

## **Briefing note on the Town Centre economic research project**

### **Introduction**

Stockport Council, on behalf of the Stockport Partnership, has commissioned a research and engagement project, to review employment and skills issues, and improve awareness of support services in the Town Centre residential area. This will involve working with both residents and business in the Town Centre.

### **The role of the Neighbourhood Renewal Team**

The Neighbourhood Renewal Team will be carrying out this work. They have extensive knowledge and experience of worklessness and a proven track record in engaging with local communities and stakeholders.

The work will include consultation with local residents and employers in these areas. It is anticipated this piece of work will provide a blue print for future consultation and engagement on economic drivers in other Priority 1 areas of the borough.

### **Profile of the Town Centre**

- Approximately 1,600 people in 958 households

There are four main concentrations of housing in the Town Centre -

- Mottram Street Estate – Mainly Stockport Homes.
- Rectory Garden and Peak Street – A mixture of Stockport Homes, Contour Housing and private dwellings.
- Covent Garden Estate – Mainly Stockport Homes.
- Market Area – Mainly flats, a mixture of Johnnie Johnson, Northern Counties and private dwellings.
- Higher levels of economic inactivity compared to Stockport average (47% compared to 31%),
- Higher levels of residents with no qualifications compared to Stockport average (51% compared to 26%),
- Higher levels of income deprivation compared to Stockport average (average mean income of £20,063 compared to £33,191),
- 425 claimants for benefits, of which 290 are for Incapacity Benefit,
- Higher levels of people experiencing a long-term limiting illness compared to Stockport average (33.5% compared to 17.7%).

### **Research and engagement project**

The project will involve fieldwork and focus groups with residents, as well as employer engagement activity in order to:

- Gain a better understanding of skills levels and employment status among a small representative cohort of local people,
- Identify the skills and recruitment needs of local employers in these residential areas,
- Identify awareness of support services for employment and skills among both local people and local employers,
- Raise interest in taking up these services, and
- Start to develop links between local residents seeking employment and local employers.

The project will involve -

- House to house survey of approximately 300 residents to identify skills levels, employment status, knowledge of support services. July and August 2010.
- Survey of local employers in and adjacent to the Priority 1 residential area to identify the skills and recruitment needs and methods, and awareness of support services. July and August 2010.
- Focus groups with residents to explore some of the issues raised in more detail. September and October 2010.
- Focus groups or 1-1 interviews with employers to explore some of the issues raised in more detail. September and October 2010.
- Use the findings of the above to provide recommendations for future engagement activity, and employment and skills services in the Town Centre priority 1 area. By end December 2010.

For further information about this work please contact Liz Madge, Neighbourhood Renewal Development Officer on 0161 476 1262 / 07891 949236 or [elizabeth.madge@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.madge@stockport.gov.uk).