

CHAPTER 6—STRONG COMMUNITIES IN STAFFORDSHIRE

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Included in this section

- What people think is most important and most in need of improvement in Staffordshire
- Feeling safe in Staffordshire
- Perceptions of anti-social behaviour in Staffordshire
- Migration and ethnicity in Staffordshire
- Levels of volunteering in Staffordshire
- Having a say, influencing decisions and voting
- Hate incidents

Further reading

Our Shared Future. Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007

Our Shared Future: Community Cohesion in Staffordshire (Dec 2007).

Guidance on Community Cohesion, LGA 2002

Future reading

Community Safety Strategic Assessments—updated October 2008

Key Findings

- Around eight-out-of-ten people living in Staffordshire are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.
- Nine-out-of-ten people feel safe when outside during the day in their local area. Those unemployed or permanently sick have disproportionately high numbers of people who feel unsafe during the day and after dark.
- Around 25,500 people in Staffordshire take part in formal voluntary work (with a registered volunteer group for more than two hours per week).

6.1 What makes Staffordshire a good place to live and what most needs improving?

Overall there is a very positive picture with regards to Staffordshire as a place to live. Around eight-out-of-ten (77%) adults are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Those in the older age group - 60 years plus - are generally more satisfied (84%) than those in the younger age group - 18 to 24 years old (66%)¹⁰.

Following disturbances in town and cities in the spring and summer of 2001 (Bradford, Oldham and Burnley) the Home Secretary established the Community Cohesion Review Team led by Ted Cante. One of the key messages of the Cante Report (as it became known) was that the towns showed a "depth of polarisation" around segregated communities living "a series of parallel lives".¹¹ The subsequent report by the Commission on Integration¹² & Cohesion 'Our Shared Future' recommends focusing on those things which all groups have in common, a vision of what is important in making somewhere a good place to live and what most needs improving in those areas.

Analysis of the Staffordshire County BVPI 2006 survey has shown that regardless of age, ethnicity, employment status or urban/rural residence, there is a vision shared by Staffordshire residents of what is most important in making an area a good place to live. Level of crime, clean streets and affordable decent housing are the most important things in making an area a good place to live. Health services also featured highly for all groups.

There is also a shared agreement as to which factors most need improving in the local area. Again the level of crime features highly for all groups in terms of needing improving, as does the level of

