

# **Community Cohesion Strategy**

## Foreword

Cohesive communities are strong communities. Stockton Renaissance's long term commitment is to "promote achievement and tackle disadvantage" making sure that the borough and its residents achieve their potential. Strong, cohesive communities where people feel that they belong and are valued for their contribution to society are vital to the success of the borough.

If people are secure, feel a sense of belonging, are respected and able to express themselves and celebrate their identity and beliefs, they will not be threatened by or negative toward others who are different from themselves.

We recognise that we have a big role to play in managing and driving through the changes that are necessary to ensure that the Borough's communities are strong and cohesive into the future. Each member of the Partnership has committed to a vision of a cohesive Borough and targeted actions to improve cohesion and ensure that all members of the community irrespective of their race, religion / belief or any other factor are treated fairly and equitably.

The Community Cohesion Strategy supports the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy and its central theme of "promoting achievement and tackling disadvantage". Inclusive and cohesive communities are a measure of our success in delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy. Recent residents' survey<sup>1</sup> results show that 66% of people living in the Borough agree that it is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, 59% agree that it is a place where residents respect ethnic differences between people and 69% feel proud of their local area. While these are good results in comparison with surveys carried out in other areas of the country there is much scope for improvement.

We are committed to ensuring that Stockton's communities are strong and cohesive and to building on work that has already taken place in the borough.

Cllr Ken Lupton  
Chair, Stockton Renaissance

Geoff Lee  
Chair, Community Cohesion Group

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from IPSOS MORI Stockton-on-Tees Residents Survey 2006

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## What is community cohesion?

There are several factors which affect people's perception of cohesion in localities. These include:

- The population's characteristics - age, qualifications, occupation
- Local people's satisfaction with the place and key services and service providers:
  - Satisfaction with area as a place to live
  - Perception of high levels of anti-social behaviour
  - Satisfaction with the Council overall
  - Satisfaction with cleanliness
  - Satisfaction with participation opportunities
  - Satisfaction with parks and open spaces
  - Feeling that they can influence local decisions
- The level of deprivation of the area
- The amount of crime in the area (particularly burglaries, robberies and violent crime)
- Levels of perceived and actual discrimination in the way that different groups are treated in the area
- The level of ethnic diversity in an area and how this is changing through immigration

The emerging national definition of integration and cohesion is a community where:

- There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country
- There is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment
- There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny
- There is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common
- There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods.

This emerging definition is supported by Stockton Renaissance and provides a clear challenge to the borough both now and into the future. Having considered the local context of cohesion we have agreed eight objectives which the partnership will work towards to achieve greater cohesion in the

borough in support of our overall objective of “promoting achievement and tackling disadvantage”. The eight objectives are:

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Link to national definition</b>
1	<b>Equality of opportunity</b> - Ensuring that people from different communities and backgrounds have the same life chances and opportunities to fulfil their potential	Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment
2	<b>Community, belonging and pride</b> - Maintaining a sense of community, ownership, belonging and pride in the area	There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country
3	<b>Meeting needs and aspirations</b> - Ensuring that services meet the needs of different communities	There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny
4	<b>Celebrating diversity and commonality</b> – Celebrating diversity in an inclusive way and engaging and involving communities in positive interactions	There is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common
5	<b>Creating boundaries</b> - Being clear that racism, hatred, and any form of discrimination and prejudice will not be tolerated	There is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn
6	<b>Reduce conflict and tension</b> - Identifying ways to monitor and resolve conflicts and tensions between and within our communities	There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods.
7	<b>Myth busting</b> - Breaking down myths and misconceptions of different communities	There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods.
8	<b>Empowerment</b> - Empowering residents to participate in democracy and make a positive contribution to the Borough	There is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a

		<p>particular place, with a focus on what they have in common</p> <p>There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny</p>
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We will also take all available opportunities to exert influence on those areas outside the direct control of Stockton Renaissance but which have a crucial role to play in the promotion of cohesion.

