

**Unheard Voices**

**Sustainable Community Strategy**

**Consultation with Hard-to-Reach  
Groups**

**Research Report**

**Document prepared for:**

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Stroud District Council, in conjunction with the Local Strategic Partnership, has been running some public consultation on the Draft Community Strategy. The community strategies are now about delivering sustainable communities, following the Egan Review and authorities are looking at how they can ensure that communities offer people:

- a decent home that they can afford
- a community in which they want to live and work
- the chance to develop their skills and interests
- access to jobs and excellent services
- the chance to get engaged in their community and make a difference.

The authority now has a particular need to gain more knowledge about those communities on the fringes which are harder to reach than the people who may already have responded to consultation. A specific piece of research was required to identify how the aims of the community can be related to the communities such as:

- people with disabilities
- the BME community
- new EU communities
- gay and lesbian residents

The research examined aspects of equal access and cultural requirements that these communities might feel is lacking. Within the Stroud District there are pockets of communities who may use facilities in Gloucester and may think this is sufficient but the research needs to go beyond this and examine what future motivations and needs could be fulfilled within the District.

### 1.2 Objectives of the Research

The objectives of the research were quite open-ended as the research was commissioned to identify the current situation plus any unmet needs rather than test any specific ideas, since not much was known about the communities involved. The main objectives were as follows:

- identify needs of specific hard to reach communities
- ascertain what they want to be provided in their area
- examine issues surrounding, employment, housing, access to services.



### **1.3 Method**

A qualitative methodology was used as quantitative techniques were considered unworkable given the small percentage of the population involved. Thirty in-depth interviews were conducted in people homes or chosen venue and interviews of one to two hours were conducted.

The final sample is yet to be confirmed at time of writing but there is a good spread across the four categories.

### **1.4 Structure of Report**

The following sections outline the spontaneous issues considered to be important to the different communities. They do not appear in order of priority but were all raised generally as natural concerns.

It will be noted that many of the verbatim comments appear as spoken rather than correcting the English used.



## 2. General Wellbeing

The research covered a broad range of diverse targets within these seldom heard groups; some of which feel more included than others. Disability groups seemed to have quite good structures in place, whilst the new EU communities are just emerging and in flux with regard to how long they want to stay and whether they will settle.

Interestingly, there was a widespread view that the Stroud district is a friendly and welcoming place for people who are in the minority. It is felt to be a place in which hard workers can prosper.

The area is clearly valued for its natural beauty and heritage and, to this extent, this group of people agree with general priorities within the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) to protect this part of Stroud district's character.

*"I really like the picturesque of the country. The houses are beautiful. Towns are small so it is not really full of smoke or traffic." EU*

The new EU communities can be quite content with the area because many are trying to change their lives and on the whole they see this country as having better opportunities and facilities:

*"Not experience any problems. Government is really helpful and the police officers are alright. All benefits offices are alright I don't have to go to the council. I feel alright in this Country" EU*

The different groups interviewed all thought that Stroud was quite a 'calm' place which was relatively safe from a crime and a hate-crime point of view, largely due to it being not very 'urban'. People's sense of well-being was quite high, but for young people there were difficulties in achieving a vibrant social life or engaging with cultural activities:

*"I feel safe in Stroud; it is a big thing. I have had no prejudice in Stroud and I have met some other gay people which is nice." LGBT*

*"It is nice area here but there is nothing to do for young people. This is very quiet for me. The thing is we work from 11 in the morning to midnight so because when I am working I can't do anything else. When I have time off I am sleeping or cleaning my room". EU*

People with disabilities seemed to enjoy the Stroud district but experienced some barriers towards leading a full life. Generally, there were felt to be examples of good practice in terms of improvements to physical accessibility and good joint working with voluntary groups. Some still did not feel able to speak up about issues and those with physical disabilities seemed to feel less isolated than those with mental health disabilities or other 'invisible' disabilities.



### 3. Finding Employment/Getting a Job

Some of the groups researched did experience difficulties in obtaining employment.

