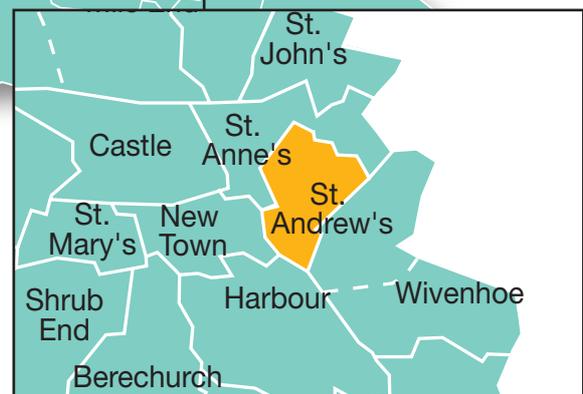


# Discovering Need, Developing Solutions

## St Andrew's Ward Community Strengths Assessment



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## ST ANDREW'S WARD COMMUNITY STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)

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### GENERAL INFORMATION

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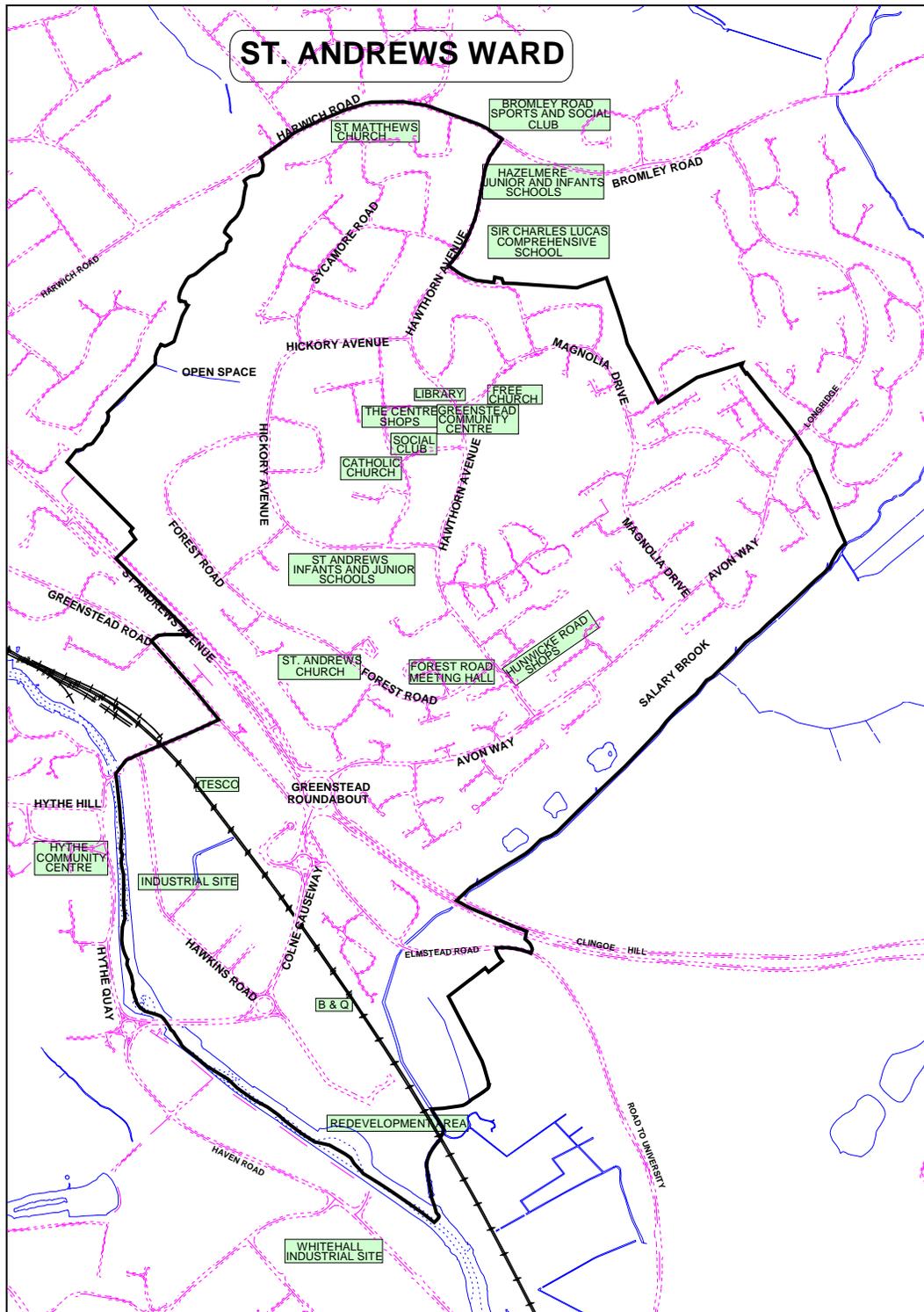
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## **1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY**