¹⁰ Staffordshire County Council Best Value Survey 2006

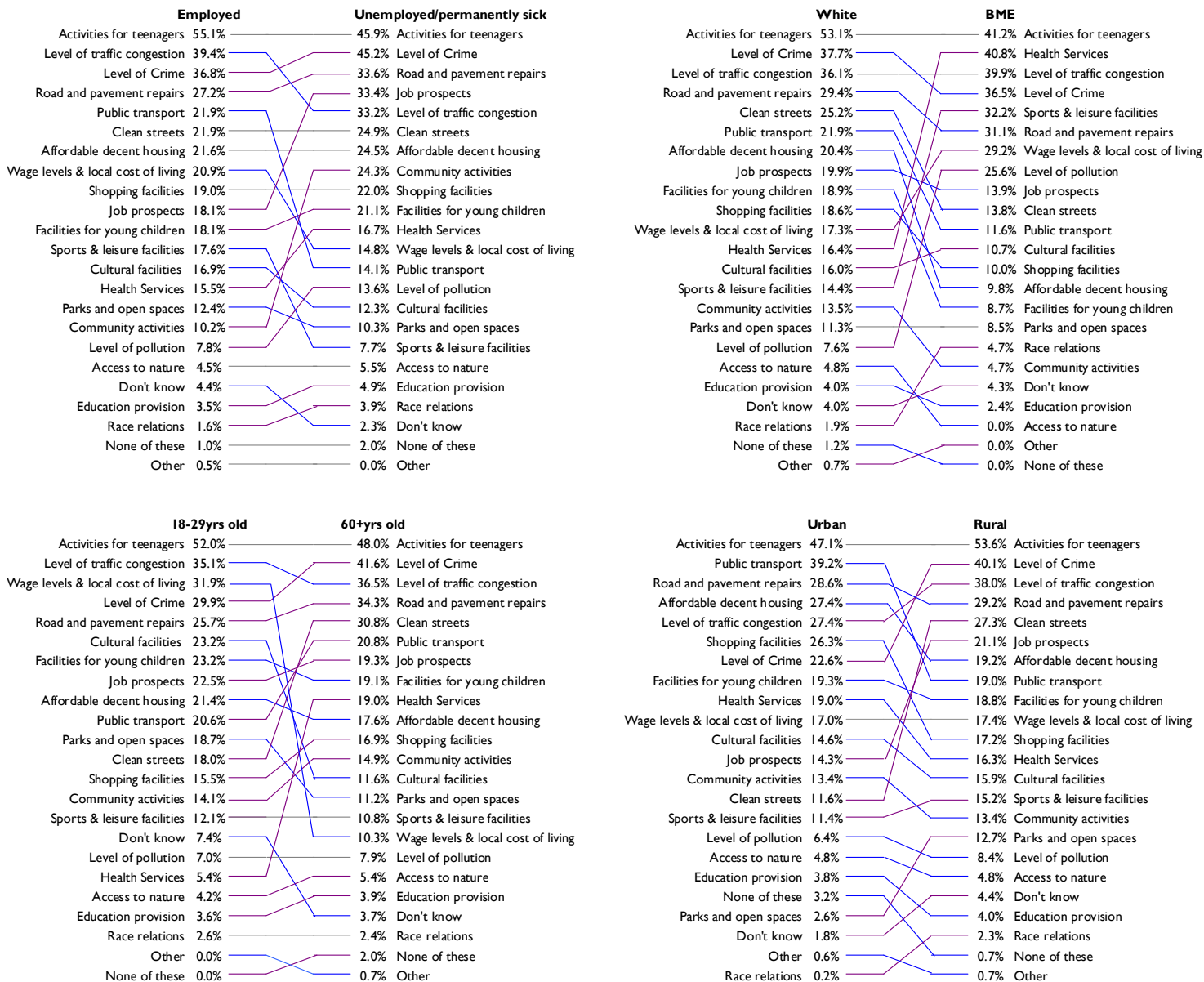
¹¹ Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team Chaired by Ted Cante

<http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2001/12/11/communitycohesionreport.pdf>

¹² Our Shared Future, Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007

traffic congestion. However, as shown in Figure 6.1 (below), improving activities for teenagers was rated the highest for all groups, however you choose to cut the data, in terms of what most needs improving in Staffordshire. Further investigation needs to be done around what this means? What type of activities do teenagers want and what can local authorities realistically do to provide those opportunities?

Figure 6.1—What most needs improving in Staffordshire? (by employment status, ethnicity, age & urban/rural)



Source: Staffordshire County Council Best Value, User Satisfaction Survey 2006

6.2 The most important issues for Young People

Table 6.1 (next page) shows a summary of responses to the UK Youth Parliament Survey on the most important issues for young people in Staffordshire¹. Just under 7,000 people aged 11 to 18 years old in Staffordshire took part in this consultation. Results are shown by the four Youth Service Area Divisions.

Bullying is the most important issue for young people in Staffordshire. Around two-fifths of people across the County rated bullying as one of the two most important issues for them. This trend holds true across all four divisional areas and rises to half of all respondents in the East area. Also

rated as a priority for young people are issues around a 'lack of things to do/places to go', 'sex and relationships education' and 'anti-social behaviour/section 30s/crime'.

There is a good deal of similarity across the four divisions in terms of the relative ranking of issues but there are some notable and interesting differences. In particular the responses in the East area differ most from the other three areas, which may be a reflection of the different local characteristics. For example, 'bus and train services' are less of an issue in the East area which may be a reflection of better transport links around Burton. The South area had the highest percentage of young people who thought 'bus and train services..' were an important issue.

Conversely, 'race/multi-cultural awareness' and 'disability awareness' were both rated as more of an issue in the East area than in other areas. Again this may reflect the demographic make-up of the East area, in terms of the general population and/or those responding to this survey.

Table 6.1—Percentage of respondents to UK Youth Parliament Survey who rated each issue as the most important by Youth Service Division Area¹³

Interesting differences are highlighted where percentages are higher than other areas (circled in red) and lower than other areas (circled in green).