For people with disabilities there were barriers towards gaining employment which stemmed largely from employers' attitudes towards how they would integrate a disabled person. In the case of visually-impaired people there was considered to be a lack of understanding on the part of companies about the cost and availability of technology, such as speaking software. Another concern for employers was a perceived barrier of health and safety and the imagined need to make too many 'adaptations' to the workplace. One person had come across the erroneous view that the company would need to paint white lines everywhere so that she would be able to find her way around the office.

*"Basically they are not expecting anyone with a disability to have a proper job. Not a job that they are capable of intellectually. They are expecting them to be satisfied with a menial job. I know people who've got visual impairment who have degrees and God knows what and they still can't get a proper job." D*

The need for educating employers about disability was considered to be high. In the case of mental health needs, the situation was felt to be more severe due to employers' lack of understanding and prejudice. There were experiences of people being interviewed for a job and not being able to be transparent about (for example) being on medication for a controlled mental health condition:

*"I went for a job application in XYZ and as soon as I told them I was on injections, their face dropped and he ended the interview. He was definitely prejudice against me and I didn't get a letter or nothing saying I'd not got the job. His jaw dropped as soon as I told him I had mental health problems, he started fidgeting as if I was going to attack him or something." D*

There were felt to be certain ignorances in Stroud that were largely echoed on a national basis but that could be slightly worse in Stroud, such as getting a job as a black person. Whilst there was not considered to be outright prejudice, it was obvious that people in the area are not used to seeing 'many black faces' and so the situation was always unusual for them. This was not always a negative for some black people who enjoyed having a high profile or being 'a bit special' because they felt more characterful.

Revealing one's sexuality at a job interview or during the first phases of employment was considered to be inadvisable and, for some, a complete no-no. One person, whose trade was bricklayer, would never reveal the fact that he was gay in the building trade as he knew the culture would not be able to accept it. Another person chose to conceal their sexuality from their employer because they thought they would lose their job:

*"If they found out I was gay I am sure they would find some other reason to not require my services anymore. Maybe I am judging them and that would not be the case, I do not feel comfortable." LGBT*

At the time of the research, people were not very confident about the economic situation and so getting a job was concerning for many. Those from EU countries and also within the



Asian and Turkish communities were protected to a certain degree from this situation because some had come directly to a job that was arranged beforehand. Others, for example in the Bangladeshi communities had very fixed and supportive employment networks in the restaurant trade.

Some from EU communities who had been here doing jobs that were not on a par with their qualifications, felt that they would like to stay but wanted to be able to use their qualifications from home. This was considered to be very difficult due to the lack of equivalency and the language barriers. For example, one person had a marketing qualification but had struggled to learn business English to a good enough level and felt that getting a professional job was probably not going to happen:

*“The opportunity for work here with my qualification is not as good as back home because everything is knowledge of language and experience which I don’t have yet. I studied marketing but what that needs is very, very good communication skills and knowledge of language, so I can understand why I can’t get a job. When I will come back home I will work with an International company. It would have been ideal to get a job in marketing here. You get to another level.” EU*

*“I really like catering but the only thing is that is difficult to get career progression. It can happen in 3-5 years here but that growth is not enough for me. So I want to go home now.” EU*

Those of working age believed there was not a great variety in job opportunities in the Stroud district. On the professional side, many thought that jobs were in Cheltenham, Gloucester or Bristol. Because people thought that public transport was not sufficiently integrated to be useful they thought that there were barriers to reach these jobs. Transportation to participate in many other activities also based in these towns was considered to be a barrier (see elsewhere in the report).



#### 4. Equality and Prejudice

Interestingly, there was a dual perspective on issues of equality and prejudice. On the one hand respondents found people living in the Stroud district to be very friendly, accepting and liberal-minded. On the other hand it was not felt to be an equal society and some of these groups did not feel that there were 'equal opportunities for all':

*"I find Stroud quite a liberal place. I've got quite a few black friends and I do notice them looking because it is not a multi-cultural place. There's lots of old hippies quite spiritual and they are more accepting of the person rather than the label." LGBT*

The BME community was aware that they were a minority and that this was not a multi-cultural area at all. This hampered some people's well-being but on the whole many communities, especially the more long-standing ones, had prospered and not experienced racial hatred from other residents:

