the rest of Norfolk and to other similar rural locations.

CLG should consider providing advice and support to Breckland and Norfolk LSP in developing a Community Cohesion Contingency Plan. Breckland and Norfolk could offer the opportunity to develop a national best practice Community Cohesion Contingency Planning model for rural localities facing community cohesion challenges, linked to demographic changes associated with the presence of migrant workers linked to the enlargement of the EU.

Equality of access to information, advice and services

- Breckland LSP’s Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) template included on the four LSP Project Board Action Plans should be adapted to be more effective and user-friendly with regard to incorporating cohesion-related outcomes

- Work should be undertaken by Norfolk CSP to collate and report the findings of the equality proofing review of the LAA National Indicator Action Plans to the Community Cohesion Strategy Group and the wider LSP partners. The findings from the review should inform the future LAA work and wider activities of the LSP and its partner agencies. (See LAA recommendations).
Breckland Council

Strengths

Leadership and Governance

- There are clearly identified elected members in Breckland Council, each of whom has an explicit responsibility to champion community cohesion and equalities issues (respectively).
- There is elected member engagement with the community cohesion agenda at cabinet level.
- All Breckland Council elected members and council staff undertake mandatory equalities training.
- There are clearly identified senior Breckland Council officers with specific responsibility for championing cohesion (the Sustainable Communities Manager) and equality issues (the Head of Performance) across the organisation.
- Breckland Council's Business Plan includes commitments to member development and training and greater accountability to local communities.
- Breckland Council has achieved Member Charter Status – the EERA charter provides a standard for community engagement and involvement.
- In the Breckland Council Business Plan there is a strong role for the council on housing and accessibility issues; as well as leadership and partnership on the prosperity theme (on English Language provision, growth plans, and business involvement) and on stronger communities (community cohesion, empowerment, voluntary and community sector and culture/sport).
- The ‘Your Council, Your Services’ section of the Business Plan clearly outlines how Breckland Council intends to develop closer relationships with its local communities, report on progress, tailor services to need and consult on local issues and sees this as extremely important in dealing with cohesion and migration.
- Public meetings take place in the district’s ‘neighbourhoods’. These meetings are intended to facilitate members of the public to voice and evidence their concerns and learn what the council proposes to do to resolve [issues] ‘on the night.’

Performance and resource management

- Breckland Council officers have begun to address performance management issues and effectively tie-in the SCS, LAA, Business Plan and other local strategy priorities and actions.

Voluntary and community sector: engagement and capacity

- Breckland Council has a dedicated Community Liaison Officer (based within the Housing Division who is a Portuguese speaker). The officer carries out outreach and liaison work with a range of ethnic minority voluntary and community sector groups and residents.
Community engagement and involvement

- The development of a Breckland Youth Council to help gain greater involvement of young people in the decision-making process.
- The work undertaken by the council on Post Office closures and telephone boxes locally showed a good commitment to supporting local rural communities and their services.
- As outlined above, Breckland Council has a dedicated Community Liaison Officer (based within the Housing Division) who carries out outreach and liaison work with ethnic minority/migrant communities across the district.

Intelligence and analysis of need

- Breckland Council’s Housing Department should be commended for the work that it has undertaken in leading on the Housing and Support Needs of ethnic minority communities in Norfolk and Waveney, and the Action Plan that emanated from the study.
- Discussions have taken place about the opportunity to develop of a Quality of Life survey for Breckland, which would be circulated to all households in the district bi-annually and would support the findings of the Place Survey.

Equality of access to information, advice and services

- Breckland Council demonstrates extensive use of INTRAN in most instances on paperwork produced, particularly in the Breckland Council Business Plan.
- Breckland Council’s Housing Department should be commended for developing a Community Leadership Programme which seeks to train and develop the capacity of local people to act as ‘informal community advisers’ – able to improve the access of people within their locality (and/or community of interest) to housing services. People from ethnic minority and migrant communities have been specifically targeted to participate in the programme through links with the department’s ethnic minority Community Development Worker. There are potential opportunities to roll out the Community Leadership Programme to include other information regarding other council services.
- Breckland Council’s Housing Department acts as the sub-regional lead on the Housing Equality and Diversity Group.
- Breckland Council’s Housing Department has established effective ethnic monitoring systems with regard to housing advice services, homelessness, and choice-based lettings. The department is now proposing to develop more extensive categories for ethnic monitoring of its services (including language and faith questions).
- Breckland Council aims to reach Level 3 of the Equalities Standard: equalities issues mainstreamed across the work and services of the local authority forms a strong basis for good cohesion work across the district.
- Breckland Council has sought to mainstream equalities issues in policy-making via including space in all council reports for officers’ comments on the equality implications of any proposed policy, action or recommendation.
Challenges

Leadership and Governance

- To develop the capacity of Breckland’s elected members to act as advocates and champions of community cohesion through their community leadership role, particularly with regard to issues pertaining to migrant communities and minority ethnic residents.

