



Social Inclusion Strategy

2014-2017

“Everyone working together to make a positive difference that our customers will notice”.

Social Inclusion

Introduction

What we mean by social inclusion

Social inclusion is working to break the cycle of social exclusion. A report by the Department of Sociology and School for Social Policy at the University of Bristol has defined Social Exclusion as;

Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole. (The Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Social Exclusion, 2007ⁱ)

Social inclusion is not simply an economic term, but rather it affects all areas of a person's life, and that of a society's. There are costs of social exclusion, firstly for the individual, who often does not reach their educational potential, has higher risks of unemployment, poorer physical health and is more likely to experience crime. Secondly for society who loses out on skilled workers and customers, as when people are socially excluded they are not able to reach their full potential. It is also a cost to the tax payer, for example the estimated annual cost of school exclusions to public services is £406 millionⁱⁱ.

The Economic and Social Research Council (E.S.R.C) has a report *Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK* has noted that transitions such as changing schools, leaving school, becoming a parent, relationship breakdown and retirement are times when people are most at risk of becoming excluded. Similarly the report highlights that people with multiple disadvantages are less likely to access services, and receive the support they need. These multiple disadvantages include people who have a disability or chronic health problems, people who lack skills or qualifications, both formal qualifications and broader basic life skills, and people from some ethnic minority groups.

In Melton Borough it is important to understand social exclusion as both an urban and rural phenomena. Social exclusion in urban areas is often concentrated on particular neighbourhoods, as can be seen in parts of Melton Mowbray. However in rural areas social exclusion is more dispersed and more difficult to identify. Therefore we need to develop ways of working that will tackle both urban and rural social exclusion.

Profile of Melton Borough

Melton borough is an attractive rural area in the north-east part of Leicestershire and at the heart of the East Midlands. It has an area of 48,138 hectares and is one of the 50 most sparsely populated districts in the UK.

The population of the borough at 2011 was 50,376 (2011 Censusⁱⁱⁱ). It has increased by 5.2% over the past ten years and is expected to grow to about 53,607 by 2021 (2011 Census^{iv}).

The main activities of the borough are centred on the single market town of Melton Mowbray, which has a population of about 26,000. Melton Mowbray is part of the government's scheme to support market towns. There are also some 70 small villages within the surrounding rural area. Bottesford and Asfordby are the two largest villages each with a population of about 3,000. The other villages range in size from small hamlets with 20 persons to villages where up to 800 people live.

Since 2005 unemployment in the borough has gradually increased over the years peaking in June 2012 (5.3%) but in recent years unemployment has fallen to 4.3% in December 2013^v. In January 2010 the proportion claiming job seekers allowance was 2.7% with intensive support and investment into people Melton Borough in March 2014 now has a total claimant count of 489 (1.9%)^{vi}. Melton has one of the highest economic activity rates in the East Midlands (83.7%)^{vii}.

The average annual wage in Melton is £28,308 which is slightly below that of the East Midland average of £29,840 (2012)^{viii}.

The BME population of Melton is small at 2.1%^{ix} compared to Leicester of 48.7% and the East Midlands of 10.7%. Melton borough has 1620 claiming disability living allowance; however 1840 class themselves in the 2011 census as having bad or very bad health.

There were 21,490 households in Melton in 2011 with an average household size of 2.4. The majority of houses are owner occupied (72%). About 10% were rented from the Council or a housing association, and 12% rented from a private landlord. In 2013, the average house price in Melton was £177,918^x.

Why a Social Inclusion Strategy for Melton Borough

It would appear that Melton borough is affluent. However there are some pockets of deprivation, particularly in Melton Mowbray. Furthermore in a largely rural borough there is a high risk of social exclusion due to difficulty accessing services. Five Super Output Areas (SOA) are ranked within the top fifty percent most deprived wards in England, and within the ten most deprived in Leicestershire for access to housing and services.