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### **1.1 Background to the research**

1.1.1 This was the third of four community assessments that the Social and Economic Regeneration Group at Colchester Borough Council have undertaken in local authority wards that have been identified as 'deprived' in the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 (IMD 2000). The completed reports for Harbour, Berechurch and St Anne's wards are currently available online at [www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk) (to find these, click on the 'Research and Statistics' link, then 'Community Research'). Alternatively, you may telephone us if you would prefer to receive a paper copy (see Community Development and Research Contacts listed on page 4).

1.1.2 The purpose of producing this report was to increase local knowledge about characteristics and needs in these wards. These needs have been established from consultation with residents about their neighbourhood and community. This is accompanied by analysis from interviews with community and voluntary groups about the strengths and needs of their organisations and interviews about the support that these groups receive.

1.1.3 Research has shown that a vibrant community and voluntary sector and increased community involvement can have a significant and positive impact on social exclusion in areas of deprivation. Future community development work will be planned largely around the findings of this research.

### **1.2 Structure of the report**

This report is divided into six main chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction and methodology

Chapter 2: Executive summary of main findings

Chapter 3: Recommendations

Chapter 4: Results of household survey

Chapter 5: Results of interviews with community and voluntary groups

Chapter 6: Results of interviews with support organisations

### **1.3 Geography and boundaries used**

- 1.3.1 This report looks at community needs in St Andrew's ward. As mentioned above, St Andrew's ward was initially selected along with three other wards as the target area for this research on the basis of its score on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (ID 2000). This highlighted that St Andrew's ward was the most deprived ward of all 27 wards in the borough. Details of the ward boundary can be viewed on the map on page 5.

### **1.4 Methodology**

- 1.4.1 This research involved three separate parts:

- a) A household survey
- b) Interviews with community and voluntary groups
- c) Interviews with support organisations

The details of each of these methods are outlined below.

*a) Household survey*

- 1.4.2 A household survey was carried out in Jan/Feb 2004. This involved face to face interviews with 224 residents in St Andrew's ward. This amounts to a survey of approximately 5.5% of all the households in the ward. This is the standard sample size for each of the four wards where this research was carried out.

- 1.4.3 The survey asked people about their level of involvement in the community. It also explored the issues that they felt need addressing, in terms of community needs and gaps in the delivery of services to St Andrew's. A copy of the survey that was used is included in Appendix 1.

*b) Interviews with community and voluntary groups*

- 1.4.4 A total of 19 interviews were conducted with representatives from local community and voluntary groups. These interviews looked at the strengths, levels of organisation and the needs of these groups. A list of the groups interviewed is included in Appendix 2 and a copy of the interview form is included in Appendix 3.

*c) Interviews with support organisations*

- 1.4.5 A total of 12 interviews were conducted with organisations that provide support to community and voluntary groups in St Andrew's to achieve their objectives. These interviews looked at support currently delivered in St Andrew's, as well as support available. The list of organisations interviewed is included in Appendix 2 and a copy of the interview form that was used is contained in Appendix 4.

