Building a Stronger Community

Community Cohesion Strategy 2025 – 2028

Pendle Borough Council

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1. WHAT IS COMMUNITY COHESION

A cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities

- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued

- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and

- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Pendle Community Cohesion Strategy 2025-28 sets out our priorities to help us achieve our vision of making Pendle a welcoming, inclusive, and thriving place to live, work, visit, and prosper. Everyone in Pendle has a role to play in achieving these goals, and together, we can make our borough a great place for all. Building trust and confident voices and this vision requires meaningful engagement with our communities, actively listening to their voices, and collaborating on shared goals through consultation and participation.

Pendle Borough Council operates under the Public Sector Equality Duty, which has three key aims that we must consider in all our work:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation

2. Advance equality of opportunity by removing barriers, addressing disadvantages, and encouraging greater participation in public life, particularly for those from underrepresented groups

3. Foster good relations between distinct groups, promoting understanding and strengthening community cohesion.

This strategy emphasises creating a strong sense of belonging, shared values, and stronger social connections. By reducing inequalities and bringing communities together, we can ensure that everyone in Pendle has the opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute to a fairer and more cohesive borough.

3. VISION

Pendle is a richly characterful place with ambition, opportunities and strong connections.

We are supporting the delivery of Lancashire County Councils' Cohesion and Integration Strategy 2024-28 and aligning our Vision with theirs, therefore:

The vision for Pendle focuses on promoting community cohesion and ensuring that all residents feel valued and included. We aim to build a borough where collaboration thrives, diversity is celebrated, and barriers to integration are challenged. Pendle should be a place where people choose to create a home, raise their families, build fulfilling careers, and enjoy their later years.

We are committed to celebrating our borough's diverse communities, rich heritage, and beautiful landscape to create a sense of pride and belonging for everyone. Through these efforts, we aim to create a Pendle where residents can lead happier, healthier lives, and our communities feel connected, supported, and inspired to succeed.

Pendle is a richly characterful place with ambition, opportunities and strong connections.

4. DEMOGRAPHICS

- There are 97,039 people living in Pendle (ONS mid-2024 estimate)

- 1 in 4 residents (24%) are under the age of 18, compared to 21% nationally (2023)

- 27% of Pendle residents are Asian or Asian British (Census 2021), up from 19% in 2011 and higher than Lancashire (10%). This rises to 70% in the Whitefield and Walverden ward, 56% in Brierfield West and Reedley and 55% in Bradley.

Economy

58% of Pendle adults are in employment, which is considerably lower than the North West (73%) and UK (76%) – ONS 2023-24 and 1 in 14 working age people in Pendle claim Universal Credit.

Pendle has low levels of economic activity with 64% of working adults being economically active in Pendle compared to 77% in Lancashire and 79% in England (Sept 2023).

The annual pay for Pendle residents is significantly lower than Lancashire and England. The median annual earnings for Pendle residents are £26.4k compared to £32.2 across Lancashire and £35.1k for England (2023).

According to AHSE, in 2023 21% of employees earned below the Living Wage in Pendle.

Housing

53% of Pendle's housing stock is terraced (2021) and the Median house price in Pendle is £134K (March 2023), but house prices in some areas of Pendle are 5x higher than the average. The median house price in Higham and Pendleside is £345k, compared to £67k in Whitefield (September 2022).

Wellbeing and Resilience

Life expectancy in Pendle is lower than the national average. Males are expected to live to the age of 78, whilst females are expected to live 3 years longer (2020-22). Almost 1 in 5 residents have a limited long term illness or disability.

57% of adults in Pendle are physically active compared to 66% across the North West and 67% nationally (2022/23)

Environment

Pendle is the 36th most deprived district in the country (out of 327). 43% of Pendle children are in relative low income families (2022/23) significantly higher than Lancashire (27%) and England (20%).

Pendle is the 6th most deprived district in the country for living environment (housing and air quality for example)

Employment and Skills

The latest data from Growth Flag suggest that the number of active businesses in Pendle could be as high as 4,238. Two in five new businesses in Pendle are still operating after 5 years and a quarter of jobs in Pendle are in the manufacturing sector.

Fewer residents work in highly skilled occupations than regionally or nationally. 40% of Pendle residents work in managerial or professional occupations. Fewer Pendle working age residents hold a Level 4+ qualification; 32% compared to 41% in Lancashire.

Digital Connectivity

Pendle has a slower average internet download speed (125Mbit/s) than the Lancashire (133Mbit/s) and England (145Mbit/s) averages.