*"I find most people friendly but sometimes I do struggle. Not because of my sexuality but because of my colour. I do feel a bit like a minority. It's a bit weird sometimes. The way I dress I think. Some people look at my colour and automatically have an opinion of me. Most of the time it doesn't bother me but I feel people do look at me. I am from Ladbroke Grove in West London and it is so multicultural and there is every race where I was brought up. Every kind of person from every type of community lives there." BME*

*"I enjoy it is a very nice area, people are very friendly. No prejudice, people are very friendly. Especially in the restaurant. We know everyone." BME*

*"I don't mind being a minority. I don't mind being the talk of the town does that make sense, if it is in a positive way. I don't get any derogatory statements or looks, it is more like people want to know me. I find a lot of women want to know me. Especially in Tesco's. A lot of people do say hello to me and they want to know who is the new kid on the block." BME*

However, some of the BME communities seemed to have a high threshold in terms of what they are prepared to accept. Taunting from groups of young people or others, such as name calling, was considered to be normal and was generally ignored. People were aware that they were stared at if they were black but not so much if they were Asian:

*"There are small things like we went to ZYZ and they are like 'Paki bastards' and I don't take any notice, people are just idiot silly. I am not going to their level they are stupid people. Even then I never complained. A small chant here and there I don't mind". BME*

Similarly, there were taunts made by evening revellers outside the kebab shop or people leaving a gay pub. Both were dismissed as harmless drunken behaviour.

*"I had a bit of verbal abuse when I came out of pub where gay people go. But it was drunken stuff just ignorance really". LGBT*



On a more organisational level, there was also one case where a person from the BME community believed that he had experienced racism from the Council itself. He would not and did not feel that he could report this formally:

*“This Council is racial discrimination and I have not ever used this word before and I have been here since my teens in 1967. This is the first time really.” BME*

There were no other accusations of organisational racism or hate crime mentioned in the Stroud District and any incidents seemed to be on a one-to-one basis eg from passers by or colleagues. Most, bar a few respondents, thought they would be happy to report incidents to the Police. There was no awareness of the Cotswold and Stroud Hate Crime and Incidents Group as a method of reporting although people also mentioned the CAB and Solicitors for example.

Those from the EU communities did not think they had experienced any prejudice, but they believed they were not able to be ‘equal in society’ because of the language barrier. They also felt that their lives were a bit isolated from the general community because working so hard kept them away from mixing with other residents.

Some EU immigrants and BME members thought that their peers attracted hatred if they did not bother to learn English. It was often this that annoyed residents rather than the racial difference itself they thought.

From the perspective of people with a disability, they did not feel equal but many held the view that it was in part for them to make some compromises as well as for Society. Whilst there are many things that authorities can and should do to increase access and raise awareness, there was no need to be ‘militant’ about it. Demanding changes was not thought to be the way to get change.

Nevertheless, there was considered to be some prejudice toward disabled people due to ignorance, fear and lack of awareness:

*“Life should be available mainstream for everybody. I don’t think it is because people expect you to slot into your category of MS, Parkinsons, Autism. But I don’t think that is right we all ought to intermingle. I want to be part of the mainstream and I am kicking and screaming to fit in.” D*

*“People have a mindset. There is prejudice within disability. People don’t want to be seen as having a disability and if you’re not sat in a wheelchair then they don’t see it. But there are quite a lot of days when you can’t move around at all and you just want to stay in bed”. D*

*“People with mental health problems are not treated equally. There’s people who gets help and people who don’t get help and they’re are not monitored. It is under control here there’s not many wrong uns around. But there should be lectures about mental health to help people understand it a bit better.” D*



## 5. Going Shopping

Disabled people raised the issue of town centre layouts and obstacles such as street furniture, waste paper bins and flower baskets. This was an issue for both wheelchair users and visually-impaired people. Others in the disability spectrum were less worried about obstacles but more about the lack of places to sit and rest in towns: *“more benches please”*

*“Street furniture, boxes of flowers, bollards and waste paper baskets. Those cobbles are a nightmare for a cane user. You get bikes coming straight at you and vans reversing when it is supposed to be pedestrianised.” D*

*“In fairness you’ve got to strike a balance. People are being pernickity and we can walk past.” D*