## Why is community cohesion important in Stockton on Tees?

Stockton-on-Tees is a Borough of wide contrasts, a mixture of busy town centres, urban residential areas and picturesque villages. We have considered our population and borough in relation to the factors affecting community cohesion outlined on page 4.

### Population characteristics

The borough had 178,408 residents when the 2001 Census was carried out. 2.8% of these residents were from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities, with most BME residents being of Pakistani heritage. The population of the borough is growing and had reached 187,300 by 2007<sup>2</sup>, with a projected increase to 204,400 by 2029<sup>3</sup>. Our population is currently younger in profile than the national population with an average age of 38.6 years in 2004 and for BME communities in Stockton the average age is younger still. Population projections show the local population will change dramatically so that by 2029 there will be 3% fewer children and 62% more people of retirement age<sup>4</sup>.

In Stockton at the time of the 2001 census, around 20% of the population 35,438 classified themselves as having a limiting long term illness. Within the borough there is large variation, with 41.0% of residents in the Stockton Town Centre ward having a limiting long-term illness compared to Ingleby Barwick west where the rate is 10.5%. The majority of residents (81.6%) classify themselves as Christian, with Muslim (1.4%), Sikh (0.2%) and Hindu (0.2%) being the other large religious groups in the Borough. 10% of residents, almost 18,000 people, described themselves as having no religion.

Unemployment rates within the borough are varied, from 9.2% in Stockton Town Centre to 0.6% in the Northern Parishes, with an overall rate of 3.1% for the whole borough<sup>5</sup>. Nationally in 2004, the chance of a person from a BME group being unemployed was 2.28 times greater than for a White person, with odds rising to three times or more for Bangladeshi, Black Africans and Pakistanis.

People of working age in the borough are comparatively well educated with 14% of the population having low literacy skills and 59% having low numeracy skills<sup>6</sup>. At the Census in 2001, 31.4% of the working population in Stockton had no qualifications whilst 15.2% had degree level qualifications, consequently 23% of employed people work in managerial and professional jobs.

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<sup>2</sup> Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, Mid 2007 Estimate.

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics, 2004 based sub-national population projections.

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics, 2004 based sub-national population projections,

<sup>5</sup> Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, May 2007.

<sup>6</sup> DFES ReadWritePlus Study, 2003.

## Satisfaction levels

There are two data sets for satisfaction levels in the borough. The first is the statutory Best Value surveys carried out in all areas of England every three years and the second is the borough's voluntary biennial residents survey carried out by IPSOS MORI. Both surveys were carried out in 2006 and provide us with up to date information on resident satisfaction regarding key issues. The Best Value surveys provide the most robust national comparisons while the IPSOS MORI survey provides the most robust trend information for the borough. Both have therefore been used.

### Satisfaction with the area as a place to live

Local people are less satisfied with the area as a place to live than in other parts of the country according to the BVPI survey. An analysis of the IPSOS MORI data however shows that satisfaction is higher than it was in 2002 and is higher than might be expected given the borough's level of deprivation. Residents in North, West and South Stockton are more satisfied than those in Billingham, Thornaby and Central Stockton. Across the borough about a quarter of residents surveyed by IPSOS MORI think the borough has become better in the last two years. Local people's priorities for improving the area correlate strongly to those things that will improve community cohesion:

### **Top 10 priorities<sup>7</sup>**

- Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
- Facilities for teenagers & children
- Better leisure/ sports facilities
- Better cleanliness
- Provision of affordable housing
- More/ cheaper bus services
- Improved town centre facilities
- Creation of jobs
- Regeneration of run-down areas
- Attracting new business

### Perception of high levels of anti-social behaviour

There are nine questions included in the BVPI survey which enable us to judge whether there is a perception of high levels of anti-social behaviour in the borough. Stockton has a higher than average number of respondents saying that:

- parents do not take enough responsibility for the actions of their children. Stockton's figure is 75% whereas the average is 65%
- people not treating other people with respect and consideration is a problem. Stockton's figure is 65% whereas the average is 52%
- noisy neighbours or loud parties are a problem. Stockton's figure is 22% whereas the average is 17%