Whilst Pendle has 100% 3G and 4G coverage, there is just 86% 5G coverage outside premises in Pendle (lower than 96% for Lancashire and 91% across England).

The latest data from Growth Flag suggest that the number of active businesses in Pendle could be as high as 4,238.

5. COMMUNITY COHESION CHALLENGES IN PENDLE

Enhancing community cohesion in Pendle requires addressing a range of locally specific and often complex challenges. Each neighbourhood and community within the borough have unique layers of diversity that influence cohesion, including:

- Demographics and Cultural Diversity: Recognising the needs, traditions, and faiths of our diverse communities and understanding their influence on cohesion.

- Social and Neighbourhood Networks: Understanding the distinct needs of our local community, such as addressing social isolation and providing better access to services.

- Economic Challenges and Deprivation: Addressing economic instability, deprivation and the low level of economic activity amongst the working age population, which hinders prosperity and community participation.

- Poverty and Housing: Mitigating economic instability and improving housing affordability to encourage greater community participation.

- Inclusive Customer Contact: Ensuring the Customer Contact Strategy reflects the needs of our vulnerable residents and that they are met appropriately whilst also supporting digital skills to access council services

- Mental Health: Addressing mental health issues that affect individuals' ability to engage socially and economically, with a focus on access to support networks.

- Gender Inequality: Tackling exclusion and mistrust caused by unequal treatment based on gender to build a stronger, more inclusive community.

- Social Media Impact: Leveraging the positive connections social media can foster while mitigating its potential to spread division and misinformation.

6. OUR PRINCIPLES FOR PROMOTING COMMUNITY COHESION

Pendle Borough Council will use a collaborative and strategic approach to address these challenges and strengthen community bonds. Our approach focuses on three key principles:

- **Existing Services:**

  - Work across departments to deliver cohesive and inclusive services that add social value.

  - Leverage expertise to tackle inequalities while addressing integration challenges holistically. Whilst recognising our services may need to be promoted differently to deliver our resident's needs

- **Partnerships:**

  - Strengthen relationships with government agencies, local voluntary and community groups, faith-based organisations, and local businesses.

  - Work with partners to establish partnerships that reflect Pendle's diverse ethnic and cultural communities and respond to local needs and processes that result in change.

  - Build on key cohesion partnerships, such as the Community Cohesion Action Network, including Building Bridges, to sustain positive action in the community.

  - Engage with both emerging and established communities to tackle deprivation, empower residents, foster trust and combat misinformation in order to build resilient and united neighbourhoods and to develop a sense of civic pride.

- Adopt the 4 key principles of the Governments emerging Civic Society, including recognition, participation, transparency and partnership.

- **Community Engagement:**

In alignment with the Council's Community Engagement Framework, we will:

- Collaborate with local groups to identify and meet community needs through dialogue and active participation.

- Nurture belonging and cohesion by working closely with deprived and hard-to-reach communities and ensuring that all members can participate in the decision making process.

- Working with Building Bridges through the Community Cohesion Action Network we will bring partners and the community together to support the response to national/local incidents.

- Celebrate our diverse communities by ensuring our communications represent people of all ages and backgrounds, reflecting their identity.

- With consistent engagement opportunities we will promote independent and self-reliant people who are confident to share their heritage and cultural identity and are able to challenge divisive voices and uphold positive relations.

We will celebrate our diverse communities by ensuring our communications represent people of all ages and backgrounds, reflecting their identity.

7. KEY PRIORITIES

- **Promote Social Inclusion:**

  - Ensure all members of Pendle's communities feel valued and respected, regardless of their background, ethnicity, religion, or other characteristics.

  - Ensure that Pendle's shared spaces are safe and healthy and encourage interaction amongst diverse groups.

- **Build Trust and Understanding:**

  - Foster trust among residents by encouraging meaningful connections, reducing barriers, and promoting shared understanding.

- **Empower Communities:**

  - Provide individuals and groups with the tools and resources needed to participate fully in local life, encouraging active citizenship and collaboration to develop a sense of community pride.

  - Actively engage residents on determining the best outcomes in their neighbourhoods.

- **Address Conflict and Tension:**

  - Collaborate with partners to address sources of tension, promote tolerance, and resolve disputes that undermine community cohesion.

  - Work with partners and local communities to tackle extremist narratives and ideologies.

  - Work with partners to minimise the damage which can be caused by misinformation and disinformation

Pendle Borough Council's commitment to these priorities and principles aims to build stronger relationships in and across Pendle and create a more unified community. In addressing local challenges and fostering collaboration, we can add social value by ensuring that our actions and investments lead to a positive change and by helping to ensure that Pendle is a place where everyone feels they belong and can thrive.