- To use Breckland Council’s overview and scrutiny function for the ‘resolution of contentious local issues as a forerunner to the Community Call for Action.’

Intelligence and analysis of need

- To develop a consistent profile and overview to use in all documents, such as the Business Plan, SCS and LDF.

- To monitor ethnic minority populations (including ‘White Other’ populations) to ensure that communities are sufficiently supported and resourced to work with their population.

Equality of access to information, advice and services

- Equality impact assessments in relation to Breckland Council papers do not, for the most part, highlight issues. One example of this is the ‘Pride in Breckland’ project plan, where only ‘positive’ equalities impacts are recorded. In nearly all other cases of equality impact assessment reports reviewed, equalities issues are either ‘implicit’ in the process or are recorded as ‘none’.

- To ensure that Breckland Council’s positive activities associated with cohesion, equalities, and migrant communities within the council’s Housing Department (which has a positive track record of championing such issues across the Council) are built upon in other council departments. The council’s new Sustainable Communities Team is tasked with sharing and mainstreaming the cohesion and equalities work undertaken by the Housing Department.

- Detailed ethnic monitoring and INTRAN service take-up data gathered by Breckland Council’s Housing Department should be analysed and reported to senior management within the council to inform service delivery.

- To provide relevant and co-ordinated customer care training for all Breckland Council front-line staff to ensure that they are able to understand the cultural sensitivities of the wide range of Black and minority ethnic/migrant communities living in the district.
Improvement recommendations

Leadership and governance

- Community cohesion issues should form a critical element of Breckland Council’s elected member and senior management training and development programmes.

- There needs to be closer working arrangements between Breckland Council and the Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategic and Steering Groups. This will help to ensure more proactive links between Breckland’s work on cohesion issues and the Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan.

- Develop Breckland Council’s scrutiny function to support a clear and cohesive community leadership role.

- Scrutiny should allocate more time to the examination of partner activities and performance and use its powers to require partners to attend for questioning.

- A further roll-out of the council’s programme of public meetings should be considered (with a need to ensure involvement by all communities), as these meetings could help to tackle key local cohesion and migration issues positively.

- Ward profiles and plans that describe the character of each ward are discussed in the peer review. These would help raise likely contentious issues locally and, with the neighbourhood forums, show a longer-term (and more proactive) approach to dealing with them. In a number of other areas, budgets have been made available to ward members to support this process.

Business sector engagement

- The council’s Environmental Health Team should develop closer links with the Gangmasters Licensing Authority and the Council’s Housing Team, to ensure that intelligence gathered from inspections fed into enforcement activity.

- A forum that brought together key local employers (particularly those who either employ migrant workers or employ them further down the food chain), could be set up to help gain sign up and support for ESOL and pre-ESOL provision and show how they are responding responsibly to employing migrants.

- The breadth of local food businesses shows the diversity of the community. Breckland Council should consider how to effectively showcase cultural diversity through food, through either existing community events or new activities.
**Intelligence and analysis of need**

- A well-maintained and regularly updated evidence base should be kept by the council. This evidence base should outline the key cohesion and migration issues, supplemented by local knowledge from partners and from community development workers working in the public and voluntary and community sectors.

- A uniform statement and profile of Breckland would be useful for the local authority and its partner agencies. This statement and profile should emphasise a positive view of the district’s new communities and communities of interest.

**Equality of access to information, advice and services**

- Disability impact reviews of Breckland Council’s services are undertaken by a local disability network, which involves document analysis as well as a ‘mystery shopper’ review of services. This disability impact review of council services should be considered as an example of good practice. A similar arrangement could be established with regard to assessing the accessibility and impact of Council services with regard to local ethnic minority and migrant communities.

- Breckland Council should ensure that ethnic and diversity monitoring data gathered by the Housing Department is analysed and reported to senior management and where necessary acted upon. Similarly, monitoring of INTRAN service take-up across council services should be regularly reported to the council’s senior management.

- Breckland Council should undertake a review customer care training delivered to front-line staff with a review to developing a co-ordinated approach across partner agencies that promotes better understanding of the cultural sensitivities and needs of ethnic minority and migrant communities in the district.

