

Stockport Partnership Forum

Understanding Communities to support Cohesive Communities

BRIEFING NOTE

What do we need to do to maintain cohesive communities?

Nationally it is acknowledged that to maintain a strong and cohesive community it is necessary to ensure that no one is disadvantaged by where they live, their age, gender, ethnicity or disability. To achieve this it is necessary to:

- Recognise and understand the differing needs of communities
- Target actions in a way that reflects the views and preferences of these communities
- Assess whether actions are achieving the right outcomes

Consultation with local people has identified the following as key drivers for maintaining cohesive communities locally;

- Respect for ethnic differences
- People treating each other with respect and consideration
- Fair treatment by public services
- Satisfaction with local services, in particular the Police and hospital
- Feeling of safety in particular dealing with drug use/ dealing

What is important to Stockport's communities?

The same survey revealed that people from Stockport think these three things are very important in making Stockport a good place to live:

- A sense of belonging
- Feeling safe
- Good cultural and leisure facilities

There is a strong correlation between those things people tell us are important to them, and those things people tell us foster a sense of cohesion.

The survey could not tell us why people felt this way, and the forum will therefore focus on the things people have told us are important to them and seek to answer the following questions for each:

What are we doing well?

What do we need to do differently?

And how do our experiences differ across the borough?

In doing this we can develop a greater understanding of what will enhance both resident satisfaction and in turn community cohesion locally.

Detailed below is a summary of the issues the delegates will be asked to consider.

1. Sense of Belonging

Across the borough almost two thirds of those questioned in the survey told us that they feel they belong to their local neighbourhood. People who feel informed about what is going on in their local area, and feel able to influence decisions are more likely to experience a sense of belonging.

More than two thirds of those questioned told us they would like to be more involved in decision making.

Older people are more likely to feel a sense of belonging, and that there was social cohesion and people respected and considered others. Younger people feel a lesser sense of belonging.

2. Feeling Safe

Nine out of ten people questioned feel safe when outside in their local area during the day.

Overall, perceptions of anti-social behaviour are improving with fewer people thinking it is a problem. However, this improved overall picture does not reflect the concerns felt in some of the priority neighbourhoods.

Despite positive progress made in dealing with key elements of anti-social behaviour and community safety across the borough, local people still do not feel agencies seek their views when dealing with these issues.

3. Cultural and Leisure Services

Cultural and leisure facilities are increasingly seen as important in making Stockport a good place to live. These facilities include parks, open spaces, libraries, museums, theatres and sports/ leisure facilities. In the 12 months prior to the survey, nine out of ten people had visited their local park or open space and around a third had used sports/ leisure facilities and libraries.

Whilst satisfaction with libraries, parks and open spaces remains high, the survey shows that people are less satisfied with sports and leisure facilities.

More than half those questioned told us that activities for teenagers need improving, whilst a fifth thought both community activities and facilities for young children need improving.