8. COMMUNITY COHESION THEMES AND OUTCOMES

We are committed to making Pendle a great place to live, work, visit, and prosper by delivering high-quality services, supporting vulnerable people, driving economic growth, and protecting our environment. Our approach focuses on delivering key cohesion and integration outcomes around the following six themes:

Economy
Economic growth and prosperity are central to building strong and cohesive communities in Pendle. We are committed to advocating for inclusive economic policies that ensure everyone has fair access to opportunities. By eliminating barriers to participation and empowering individuals and communities, we aim to promote shared prosperity across the borough.

Outcomes
- Ensure fair access to economic opportunities for all Pendle residents.

- Strengthen local collaborations to support inclusive economic growth, creating more job opportunities that promote fairness and equality.

Housing
Stable, safe and affordable housing is essential for creating cohesive communities in Pendle. We will advocate for policies that increase access to affordable housing, support initiatives that address homelessness, tackle poor standards in the private rented sector, tackle long term empty homes and collaborate with partners to tackle housing challenges, particularly in deprived neighbourhoods. Enabling development that facilitates the diversification of the current housing stock, to provide a mix of types, sizes

and tenures that meet the housing needs of the local community. Working towards ensuring that residents have secure and adequate housing, contributing to long-term community sustainability and wellbeing.

Outcome
- Work with partners in aiming to ensure that all housing related services remain accessible to all sections of the community.

Wellbeing and Resilience
Good health and wellbeing are vital to fostering a cohesive community. Pendle Borough Council will work to reduce health inequalities and encourage active participation in health and wellbeing initiatives. By collaborating with local organisations and promoting holistic approaches to physical and mental health, we aim to create more resilient communities.

Outcomes
- Work with Pendle Health & Wellbeing Partnership to help improve the health outcomes for all by breaking down barriers and ensuring support is inclusive of all groups, including ethnic and non-ethnic communities.

- Partner with organisations focused on improving healthcare access and wellness initiatives, adding value and expertise to benefit Pendle's communities.

- Work with partners to Increase skills and confidence in communities for celebrating community pride and challenging factors that create social division, challenge divisive voices and uphold positive relations.

Environment
Pendle's Parks and open spaces play a significant role in bringing people together and fostering a sense of belonging that transcends cultural and social differences. We will work with partners to enhance and maintain clean, safe, and accessible natural areas. We will encourage participation in kerbside recycling initiatives and promote

responsible means of disposal or re-use of unwanted items. We will raise awareness about reducing carbon footprints and promote education on climate change to encourage sustainable practices across the borough.

Outcomes
- Engage Pendle's diverse communities in addressing environmental challenges from a grassroots perspective.

- Encourage participation from all backgrounds in green initiatives such as improving access to green spaces, promoting biodiversity net gain, supporting the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, promoting and enabling, recycling campaigns, and facilitating climate change education.

Employment and Skills
Stable employment is a key factor in creating a sense of purpose, belonging, and social connection. Pendle Borough Council will work with local businesses and education providers to provide opportunities to support local people into the workforce whilst promoting diversity. We will collaborate with partners to expand access to employment opportunities.

Outcomes
- Engage with hard-to-reach groups and all communities to raise awareness of employment opportunities, empowering residents and fostering community resilience.

- Address low levels of economic activity within the working age population.

- Seek to raise aspirations and encourage and enable all to fulfil their true potential.

- Work with organisations focused on improving career aspirations and employment opportunities linked to the local economy.

Digital Connectivity

Digital inclusion is crucial for fostering cohesion in Pendle, as digital exclusion limits access to essential services and opportunities, widening inequalities. Pendle Borough Council will work with partners to bridge the digital divide by promoting digital literacy and encouraging equal access to digital resources and services for all residents. By addressing this issue, we aim to promote inclusivity and equality across our communities.

Outcomes

- We will deliver or customer contact strategy to improve access to online services and engagement platforms, ensuring that all residents—regardless of background—can easily connect with the council, participate in consultations, and receive relevant updates.

- In line with Pendle Borough Council's Community Engagement Strategy we will use technology more to engage with residents, business partners and other organisations.

Through these initiatives, Pendle Borough Council is committed to removing barriers and creating a borough where everyone can thrive, contribute, and feel part of a cohesive and integrated community.

9. MONITORING

Officers from across the Council have been involved in the development of this Strategy and will continue to be involved in measuring and monitoring progress and success over the period of the strategy.

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