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<sup>7</sup> Combining top 10 general priorities and top 5 for the local economy, IPSOS Mori Survey 2006

- teenagers hanging around on the street is a problem. Stockton's figure is 69% whereas the average is 59%
- people being drunk or rowdy in public is a problem. Stockton's figure is 38% whereas the average is 33%
- people using or dealing drugs is a problem. Stockton's figure is 56% whereas the average is 45%

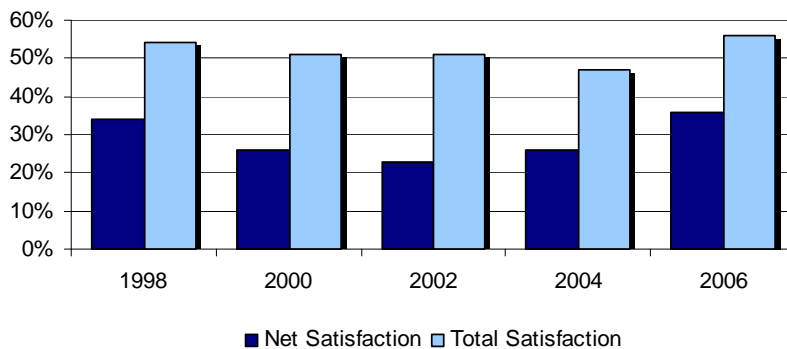
There are several areas where the borough performs better than the national average however. These are where respondents say that:

- vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to a property or vehicles is a problem. The national average is 40% whereas Stockton's figure is 38%.
- abandoned or burnt out cars is a problem. The national average is 10% whereas Stockton's figure is 7%.
- rubbish or litter lying around is a problem. The national average is 47% whereas Stockton's figure is 41%.

### Satisfaction with the Council overall

Overall satisfaction with the council is high – comparison against the national BVPI results puts Stockton's figure of 58% in the top 25% nationally. An analysis of the IPSOS MORI data shows that we have the highest levels of resident satisfaction with the council since the surveys began:

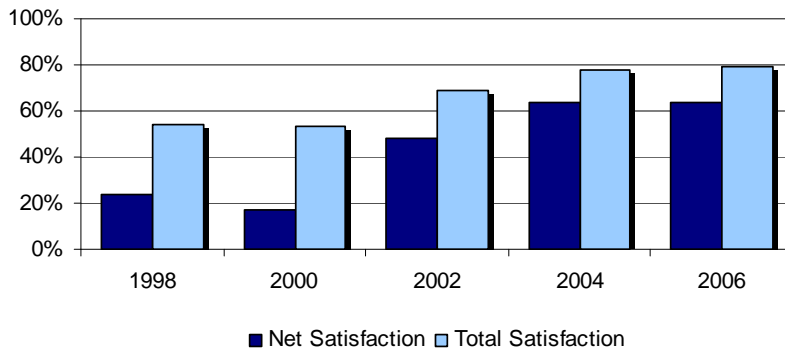
#### **Overall Satisfaction with the Council**



### Satisfaction with cleanliness

Resident satisfaction with the cleanliness of the borough is high at 74% compared to a national average of 68% putting Stockton in the top 25% of council areas according to the BVPI survey. Our IPSOS Mori data shows that net satisfaction with cleanliness is now more than three times higher than it was in 2000.

### Satisfaction with Cleanliness



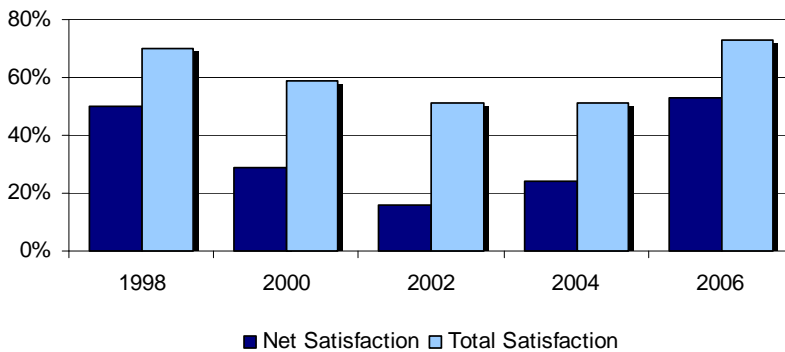
### Satisfaction with participation opportunities

28% of residents surveyed indicated satisfaction with opportunities to participate in activities in their local area.