Therefore social exclusion is a reality for some people in the borough, and moreover social inclusion is at the heart of our vision. We share this vision with the Melton Community Partnership:

We want to enhance the quality of life for everyone in the borough of Melton to achieve a sustainable, prosperous and vibrant community

Similarly social inclusion is at the heart of our corporate plan, both our values and priorities equip us to prevent and tackle social exclusion. Our values include care for the

customer and to treat them with courtesy and respect. Such values mean that we can cater for the different needs of our customers and make sure that all are able to access the support they need to be included.

Our Corporate priorities supporting social inclusion:

Support people and businesses through the economic downturn

- Improve access to money, debt, redundancy and housing advice.
- Encourage people to claim the benefits they are entitled to and promote financial well-being and awareness.
- Measures to increase local business cash flow e.g. bringing forward local projects, local procurement made simpler, payments made timelier.
- Helping young people not in employment, education or training

Reduce re-offending and the impact of offending on the community

- Develop projects to support the reintegration of ex-offenders into society
- Develop actions to tackle the causes of offending and develop better 'end to end' services.

Encourage people to take an active role in their communities.

- Encourage Volunteering
- Support Social Enterprises
- Promote devolution and localism

Improving the well-being of vulnerable people

- Promote & increase the number of vulnerable people able to live independently.
- Work with youth services to develop activities for young people at risk or involved in offending or anti-social behaviour.
- Utilise our resources to assist other key agencies to assist with the targeted intervention for vulnerable people (0-90).
- Develop Children's Centre/Community Centre services to include extended services.
- Reduce domestic Abuse
- Reduce the harm caused by substance misuse, particularly alcohol.
- Embed Family Intervention Projects

Improve quality of life for people living in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods

- Reduce anti-social behaviour and criminal damage
- Increase positive activities for young people
- Improve physical environment

Help provide a stock of housing accommodation that meets the needs of the community

- Address the imbalance of housing type and size.
- Require residential developments to make a contribution towards affordable housing.
- Secure more rural affordable housing through the development of 'exception' sites.
- Embed the CBL system, to ensure housing is allocated on a choice basis.
- Decent homes and planned maintenance programme.

To provide high performing services that are efficient and meet customers' needs

- Services that meet customer expectations.
- A 'one team' culture
- Deploy resources flexibly
- Innovate in Service Delivery
- Efficient, effective, excellent performance.

Making Melton a Socially Included Borough – our Cross Cutting Approach

Our aim is to enhance the quality of life for everyone in the borough of Melton. Through this strategy we will do this by supporting those who are excluded to become included, and ensuring that others do not become excluded.

A key to inclusion is being able to access the services and information that you need. These services and information include those that Melton Borough Council provides, but also services that are provided by our partners in the public, private, and voluntary, community and faith sector. They can include access to benefits, access to support dealing with a health problem, knowledge of how to deal with anti-social behaviour, or access to support into employment.

We have noted that people who are socially excluded, especially people who have multiple disadvantages are less likely to access these services. This could be due to a number of reasons such as lack of basic skills, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation or physical impairments. Therefore, we need to develop innovative methods for our services to reach these people, and to join up these services so that people receive a seamless approach.

To develop these methods we need to know about the people who are excluded or at risk of becoming excluded. We have identified people who are particularly at risk, which include young people, older people, people from ethnic minorities, people with a disability or chronic illness, people who care for disabled people or people with a chronic illness, and people who lack skills or qualifications. We also know that people are particularly vulnerable at times of transition such as family breakdown, leaving school and retiring.

Therefore, as a cross cutting approach to social inclusion we will work with our partners to develop a knowledge management approach, through developing communities of interest and promoting an evidence based culture which uses data, information and customer contact details. This approach and the use of innovative methods will enable vulnerable group to access services and information.

What we are already doing

- We have identified a priority area where social exclusion is a particular issue in Melton borough. This priority area includes Fairmead, Egerton North, Craven Ward, the Council Housing on Queensway and South Melton.
- We have some knowledge of the vulnerable groups in Melton borough, for example there are 933 children who live in income deprived households and an SOA in Sysonby ward is ranked in the top 20% most deprived SOAs in England for income deprived children, where over a third are in income deprived households. An SOA in Egerton Ward is in the top 30% most deprived in England. Similarly 989 older people live in income deprived households. The most deprived SOAs are in Craven and Warwick wards which rank in the top 30% in England. A fifth are in income deprived households.

