

# Culture, Sport and Cohesion

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City of

**Stoke-on-Trent**

# What happened in Stoke-on-Trent on Saturday, 3 August 2024

- Street violence; very few people injured; some property damage in city centre.
- Police kept apart ‘far-right’ protesters
- Men in balaclavas with blocks of wood. Suspected HT sympathisers involved in this faux ‘community defence’.
- Excellent collaboration between Business Improvement District (BID), police and council – shared intel and CCTV. 100 people now wanted by the police.
- PREVENT funding was cut by government, but we as a council funded skeleton service via general fund.



# Social context – fertile ground

- Austerity, plus our past of pits, pots and steel, lead to steep decline – might drop from 13<sup>th</sup> most deprived LA in IMD.
- ESF – a loan of c£40m to make ends meet, and pivot children's services towards prevention and early help.
- Circa 1:55 children in care and 1:25 'known' to us. Highest number of children in care (per capita) in England.
- History of far-right mobilisation, especially in peripheral estates.
- History of terror threats from far right within Asian community.
- RSG cuts (down from £95m - £27m between 2010 and 2024) required reduction in pro-social activities and community capacity building.



# ONS wellbeing measures

New corporate approach values wellbeing as measured by the ONS questions like:

	Stoke-on-Trent (rank / 150)	Staffs County (rank / 150)
Happiness	89 <sup>th</sup>	39 <sup>th</sup>
Life Satisfaction	140 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>
Worthwhile	121 <sup>st</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>



# Recovery plan: culture and sport

In this battle of ideas, our sector can make a difference.

- Best messages come from trusted sources. Coaches, arts leaders in locally trusted organisations (LTOs) which provide valued service/activity.
- DNA of LTOs needs to be pro-social and adapt good practice.
- Something to do; somewhere to go; someone to talk (and to trust).
- Opportunities for 'self-actualization' and belonging - making sense of the world and one's place in it. Improves lives!





# Recovery plan: strengthen neighbourhoods

Cohesion-proof our offers:

- Create new community leaders through smarter volunteering opportunities. Citizen's Jury too.
- Equip face-to-face leaders with cohesion skills: Operationalise good practice in 'what works': considerable literature to build on.
- Open leisure centre doors to more women only sessions.
- Exploring 'all stars' junior squads to represent the city that are designed to promote inter-communal collaboration.
- Greater leisure offers designed to engage disengaged youth: especially on their doorstep in most deprived areas.



# Recovery plan: heritage – wounded pride

Specifically in Stoke-on-Trent:

- World Craft City status.
- Heritage needs bringing back to life.
- Decay disrespects the city, neighbourhoods and family history...



# Stoke 100 – our centenary

- In 1925 Stoke-on-Trent became a city.
- Some grandstand events planned.
- Support community groups to run celebrations.
- Create citizens' jury and other listening forums.
- Amending theme now to something like 'fresh start; rebirth; Charter 100....'







**Thank you**