- Cohesion impact assessments (developed by Neighbourhood Renewal Advisors for CLG) could also be used in ‘short’ or ‘long’ form by officers to start to understand the impact on cohesion of particular services or issues.
Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategy

Strengths

Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategy: Developing a Shared Strategic Approach

- There is a commitment to ‘embedding and mainstreaming the principles of building cohesive and inclusive communities… to engage a diverse range of partners in the process of delivery.’ This means that there are links between cohesion and areas not currently specifically mentioned in the strategy (e.g., Norfolk Ambition themes, ‘Knowledgeable and Skilled’ and ‘Accessible and Well-housed’)

- Further qualitative research is being done to help provide a greater understanding of low cohesion levels in parts of the county

- The work to embed cohesion into ‘statutory sector commissioning, tendering and funding allocation processes’ is positive and should provide useful practice for others once it has been developed

- Activity around communication and training for members, community leaders and front-line workers will have a positive impact

- The County Community Cohesion Officer is now working closely with the Sustainable Communities Manager to identify opportunities to work with both Breckland Council and the LSP to disseminate information relating to priority setting and relevant county-wide activities.

Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategy: Accommodating growth and migration

- There is a strong emphasis placed on combating myths and misinformation, and the identification of active promotion of positive human interest stories

- Information, advice and guidance for new arrivals are identified as important

- The linkages between growth and employment, highlighted in the strategy appear sound.

Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategy: Achieving equality

- There is a focus on education and children’s services and on identifying the impact of inter-generational conflict which is positive.

Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategy: Managing community tension and Hate Crime

- There is a focus on community tension, hate crime (in all its forms) and contingency planning

- The development of plans through the Norfolk Communications Forum, (made up of press officers, communications leads and media officers from statutory bodies) is a positive feature. Plans include formulating a communications protocol to support the County Cohesion Strategy, and developing a publicity and awareness raising campaign around hate crime to support the roll out of the Multi Agency Protocol – ‘Tackling Hate Crime Together’.
Norfolk County Council Plan 2008-11

- The County Council’s Plan 2008-11 makes the positive statement that ‘population of Norfolk is becoming increasingly diverse with large numbers of people from Europe now living and working in parts of the county.’ It states that Norfolk County Council wants to make sure ‘that newcomers to the county feel welcome and have the information they need to improve their opportunities for advancement.’

- The plan notes the ‘need to continue to improve access and equality of outcome for our established black and minority ethnic communities.’ An ‘important challenge’ is ‘working with all our communities in Norfolk to promote understanding and encourage positive relationships.’

- Eight strategic objectives are contained in the plan. However, all are slightly different to those found in both Norfolk Ambition and the LAA, with ‘Community’ the most closely linked to cohesion – ‘Build vibrant, confident, cohesive communities.’ The ‘Opportunity’ objective – ‘Improve opportunities for people to learn throughout life’ also notes the importance of improving the English Language skills of migrants and uses INTRAN (Interpretation and Translation for Norfolk) as a case study.

- The Plan’s ‘Culture’ objective highlights the achievements of Norfolk’s Black History Month.

- The County Council’s corporate self-assessment Working for Norfolk (May 2008), notes that ‘a series of studies have been commissioned to inform policies and action planning and to steer priorities and investment… in response to the changing patterns of migration.’

- In addition existing practice related to cohesion is also highlighted in the corporate self-assessment document, including Intran, Black History Month, the ‘Welcome to Norfolk’ website and ‘responsive and culturally relevant’ library services, which have increases the number of ethnic communities/migrant workers using the service. Also museum programmes/collections have been tailored ‘to target minority communities, including Chinese items taken out of storage in Norwich and loaned to the Lynn museum.’

Challenges

Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan

- There are still opportunities for sharing key priorities and messages from the county’s work on community cohesion with Breckland LSP (in particular the findings, implications and expectations emanating from the ongoing development of the County Strategy and Action Plan).

- There is currently no evidence of discussion of Breckland’s plans (or any other district plans for tackling cohesion and migration issues within the minutes of the Community Cohesion Strategic Steering Group.)
Improvement recommendations

Norfolk Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan

- The County Community Cohesion Strategy has been in place in July 2008, and so is still relatively new. Many of the actions identified in the Action Plan do not have clearly identified lead officers attached to, timescales or next steps. More work is needed to gain buy-in from partners for delivery.

- There should be more regular and consistent attendance of Breckland representatives at the County’s Community Cohesion Steering Group meetings.

- There should be greater ownership by the LSP and the County Strategic Partnership in each others’ work-plans.

- Formal processes for information and intelligence sharing between county and district plans should be set down in the strategy.

- There needs to be greater clarification and discussion of county activities around skills and education to support the development of cohesion.