- Our Corporate Plan and values has a strong focus on people and address the root causes of their issues. We have been successful in European Social Fund which means we can support those furthest from the job market to address their barriers in getting work such as confidences, education skills, financial support, and mental health challenges.
- Through our children centres we have focused on early intervention on children from 0-5 and their families, creating projects that support the healthy development of every child, such as Music and Movement session.
- Through our Transformation Partnership we have:
 - Been a leading pilot for the Universal Credit
 - Developing online service to meet the needs of our customers and clients
 - Increased the variety of media usage to inform our customers about services/events/information
 - Increase the support offered at the Council offices (co-location of services)
- Delivery a support mechanism which addresses an individual challenges and barriers and who is further away from the job market to be work ready (Me and My Learning)
- Identified individual that are social isolated with health problems yet do not meet the needs of services and have support them through an integrated health and social care initiative (Brighter Futures Project).

Making Melton a Socially Included Borough

As a Council we have a duty to support those individuals or groups in our Borough that are at risk of social exclusion, this might be through economic, financial, social or environment all which we will work with partners to address and tackle.

We noted that access to services and information encompassed a wide variety of services. The Strategy has developed against a range of themes that relate to Social Inclusion and these are highlighted below:

Community Development

Participation and engagement in community life, and in the decision making process has intrinsic benefits in promoting social inclusion and community cohesion. Voluntary activity in the community is associated with better health, lower crime, improved educational performance and greater life satisfaction. For people who are socially excluded taking part in community activity is the first step in gaining confidence and life skills to access training and employment. Furthermore engaging citizen's in the decision making processes of public services will promote the effectiveness of services delivered, and therefore increase access to services.

By supporting participation and engagement in community life we can promote social inclusion. When we do this, we need to be particularly mindful of socially excluded people who might lack the confidence, skills or time to become involved. We need to develop community life that can involve all.

Leisure and Culture

There is a wealth of opportunities for leisure and cultural activities in Melton borough, such as Belvoir Castle, the theatre, the leisure pool, the leisure centre and meeting halls in villages. Participating in leisure and cultural activities can result in better mental and physical health for individuals and a more vibrant community. Again it can build up people's confidence, skills and health to enable people to engage in learning and the workforce.

However not all people can benefit from these opportunities. There are many barriers to accessing these services such as not being able to afford them, not be able to access transport and poor health. These barriers particularly affect older and younger members of the community.

Safety and Protection

Melton borough is a safe place to live with the lowest crime level in Leicestershire; however the fear of crime is still felt in the communities of Melton. Recorded crime for 2011/12 showed that the Town Centre of Melton Mowbray was a crime hotspot, and that SOAs in Craven, Egerton and Warwick wards suffer the highest level of crime. These SOAs are in the top 5 most deprived SOAs in Melton borough which shows the link between crime and social exclusion.

Furthermore as the Social Inclusion Unit (1998) says crime disintegrates the community. Crime and the fear of crime can mean that people are socially excluded, older residents can feel afraid to go out at night, and therefore afraid to access community events.

Similarly social exclusion can lead to crime and committing crime can lead to social exclusion. For example drug use is associated with low income and low educational achievement, and the effects of drugs use lead to a lack of employability, which drives users to fund the habit through illegitimate means. Neale (2002) carried out a study of drug users in Scotland and found that only 10% of users had gained income through legal means.

Safer Melton Partnership (SMP), an Implementation Group of Melton Community Partnership, and Melton Borough Council have recognised these inextricable links between crime and other factors that lead to social exclusion, such as poor educational attainment, unemployment, low income, and drug and alcohol misuse.

Housing and Development

The housing profile of the Borough comprises owner occupied homes, private rented, 'social' rented (through RSL's) and the Councils own housing stock. Social inclusion is important across all types of tenureship and this is reflected in the Councils priority on housing (see page 5).