### Satisfaction with parks and open spaces

BVPI survey data shows a below average level of satisfaction with parks and open spaces in the borough at 64% compared to an average of 74%. Our IPSOS MORI data shows however the significant improvements in satisfaction with parks and open spaces in recent years:

### Satisfaction with Parks and Open Spaces



### Feeling that they can influence local decisions

The national BVPI survey data shows that Stockton has a higher than average number of people who feel that they can influence local decisions at 35% compared to an average of 32%. This figure puts Stockton in the top 25% for this measure in comparison to other unitary council areas.

## Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 allows for a national comparison of deprivation, taking into account factors such as income, health, and education. The borough of Stockton-on-Tees has a wide variation with 40 of our 117 Super Output Areas (SOAs) amongst the most deprived 20% nationally, 20 within the most deprived 10% in England. Whilst 17 of our SOAs fall within the top 20% of most affluent areas nationally, 5 are within the top 10% in England.

## Crime

We have the lowest crime rates in the Tees Valley:

- In 2006 residents are significantly more likely to feel 'very safe' than they were in 2000 and 2002, with 94% feeling safe outside in the daytime and 54% after dark (IPSOS MORI, 2006).
- 2005/06 and 2006/07 have seen the lowest number of dwelling burglaries over the last fifteen years
- Almost all projections on crime categories are down year-on-year (robbery – 29%, vehicle crime - 13% and violent against the person – 12%)
- 217% increase in the numbers in drug treatment in 3 years

## Perceived and actual discrimination

There are no robust measures of perceived or actual discrimination within the borough. In future, this will be measured through

- public sector bodies such as the Council, police and health service analysing complaints received about their services for discriminatory factors
- the inclusion of questions regarding perceived and actual discrimination in future residents surveys.
- access to services and how organisations measure that this represents the Borough profile to ensure barriers are not present.

## Ethnic diversity and immigration

The total population of Stockton was 178,408 when the Census was recorded in 2001, and 97.24% of the population defined themselves as White (173,484 people). Stockton has a much smaller minority ethnic make up than the country, with most BME residents being of Pakistani origin.

### Population figures and percentages for Stockton from the Census 2001

	All People	White	All Non-White	Mixed	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other
Number	178410	173480	4920	1000	780	1990	50	300	800
Percentage		97.2%	2.8%	0.6%	0.4%	1.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%

There is a clear picture from the Census data of 1991 and 2001 showing that the ethnic profile of Stockton's population is changing. The comparison

between censuses is not a direct one due to changes made to the question on ethnicity in 2001 in particular the introduction of new categories of Mixed ethnicity. Since the distinction was not available to respondents in 1991 it is possible that people of Mixed race in 1991 chose to be either White or another ethnic group. The BME proportion in Stockton has increased from 1.6% in 1991 to 2.8% in 2001. It should also be taken into account that these figures do not include all asylum seekers and refugees in the Stockton area. There are 78 different nationalities of asylum seekers across North East England and as of March 2007, there were 372 registered asylum seekers in Stockton. Over 70 languages are spoken within the borough.

Other population changes and characteristics are:

- More people are moving into the Borough than moving out of it and this trend is set to continue until 2011; the overall population of the Borough has increased by 1.9% since 1991 compared to the North East average of a 2.8% fall.
- 51% of the population is female, with more women than men aged 20 or over
- It is expected that by 2010 the number of children will fall by 21%, the number of people of working age (16-retirement) will decrease by 4%, there will be a 46% increase in older people (retirement age, currently 60 for women and 65 for men) and a rise of 11% in the number of households in the Borough.
- 20% of the Borough's population has a "long-term limiting illness" falling to 12% within the BME population
- 72% of all households are owner occupied falling to 64% owner occupiers within BME households
- 59% of the working age population are economically active falling to 49% within the BME population

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that the characteristics outlined above present a number of challenges in relation to community cohesion. Perceptions of anti-social behaviour in particular need to be addressed, whether or not the perceptions match the reality of anti-social behaviour incidents in the borough; work must continue to meet the changing needs of local people through good quality service provision; and Stockton Renaissance must continue to strive towards its overarching ambition of promoting achievement and tackling disadvantage.