	North	East	South	West	Total
Bullying	38%	48%	47%	42%	43%
Lack Of Things To Do/Places To Go	29%	23%	28%	29%	27%
Sex And Relationships Education	23%	20%	20%	18%	20%
Anti-Social Behaviour/Section 30s/Crime	17%	23%	16%	19%	19%
Bus And Train Services (expensive)	20%	12%	25%	18%	19%
Race/Multi-Cultural Awareness	11%	17%	8%	11%	12%
Disability Awareness	9%	20%	8%	7%	11%
Employment (Minimum Wage/Lack Of Opportunities)	11%	10%	8%	9%	10%
Lowering Voting Age To 16	8%	9%	11%	7%	8%
Environmental Issues (e.g. Climate Change)	8%	7%	6%	10%	8%
Media Perception Of Young People (how newspapers report young people)	7%	6%	5%	9%	7%
Poverty	5%	10%	4%	8%	7%
Support Services e.g. Childcare	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%
Other - Please State	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%
<i>number of respondents</i>	<i>1,916</i>	<i>1,444</i>	<i>1,275</i>	<i>2,340</i>	<i>6,975</i>

Data Source: Staffordshire Youth Service. Each Youth Service Division Area covers two Local Authority Areas as follows: North—Newcastle & Staffs Moorlands; South—Lichfield & Cannock Chase; East—East Staffs & Tamworth; West—Stafford & South Staffs.

'Anti-social behaviour/section 30s/crime' was thought to be an issue by more young people in the East area and, to a lesser extent, the West area than in the North & South.

Fewer people thought 'environmental issues' were the biggest issue for them, although a relatively higher number identified this in the West than in other areas. Issues of 'poverty' were also thought to be less of an issue, particularly in the South of the County.

¹³ These results were collected over a seven day period during the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) elections in February 2008. Schools, colleges, youth clubs, Connexions and voluntary sector youth organizations were all contacted & invited to host a ballot box for the voting period. Participation workers from the Youth Service visited schools (some, not all) and youth provision to give young people the opportunity to vote. At the same time, young people were asked to identify the two biggest issues from the list provided. Young people aged 11 to 18 years old were eligible to vote and take part in this additional consultation. No other information (e.g. sex, age, ethnicity) was recorded for those participating in this survey.

6.3 Feeling safe in Staffordshire

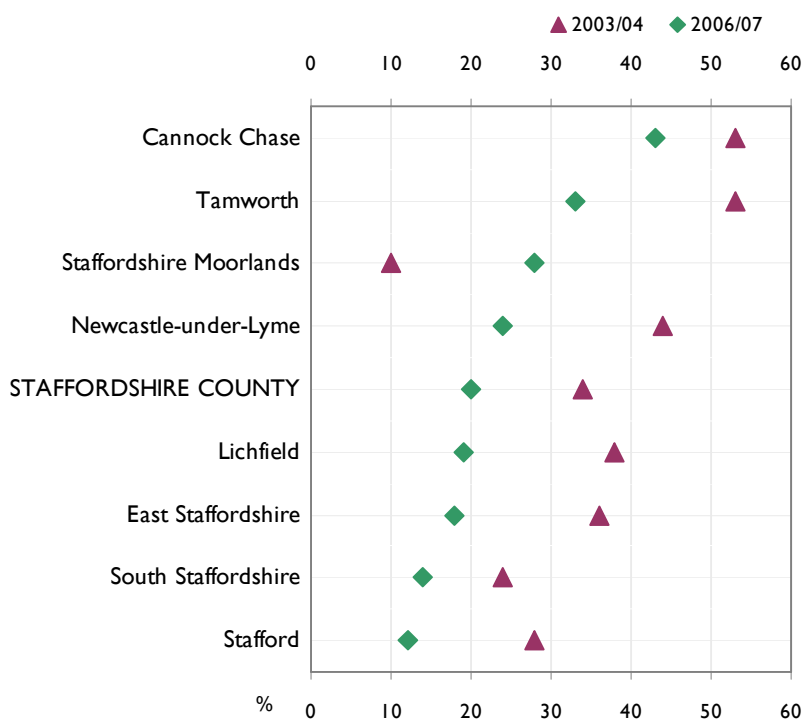
Generally, there is a very positive picture for Staffordshire in terms of feelings of safety. Around nine-out-of-ten (88%) people feel safe when outside during the day in their local area. Interestingly, this varies little by age or gender but there is a notable difference when it comes to employment status with a much higher number of those unemployed or permanently sick feeling unsafe (13%) compared to those in employment (3%).