Currently Melton Borough Council has a housing stock of 1880 units in total. A number of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) also operate within the Borough consisting of over 600 units. Melton Borough Council holds nominations with a number of local Registered Social Landlords.

The Council is also the statutory Local Planning Authority for the Borough and has a key role to play in influencing and controlling housing (and other forms of) development in sustainable patterns in order to contribute to sustainable communities. There are strong synergies between the objective of sustainable communities and social exclusion issues which will feature in planning decisions, such as ensuring that development has ease of access to services and as a supply of affordable housing. Of critical importance is the development of the Melton Local Plan (MLP) and subsequent decision making on individual applications for development.

Key Facts

- ◆ House prices across Melton Borough have increased by 22.1% over the last year.
- ◆ Access to the housing market has become more difficult, particularly for concealed households, 90% of whom cannot now purchase a terraced house as property prices have continued to rise in the Borough in excess of local income inflation. This has increased the need for subsidised housing, either for social rent or intermediate housing.

- ◆ The total affordable housing need annually is for 122 units mapped in 2013, compared with 165 units in 2004. Re-lets of the existing stock are 182 since 2013.
- ◆ Melton Borough has a scale of affordable need which justifies a high target level provided it is sustainable and viable.
- ◆ The overall target has also to consider inclusion of a tenure mix within affordable housing. The evidence from the assessment suggests that an overall balance of social rent (60%) and intermediate housing (40%) could be applied to meet the needs of low income households.

Health and Care

Poor health is a major barrier to social inclusion. People with poor health can find it difficult to keep in employment, which leads to dependence on benefits or low income through part-time jobs, which in turn excludes people from opportunities to participate in society. 15.6% of people in Melton borough have a Long-term health problem or disability and 3.7% consider their health to be 'bad' or 'very bad'.

Mental health problems also have links to social exclusion. This is both social exclusion causing mental health problems and mental health problems causing social exclusion. Once mental health problems have developed they can have a negative impact on employability, housing, household income, and opportunities to access services and social networks.

5,273 people provide unpaid care to a relative or neighbour in Melton borough. Like ill health caring can make it difficult to keep in employment, which leads to dependence on benefits and low income.

Education and Training

Education, skills and training deprivation is one aspect of deprivation in Melton which is more severe. Adults with poor basic skills are five times more likely to be unemployed than those with average skills. Key skills, such as customer service and IT skills are also important. People without these skills are more likely to have less choice within the employment market. Long term unemployment or dissatisfaction with a job can lead to poor general health, depression and social exclusion.

Good educational achievement as a young person makes the transition into the employment market easier. Young people can face a number of barriers to this achievement including living in an income deprived home, coping with the effects of family breakdown, and exclusion from school.

Jobs and Prosperity

On the whole Melton is a prosperous borough with 92.3% of the working age population being economically active, and the average annual household income of £32,760 being above the regional average of £29,259. This prosperity can mean that the 1% receiving job seekers allowance, those who cannot not work, and those on low incomes can be

overlooked, which increase their likelihood of social exclusion. Low income can also lead to debt, which again increases the likelihood of social exclusion.

Our Priorities

The strategy identifies vulnerable areas of work and where the greatest impact is required for groups within the Borough. The key priorities and actions demonstrate where the need and resources will be developed to support those most at risk and look to build stronger communities.

- We will promote participation and engagement in community life and the decision making process, and to develop services so that all can be involved.
 - Support and assist the voluntary and community groups
 - Work with tenants' and residents' groups
 - Work with rural communities to build a stronger community of services to meet the needs
 - Promote grants and funding opportunities to the voluntary and community organisations.
 - Grants for community leisure activities and community facilities.

- We will address the barriers which limit people's ability to participate in leisure and cultural activities.
 - Through the MCP support the Health and Wellbeing Sport Alliance Group and the Sport Commissioning Plan.
 - Support the Seniors Forum which facilitates older people to participate in leisure and cultural activities
 - Through Action for Youth provide various sport activities for young people on a regular basis
 - Through Action for Youth promote the Young Major initiative.
 - Create physical activities that are available to all.
 - Build links with health organisations and tackle more health issues in the Borough

- We aim to reduce crime, and to tackle the causes of reoffending.