Much good work has been done in the past and more is being done. Those tackling the issues that contribute to community cohesion need to understand the impact of their work on the cohesiveness of the borough and the public private and third sector partners in Stockton Renaissance need to maintain focus on these issues through the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## Equality of opportunity

All of the Borough's residents, regardless of their background or lifestyle will have equality of opportunity to participate fully in the community and to receive services. Equality of opportunity is an underlying principle of the Sustainable Community Strategy and an integral part of achieving a cohesive community. Equality of opportunity does not however, mean that everyone will be treated the same – some sections of the community will need more help than others to ensure that they benefit from equality of opportunity and have the same life chances as others. Every resident will be given the opportunity to fulfil their potential and in so doing contribute to the Borough.

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that our policies and practices have a positive impact on different communities in the Borough
- Promoting equality of opportunity and challenging those that discriminate
- Working with communities to help members achieve their potential
- Ensuring that service providers listen to communities and understand their needs

### Monitoring progress

In order to measure the progress Stockton Renaissance makes in improving Equality of Opportunity we will monitor performance against the following measures:

- Proportion of equality impact assessments published by public bodies such as the council, the police and the health service which identify positive impacts on equality in relation to race, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation and gender
- The representativeness of the public sector workforce in relation to the borough's population
- The number of opportunities for communities to engage with service providers; take up of such opportunities by different communities
- The proportion of equality scheme action plan actions that have been achieved
- The Council's performance against the Local Government Equality Standard

### **Case Study: Involving our Communities**

Tristar Homes has 21 different ways for Customers to become involved (including becoming a Board member) in the development of services for the Councils 11,000 Homes . Customer service standards are set and performance reviewed by customers with 173 actively involved. Customer Inspectors and Champions ensure that "Succeeding Together" is more than just words.

## **Community belonging and pride**

The Borough is made up of many different communities based on a variety of factors such as geography, religion or common interests. Most residents belong to more than one community and will identify as part of different communities at different times.

Strong communities are those that are valued by their members and those around them, and recognised for their contribution to society. Communities must not be discriminated against or excluded from decision making processes. Residents should feel able to be proud of community membership and not fear an adverse reaction from others. Stockton Renaissance is committed to capitalising on and further developing the sense of belonging and pride that local people have in the borough and ensuring that this extends to welcoming newcomers who add to the strength and diversity of the Borough. Our communities will be welcoming to all and will encourage all residents, particularly those currently isolated to play an active role in their areas.

We will do this by:

- Empowering different communities to develop and celebrate their identity
- Ensuring that localities are places to take pride in
- Offering people opportunities to contribute to the development of their communities
- Ensuring that local people's voice is heard
- Helping others to understand different communities
- Developing a common vision for the Borough

### **Monitoring progress**

In order to measure the progress Stockton Renaissance makes in improving Community Belonging and Pride we will monitor performance against the following measures:

- The percentage of residents who feel that they belong to Stockton on Tees
- The percentage of residents who believe that the borough is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on

### **CASE STUDY - African Sport Embassy**

People's participation in physical activity is influenced by the built, natural and social environments in which they live as well as by personal factors such as sex, age, ability, time, motivation, as well as financial and social factors.

African Sport Embassy takes the lead role in creating environments that promote opportunities for physical activities and active living. It also encourages people, especially people from BME groups to take up physical activities. The Embassy was supported by Public Health, North Tees Primary Care Trust to run a six-month football training programme for young people aged 8-16 in Stockton area.

This programme aimed to help young people to see the benefit and the value of physical activities in their lifestyle, help to improve their understanding and technical ability and help to keep them fit and healthy.