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## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

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### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This summary integrates the findings from each of the methodologies used throughout the research. Methodologies used include a household survey, interviews with community and voluntary groups and interviews with support organisations (see chapter 1 for more detail). Recommendations for tackling each of the issues highlighted in this section of the report are contained in Chapter 3.
- 2.1.2 The main findings that emerged from the research shaped the structure of this chapter. It is organised under the following sections:
- Anti-social behaviour
  - Younger people
  - Funding
  - Resource issues and local meeting places
  - Building equality
  - Community participation
  - Joint working and support
- 2.1.3 The first two sections - Anti-social behaviour and Younger people are closely linked. For instance, anti-social behaviour was seen as a problem in the neighbourhood and respondents identified younger people as the main cause. Providing better leisure and recreation facilities in St Andrew's and activities aimed at younger people were seen as a solution to this problem.
- 2.1.4 The next sections, Funding, and Resource Issues and Local Meeting Places were identified mostly from the interviews with community and voluntary groups. These relate to the ability of community and voluntary groups in St Andrew's to carry out their objectives with the available resources.
- 2.1.5 The last three sections, Building Equality, Community Participation and Joint Working and Support, relate to the ways in which community and voluntary groups try to involve and include people and the extent to which support organisations assist them in doing so.
- 2.1.6 For conciseness and to avoid duplication, this chapter does not contain data. All references to research findings, however, signpost back to from the original text where actual data can be found.

## **2.2 Anti-social behaviour**

- 2.2.1 Anti-social behaviour was seen as a major problem for people in St Andrew's. This was the most common type of issue that people said they had taken practical action to address. More specifically, the issues they said they had addressed included noise, drug abuse and vandalism (see Section 4.6.2). Many people also commented on the disruptive / abusive behaviour of younger people in the neighbourhood (see Section 2.3 for more detail about this aspect of the issue).
- 2.2.2 Anti-social behaviour was also the issue most commonly rated as a problem after litter and rubbish, and vandalism and graffiti (although these issues may all be described as forms of anti-social behaviour) (see Section 4.15.2).
- 2.2.3 Additionally, two community and voluntary groups stated (unprompted) that anti-social behaviour of people within the neighbourhood hindered them in meeting their groups' objectives (see Section 5.3.6).

## **2.3 Younger people**

- 2.3.1 The needs and behaviour of younger people were a recurrent theme throughout the research process and is closely connected to the issue of anti-social behaviour discussed above.
- 2.3.2 The household survey revealed that disruptive / abusive behaviour of younger people in the neighbourhood was the second most common type of issue that people said they had taken practical action to address (see Section 4.6.2).
- 2.3.3 More than one third of household survey interviewees felt local facilities for younger people were inadequate. In fact, facilities for younger people received the highest level of poor or very poor ratings of all the services listed (see Section 4.12.4).
- 2.3.4 Indeed, improving the facilities for younger people was by far seen as the highest priority of all the services listed. Nearly three times more people rated this as the service to which they would give highest priority than public transport, the service that was prioritised by the next highest proportion (see Section 4.13.2).
- 2.3.5 When household survey interviewees were asked to give any ideas for additional groups that they would welcome within their community, the most common types of suggestion given were activities for teenagers and activities for children (see Section 4.9.1).

- 2.3.6 Similarly, events / services for younger people were the most common suggestions made when people were asked for ideas for services or events that they would like to see in the new Greenstead Community Centre (see Section 4.11.3).
- 2.3.7 It is perhaps worth noting that the difficulties surrounding younger people and anti-social behaviour in this area have been recognised and that activities to tackle these issues have gained momentum over the last year in St Andrew's. For instance, two United Solutions Problem Solving groups (multi-agency, time limited teams) have been set up specifically to deal with these issues.

## **2.4 Funding**

- 2.4.1 Funding was rated as the most common problem facing community and voluntary groups in St Andrew's. Almost two thirds of groups interviewed said that funding was a significant problem (see Section 5.3.2).
- 2.4.2 Almost half of groups had a dedicated person responsible for fundraising. Nearly two thirds of groups had sought funding advice on at least one occasion over the past three years. The majority had approached a funding body such as Colchester Borough Council or National Lottery funding (see Sections 5.4.7, 5.4.8).
- 2.4.3 It is interesting to note, however, that funding levels for groups in St Andrew's was generally fairly high. Nearly one third of groups said that they received funding of £100,000 and over in the previous year. Just one group said they did not receive any revenue or funding and one group received less than £1,000 (see Sections 5.4.5, 5.4.6).
- 2.4.4 Interviews with support organisations revealed that all six of the organisations interviewed that provide funding to groups in Colchester said they funded at least one community or voluntary group in St Andrew's at the time of completing the questionnaire (see Section 6.2.1).