Melton Borough Council and SMP are doing the following activities:

 - We will also continue work to address persistent and prolific offenders through tackling the causes of the crime and reoffending.
 - Promote and assist Neighbourhood Watch in delivering their message and creating safer communities.
 - Anti-Social Behaviour officer and YISP projects will identify and address individuals, households and communities who may suffer from social exclusion as a result of ASB actions.
 - Young People – providing increased youth provision, youth groups and diversionary projects.
 - Reducing the social exclusion of individuals by developing projects that directly reduce crime and provide reassurance thereby increasing peoples quality of life e.g. Alcohol Control Zone to reduce ASB, aimed at increasing residents quality of life and encouraging people to reengage in the evening economy.

- Drugs and Alcohol Team (DAAT) worker to help reduce the harm caused by substance misuse and increase access to treatment.
 - Secure Melton Against retail Theft (SMART) and Pubwatch designed to reduce crime and disorder (and its impacts) on the town centre increasing resident's quality of life and encouraging people to reengage in the evening economy.
 - We need to reduce the fear of crime through increased awareness by raising of successful crime initiatives and increase services to highly isolated rural areas and vulnerable groups.
- **Make sure everyone has access to decent and affordable houses**
- We have established the percentage requirement of affordable housing on applicable sites. (40%)
 - Refresh the 'fit for purpose' housing strategy
 - Deliver on the project identified in the HAMP (Housing Asset Management Plan)
 - Work with RSL's to proactively promote affordable housing developments
 - We will reduce the threshold requirement for developments to provide affordable housing through the MLP, to stimulate a greater proportionate supply.
 - We will develop an internal s106 system to ensure we maximise the provision of affordable Housing when negotiating with developers on developments that require affordable housing provision
 - The MLP and development control decisions will ensure that development is focussed in locations with ease of access to services and facilities with less dependence on car ownership
 - Review rural housing affordable housing exceptions policy through the MLP
 - Develop a older person's housing delivery strategy
 - Develop a local guide to affordable housing
- **We aim to improve health, and to support those with health problems, and their carers, to be fully included.**
- Delivery of the Leisure Vision
 - Improve business intelligence on people with health issues in the Borough.
 - Further develop partnership working through the Health Wellbeing Sport Alliance Group, Seniors Forum and Action for Youth.
 - Improve the uptake of welfare benefits to try and break the cycle of people with health problems due to financial concerns
 - Investigate innovative ways to provide support services to users and their carers
 - Work with the education and training providers to develop schemes to support users and carers in education, training and employment.
 - Focus on key health issues such as obesity, dementia, mental health issues, and diabetes.
- **We want to work with our partners to improve education and training opportunities for all.**
- Tackle individuals lack of education or training through the Me and My Learning Centre.
 - Work with the Learning Forum and education partners to raise the level of skills and knowledge in the local population in line with business needs and opportunities
 - The Hub which will provide an alternative education programme for young people.

- Develop initiative and projects in the children centre that support children to be ready for primary school.
- We plan to support people into work, and support those who cannot work or who are on low income.
 - Promote Wheels to Work scheme to customers and the employees.
 - Link between low income and ill-health has led to links with benefits service and CAB to increase benefits take-up.
 - Number of initiatives to raise welfare benefit awareness
 - Promote opportunities such as volunteering to build confidants and potential skills.
 - Help individuals back to work through our Employment and Skills Officer and linking into project such as Me and My Learning.
 - Encourage individuals to make sure they are on the right benefits.

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http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/research/multidimensional.pdf

ii [http://www.poverty.ac.uk/system/files/WP%20Policy%20Response%20No.3-%20%20'Trouble'%20ahead%20\(Levitas%20Final%2021April2012\).pdf](http://www.poverty.ac.uk/system/files/WP%20Policy%20Response%20No.3-%20%20'Trouble'%20ahead%20(Levitas%20Final%2021April2012).pdf) – pg10

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