North Tees PCT has also worked in partnership with African Sport Embassy to launch a campaign called 'Beat Your Own Record' in August 2007. The idea is to develop and promote costless physical activities in a welcoming environment to encourage and engage people from the community, especially the BME community, into physical activities to beat their own record in order to maintain their interest in the activities and to keep them healthy.

The campaign also aims to promote some of the sports that are not generally practised in this country. It will show people about the diversity of sport from different ethnic communities.

## **Meeting needs and aspirations**

An understanding of the needs of the Borough and the aspirations of residents is essential to tackling the issues that affect community cohesion. The Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy focuses on ensuring that the Borough's potential is met and members of Stockton Renaissance are fully committed to promoting achievement and tackling disadvantage. A key part of this is to provide good quality services that meet the needs of local people, regardless of their personal circumstances.

We will do this by:

- Understanding local communities – their circumstances, values and needs
- Providing services that are accessible to all residents who need them
- Being clear about the standard of service that can be expected
- Tackling inequalities through targeted actions and being clear about why the actions are being taken
- Helping communities to understand each other

## **Monitoring progress**

In order to measure the progress Stockton Renaissance makes in improving Meeting Needs and Aspirations we will monitor performance against the following measures:

- The proportion of council services meeting Customer First level 2 criteria
- The number and effectiveness of targeted actions taken to tackle inequalities
- Improvements in satisfaction with key public services

### **CASE STUDY - Community Health Champions and Health Trainers**

The Community Health Champions project was created by North Tees Primary Care Trust and Parkfield Mill Lane Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder. The project helped to meet the health needs of local people in Stockton-on-Tees, especially Black and Minority Ethnic groups.

The project was a joint initiative to design and implement a local model of peer education. The main objectives of this project were to empower local community members, train them in the delivery of health topics, and make a positive contribution to community health in Parkfield/Mill Lane.

Volunteers were recruited through local community development workers, supporting agencies and BME networks. The participant group consisted of 5 local women (young mothers and one grandmother with different ethnic background) who are active in their communities.

As a result of the project, 15 'Look After Your Health' sessions were delivered in different location within the community such as community centres, homes and churches. Their activities included compiling a recipe book, running fitness classes, leading healthy walks, and organising parent/children healthy eating courses.

The recipe book consists of international recipes such as Asian Curry dishes, Spanish dishes and English dishes. It also shows people how to make traditional Asian yogurt. The books have created opportunities for communities to explore not only healthy recipes but also each others cultures through cooking.

Through the project, the Champions have increased their health knowledge and their confidence in working with different community groups and continue to provide advice to friends and families. Two have gone on to get jobs linked to promoting health.

## Celebrating diversity and commonality

It is important that we all understand the communities that make up the Borough. The area has a long history of inward migration linked to the development of key industries. It is this diverse heritage that provides the Borough with some of its strengths and newer communities continue to strengthen the area. Celebrating diversity and commonality in an inclusive way will make our communities, new and old, realise their value to the whole community and contribute to the overall well being of the Borough.

We will do this by

- Promoting the diverse heritage of the Borough
- Creating opportunities for communities to engage, interact and explore each others cultures, including inter-community and intergenerational events
- Providing opportunities for local people to understand the different communities that make up the Borough – their heritage, beliefs, values and lifestyles
- Supporting arts initiatives that promote cultural diversity
- Celebrating commonality between communities

## Monitoring progress

In order to measure the progress Stockton Renaissance makes in celebrating diversity and commonality we will monitor performance against the following measures:

- The number of activities which promote the diverse heritage of the borough
- The number of opportunities for communities to engage, interact and explore each others cultures
- The number of inter-community and intergenerational event
- The number of arts initiatives that promote cultural diversity and attendance at relevant arts events

## **CASE STUDY – Cohesion Through Culture**

### **Stockton International Riverside Festival - Bollywood Steps**

SIRF, the UK's finest street arts festival, is a genuine cultural diversity event, presenting performers from every continent to diverse audiences, and highlighting shared languages and universal themes. In 2006 SIRF commissioned UK street theatre company Nutkhut to produce a music and dance spectacular mirroring the typical Bollywood movie story. Members of the local community trained and performed with the company, dancing at the 'Bollywood Oscars' ceremony in Bradford. This built on a season of films which were selected by local resident members of the south Asian community and presented at ARC, Stockton's Arts Centre. Community networks were also used to promote the films and related events at the venue, fostering a real sense of ownership and influence over the facility amongst minority ethnic communities.