- There is some breakdown of district activity within the strategy and action plan, but this should be made explicit, and identify who is responsible for delivery of actions.

- The identification of the voluntary and community sector contribution to improving cohesion will be useful, although a more useful first step towards this could include mapping frontline services delivered across the county, identifying gaps and then raising awareness and developing measures to demonstrate effectiveness. This activity should be undertaken by all districts and would help get more voluntary and community sector buy-in to plans.

- A greater focus on community empowerment as a means of improving cohesion levels is needed, (including links to objectives and targets around National Indicator 4). This also closely links to the communications and tension monitoring work needed, so that, for example, both new and existing communities feel particular housing or environmental issues are being addressed and that their views are being taken into account.

- The ‘accommodating growth and migration’ section of the strategy would benefit from a more developed approach to housing issues (ie private sector rented accommodation, homelessness etc) and to building cohesion into the planning process.

- The strategy should either be re-framed or further developed to pick up particular ‘mainstream’ areas of work. It could be framed around particular areas of work – education, skills, housing etc. or follow all the Norfolk Ambition or LAA key themes. This would then show how cohesion issues are being addressed across all areas and would also broaden out the firm basis in equalities issues to a wider strategy that tackles all aspects of what makes a cohesive community.

- There is a need to coordinate between the cohesion-related areas of work identified in the Norfolk Council’s Plan 2008-11 and the County Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan.
Conclusion

Delivering the Specialist Cohesion Pilot and producing this report are good examples of how central and local government can work extremely effectively together towards a common aim. From the start of the pilot in July 2008, the Department for Communities and Local Government and Breckland District Council shared a commitment to build stronger and more cohesive communities.

Breckland was chosen as one of two areas in England to take part in the pilot because of the considerable increase in migration to the area in recent years and the good practice that was already being developed. Often much of the work on building community cohesion has been on densely-populated urban areas, so focusing the pilot on such a distinctive and widespread area as Breckland can offer other rural areas some helpful practice and ways forward in building cohesion.

Breckland Council and its many stakeholders have long recognised the importance of strong and cohesive communities – and the value and stability they bring to wider society. However, the council equally recognised that a sudden increase in migration can be unsettling to the resident population and managing the process well is vital if communities are to be strengthened.

It is clear from this report, that local services, including health, housing, education and community advice services are the key to building strong and cohesive communities. The council’s many partners and stakeholders were closely involved in the pilot and are committed to delivering the recommendations outlined in Section 5.

The strategy is being delivered within the context of the Norfolk Local Area Agreement and can build, therefore, on existing partnerships and structures at district and county levels.
Highlighting the positive

The work carried out as part of the pilot programme highlights a number of key and positive points:

- despite having high migration levels, and a low score on National Indicator 1, (the percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local areas); there are no significant community tensions in Breckland

- Breckland Council and its partners have a strong track record in putting a number of actions in place to build stronger communities including:
  - strategic overview, structures and commitment that tie into wider country strategies on cohesion
  - having Community Liaison Officers in post to monitor progress
  - developing a Pride in Breckland campaign to highlight the strengths of the district
  - building good relationships with the voluntary and community sector and frontline workers.

The challenges ahead

However, there are, as the report also highlights, challenges too and these include:

- improving data collection and monitoring so there is a clearer picture to help inform future planning and allocation of resources

- the need to develop a better interface between the local council and the communities themselves – and empowering communities to become more involved

- increasing the voluntary and community sector capacity while also managing expectations

- involving the voluntary and community sector more in key decisions, including the management of resources; and

- improving communications generally, and with local media, to help with myth-busting on, for example, social housing allocation; responding to any community tensions and increasing the community ‘feel good’ factor.

All partners are committed to tackling these challenges over the coming months and building best practice to share with colleagues.
The learning gained from the pilot

The pilot has also given the council several learning opportunities. For example, the pilot will help inform the development of the IDeA benchmarking process, which comes from the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government, (see page 18 on this draft),

The benefits of taking part

Being part of the first Specialist Cohesion Pilot brought a number of important benefits to Breckland, including:

- the opportunity to explore cohesion in a rural context
- focusing of resources on a significant local issue
- building new and existing partnerships at national, regional and local level
- using wide range of expertise outside the council
- developing range of best practice examples, across different contexts
- developing collectively agreed actions to take forward.

The next stage – working together

Breckland Council will continue to work with its partners and stakeholders to act on the recommendations and, as part of its aim to improve communications, highlight its work to build strong and cohesive communities on its website at: www.breckland.gov.uk

In the meantime, if you have any comments, feedback or questions please contact: Robert.Walker@breckland.gov.uk
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