## **2.5 Resource issues and local meeting places**

- 2.5.1 Of all the resources and equipment listed, meeting space was rated as the most problematic for community and voluntary groups in St Andrew's. Just under half of the groups interviewed said that this was a significant problem (see Section 5.4.13).
- 2.5.2 One group said they felt that the lack of an appropriate venue for meetings was a barrier to fuller participation in local networks (see Section 5.7.9).

- 2.5.3 According to the support organisations that were interviewed, however, several meeting places were available to community and voluntary groups. Some of these were free of charge, whilst others said that they incurred a charge (see Section 6.3.2).
- 2.5.4 It is perhaps worth mentioning that the new Greenstead Community Centre opened during the course of the research. The timing of this may have had an impact on the findings of the research. The recent availability of this community facility may alleviate some of these problems.
- 2.5.5 Responses to the household survey seem to confirm that the timing of the research might have impacted on the findings since many interviewees were not sure of how to rate local meeting places.
- 2.5.6 Over one third of people said they did not know how to rate meeting places in St Andrew's. Of those that did have an opinion about meeting places, the responses were divided evenly between those who felt that they were good or very good and those who felt that they were poor or very poor (see Section 4.12.5).
- 2.5.7 Although groups generally appeared to be well resourced, storage space was rated as a problem by many of the groups interviewed. Meeting space was also a problem for many of the groups interviewed (see Sections 5.4.13, 5.4.14).

## **2.6 Building equality**

- 2.6.1 The groups interviewed appeared confident about their ability to deal with equal opportunities issues. All 17 groups that answered this question agreed (strongly or slightly) that they had the skills or experiences necessary to deal with equal opportunities issues (see Section 5.5.2).
- 2.6.2 Many community and voluntary groups interviewed said they had been involved in activities for challenging discrimination within their communities. For example, more than one third of groups had done this through awareness raising events (see Section 5.6.3).
- 2.6.3 Just three of all 19 groups interviewed said they had neither a written equal opportunities policy nor a statement of equality within their constitution. All three of these groups, however, said they would be interested in receiving help to develop these (see Section 5.6.1).
- 2.6.4 Although the majority of groups conveyed commitment and concern about these issues, very few groups showed signs of implementing or monitoring equal opportunities in any systematic way. For instance, many groups said that they tried to be open and accessible and that

they would be prepared to challenge any incidents of discrimination that occurred within their group (see Section 5.6.3).

- 2.6.5 Community and voluntary groups rated language barriers in communicating with the local community and access to childcare for members to access activities as the least problematic of all issues listed. Three quarters of the groups interviewed said that language barriers were no problem and over one half of groups said that child care was no problem. However, this does not necessarily mean that these are not problems for these groups, but that they were not perceived as such by those interviewed. Further examination would be needed to investigate the possible existence, and then the extent of, any of these access issues (see Section 5.3.4).
- 2.6.6 Interviews with the support organisations revealed that support is available to community and voluntary groups in St Andrew's in promoting diversity. For example, St Andrew's has a Community Development worker who is able to offer advice and support to groups on these issues, but this tends to be delivered to groups as issues arise (see Section 6.5.1).
- 2.6.7 Over half of the community and voluntary groups interviewed, however, said that they received support for their work on equal opportunities. Ten of these organisations were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the quality of support that they received on implementing equal opportunities (see Section 5.6.4).
- 2.6.8 As mentioned above, the majority of the groups interviewed felt that they had the necessary skills and experience to deal with equal opportunities issues and many people felt that language barriers were not an issue. This could reflect reality, or it could reflect a lack of awareness on the part of community and voluntary groups in St Andrew's in addressing issues of diversity and equality of opportunity. Further investigation would be needed to determine whether this was the case.
- 2.6.9 Since St Andrew's has the second most ethnically diverse population of all 27 wards in Colchester (according to 2001 Census) it could be that many people from black and minority ethnic groups are not accessing local services. One possible explanation for this could be that many of these people are accessing services at the University of Essex. However, this might be because they feel that St Andrew's is not particularly friendly to people from black and minority ethnic groups. In fact, this aspect of diversity is particularly important in relation to St Andrew's since a number of racial incidents have recently occurred in this area.