### **Billingham International Folklore Festival**

Putting Billingham on the international map for 40 years, BIFF has presented Folk Arts from around the world, with performances and participation programmes that educate people about the shared roots and rich differences of global folk culture. BIFF is also the UK representative for the world folk art festivals body CIOFF.

## **Creating boundaries**

Strong communities are clear about what is acceptable and what is not. In Stockton-on-Tees we will not tolerate racism, homophobia, hatred or any form of discrimination or prejudice. Local people will be able to live their lives the way they choose (providing it is within the law) and deserve an equal amount of respect.

We will do this by

- Enabling local people to report incidents of hatred and prejudice, investigating and tackling them
- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Leading by example and being clear about what is acceptable
- Building and forming stronger relationships with local people and enabling trust
- Developing more community agreements

## **Monitoring progress**

In order to measure the progress Stockton Renaissance makes in creating boundaries we will monitor performance against the following measures:

- The number of mechanisms for reporting incidents of hatred and prejudice; the number of incidents reported; the number of incidents investigated and / or resolved
- Improvements in the perception of the level of antisocial behaviour in the borough
- The proportion of Stockton Renaissance members signed up to the “Commitment to Community Cohesion”

### **CASE STUDY Tristar homes – Neighbourhood agreements**

In partnership with UNITE, Tristar Homes are to work with local residents in 5 localities to develop Neighbourhood agreements, These set out the standards of service all providers in the area commit to and also what the expected contributions from the local Community are. The 5 localities have been identified from statistics that show low levels of ASB recording in certain areas where we know ASB is occurring. The agreements will be developed with local residents and the outcomes monitored to see if anti-social behaviour decline as a result of the work. The initiative is part of the work to address the challenges of the Respect agenda and the housing management standard.

## **Reducing conflict and tension**

Despite the measures outlined in this strategy, from time to time the Borough will experience conflict and tension between different communities. The implementation of this strategy will minimise the possibility of large scale tension and it will be important to monitor and resolve tensions, no matter how small, through positive actions to ensure that they do not become larger scale issues. We strive to keep all our residents safe and will not tolerate any negative behaviour towards the most vulnerable in our community.

Nearly 60% of residents currently agree that the Borough is a place where residents from different ethnic backgrounds get on. This is a positive result in comparison with other areas and an increase on the 2004 result (53% in 2004).

Conflict between communities is not simply a result of race and can be a result of religious or often generational differences. We will work hard to reduce conflict between all our communities.

We will achieve this by

- Promoting mechanisms to report hate crimes
- Monitoring and analysing hate crimes and anti-social behaviour caused by prejudice and publicising actions taken following hate crime and anti-social behaviour
- Working with communities to reduce tensions and resolve emerging conflicts , for example by developing mediation schemes
- Identifying and tackling issues that are affecting people of different ethnic backgrounds getting on.

### **Monitoring progress**

In order to measure the progress Stockton Renaissance makes in reducing conflict and tension we will monitor performance against the following measures:

- The number of mechanisms for reporting incidents of hatred and prejudice; the number of incidents reported; the number of incidents investigated and / or resolved, satisfaction levels with the service
- The number of promotional activities for offensive incident schemes
- The number of mediation services available and take up of these services
- The proportion of residents who feel that the borough is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together

### **CASE STUDY – Independent Advisory Groups**

Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) were originally founded by the Metropolitan Police in response to the McPherson report into the Stephen Lawrence murder. They were introduced in Stockton in 2005 with the aim of providing a forum for a cross section of the local community to both give their views and share intelligence with the police, but also act as a critical friend.