Predictably, the number of people feeling safe outside in their local area is lower after dark than during the day. Around a quarter (25%) of residents felt unsafe in their local area after dark. Again there was little difference by gender or age but a higher number of those unemployed/permanently sick felt unsafe after dark. This highlights the cross-cutting nature of the impact of unemployment or poor health.

6.4 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour in Staffordshire

Incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are recorded by the police. Over 40,000 incidents were recorded in Staffordshire in 2006/07, equating to around 110 incidents per day. As would be expected, figures vary in different parts of the county. However, a more useful measure is perceptions of anti-social behaviour.

Figure 6.2—Percentage of respondents with a high-level of perceived anti-social behaviour in their local area¹⁴. (Data for 2003/04 and 2006/07, ranked by Local Authority District according to 2006/07 figure—highest to lowest.)



For Staffordshire there was a very positive picture of a marked improvement in perceptions of ASB across the county. Fewer people in 2006/07 considered there to be a high-level of ASB problems in their local area, compared to in 2003/04. For the County as a whole there was an improvement of 14 percentage points, down from around a third (34%) of the population in 2003/04 to a fifth (20%) in 2006/07. Figure 6.2, below, shows the improvement in perceptions across all districts in Staffordshire (except for Staffordshire Moorlands). The biggest improvements were in Newcastle-under-Lyme and in Tamworth.

¹⁴ Note

The composite measure of a high level of perceived anti-social behaviour is based on British Crime Survey methodology, using a scale constructed of the following seven individual strands: Percentage in the local area who perceive the following to be a problem:

1. Noisy neighbours or loud parties;
2. teenagers hanging around on the streets;
3. rubbish and litter lying around;
4. people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces;
5. abandoned or burnt out cars;
6. vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles; and
7. people using or dealing drugs

Statistical tests carried out by the Home Office have show that these seven individual questions behaved in a sufficiently similar way between respondents for a valid and reliable single measure to be produced.

Source: 2003/04 and 2006/07 Local Government User Satisfaction Survey (LGUSS) Administered by the Audit Commission on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government. For further information or to download the data go to:

<http://www.respect.gov.uk/members/article.aspx?id=11554>

6.5 Levels of volunteering in Staffordshire

It is not possible to count every volunteer or every bit of voluntary work undertaken in Staffordshire. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Consortium of Infrastructure Organisations (SCIO) is made up of the local voluntary sector support organisations. As part of the Staffordshire LAA 2007—2010 (now replaced) SCIO agreed to measure the activity of a 10% sample of registered volunteer groups as a proxy measure for the voluntary sector in Staffordshire as a whole. In September 2007 SCIO recorded a total of 2,558 volunteers who volunteer for more than two hours per week. Applied to the total number of registered volunteer groups produces an estimate of around 25,500 volunteers in Staffordshire (4.5% of the adult population)². Those aged 55 or over were more likely to volunteer than younger age groups.

It is important to remember that the vast majority of volunteers are excluded from this figure because they volunteer less than two hours per week and/or do informal voluntary activities. The Citizenship survey revealed that Nationally around 73% of all adults had volunteered at least once in the last 12 months. Applied locally this would mean around 600,000 volunteers across the whole of Staffordshire making a huge contribution to the local communities in Staffordshire.

6.6 Having a say, influencing decisions and voting

A key element of strong communities is about whether people feel they have any control over their life chances. It is important that residents feel they have some power and that there is a possibility for change and development in their local area. In Staffordshire around a quarter (25%) of people agree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area. This is a much lower proportion than compared to the regional and national figure (32%). A lower proportion of older people (24% aged 60 years plus) feel they can influence local decision making compared to younger adults (37% of 18 to 29 year olds). Again, unemployed or permanently sick fare worse as a group. Twice as many people who are employed (26%) feel they can influence local decision making compared to those who are unemployed or permanently sick (13%).