## **2.7 Community participation**

- 2.7.1 Whilst three quarters of people interviewed for the household survey said that they were happy living in their neighbourhood, almost one

third of people said they did not feel a part of their community. Again, almost one third of people said they do not know the people that live near them on their road or street. This combination of responses could suggest that a significant proportion of the population felt they were less integrated in community life (see Sections 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4).

- 2.7.2 Similarly, whilst approximately half of the people interviewed said they felt well informed about issues of concern in their neighbourhood, almost as many people disagreed (slightly or strongly) (see Section 4.4.2).
- 2.7.3 The vast majority of people said they had not taken practical action in an attempt to resolve an issue that affected their community in the last two years (see Section 4.5.7).
- 2.7.4 Interviews with community groups revealed that recruiting and retaining volunteers appeared to be a common problem for groups in St Andrew's (see Section 5.3.3).
- 2.7.5 Just four of all 200 people interviewed for the household survey had come into contact with any of the local groups listed as a volunteer (see Section 4.8.3).
- 2.7.6 However, nearly one quarter of people said they would be willing to get more involved in local groups. The most common factor that prevents people from getting involved in local groups is lack of time (almost half of all people interviewed) (see Sections 4.10.1, 4.10.2).

## **2.8 Joint working and support**

- 2.8.1 Community and voluntary groups in St Andrew's generally seemed well connected and supported by the support organisations that were interviewed. For instance, as mentioned above, all six of the support organisations that offer funding to groups in Colchester currently fund groups in St Andrew's at the time of completing questionnaire. Additionally, all eight of the support organisations that said they offered staff time to community and voluntary groups were doing so in St Andrew's. All seven of the support organisations that said they could provide information to community and voluntary groups in Colchester currently do so in St Andrew's (see Section 6.2.4).
- 2.8.2 More than half of the community and voluntary groups interviewed had been involved in joint working with the local Council over the previous year and half said they had been involved in joint working with other statutory agencies. The majority of groups were members of formal networks (see Sections 5.7.6, 5.7.7).

- 2.8.3 Suggestions for ways of improving local networks include having more focussed meetings that are relevant and lead to action (see Section 5.7.7).
- 2.8.4 Almost half of groups interviewed said they would be interested in support to identify their training needs (see Section 5.5.4).
- 2.8.5 As discussed in Section 2.6.3 above, all three of the community and voluntary groups in St Andrew's that said they have neither an equal opportunities policy nor a statement of equality within their constitution said they would be interested in receiving help to develop their practices (see Section 5.6.1).

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## 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Below is a short list of recommendations that have been proposed in the light of findings about local needs that emerged from this research. These recommendations are organised under the same thematic section headings under which the Executive Summary was structured (see Chapter 2). Each issue is briefly documented along with suggested recommendations as to how they might be tackled. These recommendations are intended as a starting point to instigate further community action and are by no means an exhaustive list.

### 3.2 Anti-social behaviour

3.2.1 Anti-social behaviour was widely perceived as a problem in St Andrew's. In fact, this issue has already been recognised, particularly in relation to the behaviour of younger people and United Solutions Problem Solving groups have been set up to tackle these issues.

3.2.2 **Recommendation 1:** Engage with the United Solutions process to ensure the success of the problem solving groups.

3.2.3 **Recommendation 2:** Support colleagues in Essex Police, Colchester Borough Council, Colchester Borough Homes, and Housing Associations to promote the use of new resources to combat anti-social behaviour such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

### 3.3 Younger people

3.3.1 Younger people were a prominent theme emerging from this research. In connection to the issue discussed above, younger people were closely associated with anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood. People in St Andrew's are keen to provide activities for younger people and create opportunities for them to be more involved in the community.

3.3.2 **Recommendation 3:** Map services for younger people currently available in St Andrew's (and St Anne's).

3.3.3 **Recommendation 4:** Consult with younger people about the gaps that exist and their interest in new services.

- 3.3.4 **Recommendation 5:** Organise a planning event to help statutory and voluntary organisations develop new services for young people in the light of the mapping and consultation and to maintain improved co-ordination.