For others, including new EU immigrants, who tended to rely on public transport accessing the towns was considered to be difficult. The centre of Stroud was not regarded as a good shopping centre and younger people, which many of the BME and EU immigrants are, wanted more lively and interesting shops for something to do in their time off that was nearer than Cheltenham. There was incredulity expressed that everything shuts at five and on Sundays:

*“Buses needed to be running a lot later. And they should have a night bus to Cheltenham or Gloucester and one back late at night. They could do something about shops. The last time I saw a shopping centre like that in Merrywalks was in London 20 years ago. There is nothing in there. It is pointless, they should just make it an ice rink or just knock it down. It needs some regeneration it is a bit shabby.” BME*

*“It is small town. I am from small town in Slovakia. It is very similar to Stroud. It is fine. When you want to go shopping you need to go to the other towns.” EU*



## 6. Access to Health Agencies and Social Support

Respondents were quite pleased with the services they receive from the NHS and local GPs. BME and EU communities were full of praise, saying how much better they were than in their previous communities.

*“I went to the NHS and she just looked at it and told me it was not broken. It was really easy, I filled in a few forms and I paid some money for medicines, not very much and actually I am quite pleased with the NHS. It is was no problem at all. Really pleased it is alright.” EU*

Some EU immigrants realized that there was more emphasis on ‘natural’ therapies here, which they were not used to and thought strange. They had also noticed that it seem things don’t get solved on the first visit to a GP. There was also an issue with language for some people and requests for a helpline to access Polish speakers or the provision of translators when dealing with doctors and hospitals.

*“First of all the health problem. If Council could provide a translator for the health service. Some sort of helpline or phone number.”*

The LGBT community had not experienced problems accessing health services.

Some people with disabilities had minor complaints about ‘reception’ areas, such as finding seats, not being given extra help to get through and past obstacles. Physical accessibility to the building seemed to be okay and there was adequate parking in the main.

People with disabilities such as multiple sclerosis or mental health needs thought there could be better, easier and cheaper access to counselling and support groups in the form of a multi-functional health/resource centre. This was also felt to be interesting to some disabled people who wanted help with the depression that arises through lack of mobility and spending a significant amount of time in the house:

*“A neutral building where you knew a counsellor would be on a particular day.”*

This was felt to be an important facility for the District. Such drop-in centres should be in quiet parts of town, people thought, not in the middle as this can be stressful for some people with depression or access difficulties:.

*“There should be somewhere a place where you could go and talk to someone about your depression, where there were counsellors free of charge. I know there is the Samaritans but ..... A place where there are other things going on like a community centre. There isn’t really one. There are for theatre and arts and painting. It could also be a resource centre to learn languages for people with learning disabilities. Not a College. It would be good to have a lot of services under one roof.” D*

*“I’ve never been somewhere as supportive as Stroud before. They’ve got good services here but they could do with a drop in centre. Daytime.” D*



The ability to lead a healthy life was felt to be available in the Stroud District. There were lots of opportunities to walk, cycle and access leisure centres. The facilities for disabled people to participate in sport, where possible, were felt to be good.



## 7. Access to Learning

The availability of training courses in the District was felt to be quite good, although many types of courses were based in Gloucester and so there were issues of transport. Overall, there could be a better variety in the Stroud District in comparison with Gloucester or Cheltenham, people thought.

The flexibility of courses at Stroud College could be improved for people with mental health needs because of the inability to get to every session and pay upfront. The timing of courses was also an issue for some of the EU respondents who worked during the day. For people working in the catering trade, evening classes were difficult to make.

On the whole, the two groups who had the most to say about access to learning were the disabled community and new EU immigrants. Overall, access to learning was a much higher priority for people than is suggested in the SCS, although the ‘easy access to appropriate skills development and learning opportunities’ does chime with their needs.

The biggest concern for EU immigrants was learning the English language. Some employers had put courses on but they were generally very basic and infrequent. The courses available at Stroud College were also considered to be very basic. The main gaps were in the next level up and in reading and writing. By virtue of the interview process the people we spoke to had a fairly good command of the English language. However, we also spoke through them to others who had no language capabilities:

*“All of the problems go with this problem of language, we are not speaking fluent English. If we have something to do in offices we have a big problem to communicate with people but in every office people are so nice, they give us time and try to explain everything”. EU*

Such people initially had difficulties in independently accessing services, eg using banks and shops, but often relied either on their employers to help or their own cultural community.