Stockton IAG was launched following a series of roadshows held across the Stockton-on-Tees communities, which generated interest through outlining what IAGs could accomplish, but also helping people understand exactly what the police do and the pressures which the service faces. Meetings have been held on a variety of topics including; Control Room procedure, function of the Air Support Unit, the role of Special Branch, police use of firearms and immigration and asylum issues.

Feedback from members of the IAG has indicated that this has been a very worthwhile exercise and Stockton IAG is now held up as best practice for the rest of the force. Such has been the success of Stockton IAG, work has commenced to develop a Youth IAG using exactly the same concept to build trust between the police and young people of Stockton. This is the first of its type within the Cleveland Police Area.

## **Myth busting**

Many community cohesion issues come from a lack of knowledge and understanding of different communities. It is therefore essential that we work together to provide local people with information that is reliable and trusted. False perceptions are very hard to change, but we will work together to develop our own understanding and counter the myths and misconceptions about different communities.

We will do this by:

- Being clear about why we do things e.g. use funding to improve a specific areas of the Borough
- Work with the local media to break down the myths and misconceptions about different communities
- Developing our own understanding of the communities that make up the Borough
- Create opportunities for communities to learn about each other

## **Monitoring progress**

In order to measure the progress Stockton Renaissance makes in myth busting we will monitor performance against the following measures:

- The number of positive articles in the local media which help break down the myths and misconceptions about different communities
- The percentage of politicians and managers within public sector organisations who feel they have a good understanding of the different communities who make up the borough
- The number of opportunities for communities to learn about each other

### **CASE STUDY – Asylum Monologues**

This powerful presentation of real experiences read by actors generated a strong response from the public, many of whom had relied on information about asylum found in press reports and had not realised the extent of the suffering of asylum seekers.

## Empowerment

A strong, cohesive community is one where people feel empowered and that they have a say in decision making. Every resident, regardless of their background or lifestyle should have an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the Borough. Empowerment leads to positive contributions and these can be made at many different levels, from helping with a community project to participating in a residents group to standing for election onto the Council.

We will do this by:

- Opening up opportunities to participate to all sections of the community
- Developing the capacity of under represented groups to participate in the Borough
- Promoting opportunities to participate in democracy and decision making processes
- Ensuring that different communities are consulted on issues that affect them and that their views are listened to
- Identifying under represented groups and developing positive actions to enable participation and empowerment

## Monitoring progress

In order to measure the progress Stockton Renaissance makes in empowering people we will monitor performance against the following measures:

- The percentage of people who feel they can participate in the decision making process in the borough
- The proportion of the community registered to vote; the level of turn out at local and national elections
- The number of consultation and engagement activities targeted at specific communities and actions taken as a result

### **CASE STUDY - Housing Regeneration At Parkfield/Mill Lane**

The Parkfield Mill Lane area is home to many of the Borough's BME communities with many residents living in the areas designated for demolition or facelift works. In order to address the cultural and religious needs of the BME communities the following has been developed:

- When considering whether to demolish Phase 3, the BME community advised that they had a very stable community in that area. A number of residents lived in large 8 bed roomed homes which had been knocked through from two 3 storey properties to accommodate extended families. The local community had recently fundraised to purchase and demolish a derelict building to build a new mosque just outside the boundary of where they lived. In light of all these issues, the Council withdrew its demolition proposal
- Workshops have been held with the community to enable them to get involved in the design of their area
- TVHG, our RSL partner, will build some bespoke BME properties to cater for family size and cultural requirements such as the need to have dual living spaces for males and females and where possible, they will be positioned towards Mecca for daily prayer
- The new equity loan scheme is Sharia compliant so that all Muslim members of the community can take advantage of the loans
- Consultation events were held in venues which don't exclude any particular religions and at times which don't conflict with prayer times or religious festivals

## **Commitment to cohesive communities**

We, the members of Stockton Renaissance, are committed to improving the strength and cohesion of the borough's communities. We will take every opportunity to:

- promote equality of opportunity
- enhance community belonging and pride
- meet the needs and aspirations of local people
- celebrate diversity and commonality
- create boundaries
- reduce conflict and tension
- myth bust
- empower communities