### **3.4 Funding**

- 3.4.1 Funding was seen as a significant problem for many groups in St Andrew's. It is not clear why such a large proportion of groups felt that funding was a problem since levels of funding for groups in this area is generally relatively high.

- 3.4.2 **Recommendation 6:** Support the Colchester Community Voluntary Service (CCVS) outreach project to target community groups in St Andrew's for funding and business planning advice and training.

### **3.5 Local meeting places**

- 3.5.1 Access to local meeting places was rated as the most problematic for groups of all the resources listed. Although many groups were satisfied with the premises they used, a number of groups had low levels of satisfaction with the premises they used.

- 3.5.2 It is important to note that the new Greenstead Community Centre opened during the course of the research. The extent to which the timing of this research may have impacted upon these findings is not clear. It is hoped that the recent availability of this facility may alleviate some of these problems. However, one group suggested that affordability might be an issue for some groups in accessing the community centre.

- 3.5.3 **Recommendation 7:** Support the Greenstead Community Association to ensure the Greenstead Community Centre meets the needs of individuals and groups in the area while adopting a sustainable business plan.

### **3.6 Building equality**

- 3.6.1 Community and voluntary groups appeared fairly confident that they had the skills and experiences necessary to deal with equal opportunities issues. Although the majority of groups conveyed commitment and concern about these issues, very few showed signs of implementing equal opportunities in any systematic way or addressing issues proactively.

- 3.6.2 For example, language barriers in communicating with the local community were not seen to be a problem for the majority of groups.

However, since St Andrew's has one of the most ethnically diverse populations of all 27 wards in Colchester (according to 2001 Census) it could be that many black and minority ethnic (BME) groups are not accessing local services. One possible explanation for this could be that many of these people are accessing services at the University of Essex. However, this might be because they feel that St Andrew's is not particularly friendly to people from black and minority ethnic groups. In fact, this aspect of diversity may be particularly important in relation to St Andrew's since a number of racial incidents have recently occurred in this area.

- 3.6.3 Support is available for community and voluntary groups in building equality and most groups appeared to be satisfied with the support available for dealing with issues of diversity as they arose.
- 3.6.4 Although the majority of groups in St Andrew's said that they had an equal opportunities policy or a statement of equality within their constitution, a handful of groups said that they had neither of these and said they were interested in having help to develop these.
- 3.6.5 **Recommendation 8:** Ensure that the Community Development workers continue to remain abreast of trends and legislation pertaining to diversity and equality of opportunity.
- 3.6.6 **Recommendation 9:** Support community and voluntary groups to develop equal opportunities policies (particularly where they do not have one) to strengthen their organisations. Continue to support community and voluntary groups in responding to issues of diversity and equality of opportunity as they arise.
- 3.6.7 **Recommendation 10:** Support the Tendring and Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership to research the needs of local black and minority ethnic people to access services.
- 3.6.8 **Recommendation 11:** Encourage local community and voluntary groups to consider the findings of the above research and amend their policies and practices accordingly in order to make their services accessible to all people within their target populations.

### **3.7 Community participation**

- 3.7.1 A small segment of people in the neighbourhood feel that they are less integrated in community life.
- 3.7.2 Recruiting and retaining volunteers was a common problem for groups in St Andrew's. Very few of the people interviewed had come into contact with any local community and voluntary groups as a volunteer. However, almost one quarter of the people interviewed said they would be willing to get more involved in local groups.

3.7.3 **Recommendation 12:** In connection with Recommendation 7, support the Greenstead Community Association to produce the Greenstead Grapevine newsletter. Ensure that the newsletter encourages participation and involvement of all sections of the community (see Recommendation 9).

3.7.4 **Recommendation 13:** Work with the voluntary sector, Greenstead Community Association, and the University to organise promotional events to encourage wider community participation and volunteering.

### **3.8 Joint working and support**

3.8.1 Community and voluntary groups in St Andrew's generally seem well supported (with the possible exception of issues regarding diversity and equality of opportunity) and networks between community and voluntary groups and statutory organisations in this area appear to be relatively strong.

3.8.2 **Recommendation 14:** Continue to support the 'Health for Greenstead' networking forum to provide an opportunity for agencies to share information, exchange good practice and plan joint working.