Less than a quarter (23%) of residents in Staffordshire are satisfied with opportunities for participating in local decision making.

Election turnout information can give an indication of the level of involvement people have in their local areas. Turnout at the May 2005 County Elections varied across the 59 electoral divisions in the County from a higher of 71% in Gnosall and Doxey (Stafford Borough) to a low of 41% in Kinver (South Staffordshire). The five areas with the lowest turnout were: Burton Town (51%) and Burton Trent (51%) - both in East Staffs; Stoneydelph (50%) in Tamworth; and, Perton (51%) and Kinver (41%) in South Staffs.

6.7 Hate incidents

An important aspect of community cohesion is to raise awareness of and tackle hate crime. Hate crime can be defined as any offence committed against a person or property that is motivated by the offender's hatred of people because of their age, gender, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation. Hate crimes/incidents can take on many forms ranging from name-calling, harassment, criminal damage, graffiti and assault to violence against the person and murder.

It is important to note that the police estimate that most racist and religious hate incidents, and as much as 90% of homophobic crime goes unreported because victims are too frightened or embarrassed to let someone know¹⁵. The hate incidents reported to the police will however enable us to see a snapshot of the problem in Staffordshire.

¹⁵ Hate Crime: Delivering a Quality Service (ACPO, 2005)

Hate incidents are on the increase in Staffordshire and have increased from 581 in 2005-06 to 614 in 2006-07¹⁶; an increase of nearly 6%, with over 95% of these incidents classified as crimes in 2006-07. This change should be viewed positively as local agencies are trying to increase levels of reporting.

The largest proportion of hate incidents in Staffordshire County were committed in Newcastle-Under-Lyme in 2006-07 (27% of all hate incidents), with the smallest proportion of incidents taking place in Lichfield (5%).

Some 80% of all hate incidents in Staffordshire in 2006-07 were of a racial nature, with 11% of all incidents relating to homophobic incidents.

The large majority of hate incidents go unreported due to fear of reprisal or embarrassment. It is vital that local authorities continue to encourage the reporting of hate crime, encouraging victims or witnesses to notify the authorities and seek advice. By encouraging more witnesses and victims to report incidents, this may prevent it happening to someone else.

¹⁶ Source: Staffordshire Police

Implications for service delivery

- Improving the number of people who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live should focus on children and young people, who currently have the lowest satisfaction levels. In particular, there needs to be more activities for young people.
 - The group of society which suffers most from feeling unsafe in their local area is those who are unemployed or permanently sick. Getting people into employment and improving health for those permanently sick will improve feelings of safety in addition to any other effects.
 - Participation has been identified as a key driver for building integration and cohesion. Local authorities need to identify how they can increase volunteering and support local groups, encouraging people to get involved in their local communities.
 - Efforts to increasing voting turnout should focus on the five areas where turnout was lowest in the May 2005 County Elections. They are: Burton Town & Burton Trent, Perton, Stoneydelph and Kinver. Analysis of the May 2009 County Election turnout should be carried out.
 - Being the victim of hate crime can have a severe emotional and social effect on people, however the large majority of hate incidents go unreported due to embarrassment or fear of reprisals. Efforts need to be made to encourage the reporting of hate crimes.
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Government Priorities

2007 Pre-Budget Report and Comprehensive Spending Review: Public service agreements (PSAs)

New PSAs set out the key priority outcomes the Government wants to achieve in the next spending period (2008-2011).

Stronger Communities and a better quality of life (PSAs 18—26):

PSA Delivery Agreement 21: **Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities**

Indicators that will be used to measure progress towards this PSA:

1. The percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.
 2. The percentage of people who have meaningful interactions with people from different backgrounds
 3. The percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
 4. The percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
 5. A thriving third sector
 6. The percentage of people who participate in culture or sport
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Indicators in the Staffordshire LAA relevant to this area

- NI 4: Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
 - NI 6: Participation in regular volunteering
 - NI 7: Environment for a thriving third sector
 - NI 21: Dealing with local concerns about anti social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
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