Several, including Polish, Slovakian and Turkish people thought that there was definitely scope for a dedicated language school in the Stroud District. There was some call from the Bangladeshi community for this also, but not to the same degree. There was considered to be demand for new arrivals but also for more established people who are looking to develop and move onto better jobs for which they are more qualified (in their own countries):

*“In Stroud and around, language schools are really, really expensive. I am looking at a language course in Gloucester for about £8,000! We haven’t got anything like that in Stroud. Too many people coming into the Stroud, Polish, Slovakian too many. Stroud College do something but it is not enough. Just speaking. I been there one year. In London it is really, really good. Council have to get language school for people”. EU*

Those people of working age with a disability were interested in skills development and training. Largely due to the low level of employment in this group, it was considered to be an



Access to Work issue. Again, Stroud was felt to lose out to Gloucester and so transport and cost became a barrier to learning:

*“Because of the work I am doing and my disability I could get the course for just under £10 but it was going to cost me just under £600 in transport. Fifteen weeks course but because our joint income is over I couldn’t get transport costs but I don’t think it is fair to ask my husband to pay for me to go on a course. My income on its own would have qualified.” D*



## 8. Transport

The issue of accessing services was considered paramount amongst these groups. There was a low-level of car ownership, due to low-income or disability and so many were reliant on non-car methods of travel. There was therefore a strong call to improve public transport for many reasons. Aspects of the SCS, such as making services as close to home as possible and reducing the need for ‘out-commuting’, were both considered to be important for many of these groups:

*“I would improve the buses. Make them more regular and have late buses. If they ran all the time, I could get anywhere, I could work in Gloucester and still come back here and live. They stop at 6 or 7 and that is insane. Improve public transport!” LGBT*

*“There’s buses going to Stroud they are always late. When you want to go to Cheltenham or Gloucester by train you always miss it.” EU*

*“Transport is ridiculous. The buses don’t run enough. If I didn’t have my car I couldn’t get my boy to Stratford swimming pool after school”. LGBT*

*“The buses after 7 o’clock terrible. If you went to Nailsworth you couldn’t get a bus back. Being on benefits it was really hard but now I have got a car.” BME*

*“It is a certain kind of area. It is nature. There is nothing to change it. That is the only trouble here is the travel”. EU*

For some people with disabilities, there were a number of accessibility issues discussed when using buses, such as the design layout and ease of using a bus with a wheelchair, which for some was not worth the hassle. Transport to places was a constant problem:

*“You’ve got constantly think ahead. You can’t do anything spontaneously. If you want to book a driver you have to book a driver a week in advance”. D*

Whilst also concerned about the reliability and frequency issue, visually-impaired people mentioned the difficulties of using the new bus station in Stroud:

*“I can’t find my bus to get home. So I get the Cashes Green bus and walk from the Co-op. What they laughingly call the bus station. It used to be able to count the stops and be pretty sure.” D*

This research fully endorses the need to improve accessibility across the district for disabled people as stated in the SCS.



## 9. Social and Cultural Activity

Whilst there is huge positive feedback about the peace and calmness of the Stroud District, a downside is the lack of accessible social activity for people. Some of the groups researched were very interested in funding to set up clubs, societies and resource centres to hold cultural evenings.

Younger people in particular felt very socially isolated.

*“There are blind clubs but they average 76 years old!” D*

*“It would be good to have a Turkish evening” EU*

*“ A Polish club, yes that would be good ”EU*

*“There is no gay scene here at all. The nearest is Bristol.” LGBT*

There are informal facilities for Muslims to take Friday prayers but they are very small. Although not all Muslims interviewed were regular attendees at Mosque and were therefore happy to go elsewhere for the main festivals (ie. Gloucester and Bristol), there was felt to be some demand for a better facility.

Although it appears that the creation of a new Mosque is dealt with by religious leaders, there was interest in forming a formal group with charitable status that could apply for funding for a resource centre or something similar. The community is reluctant to use central Stroud partly due to the prayer meetings being on Friday nights, meaning they would need to leave when people would be leaving pubs and clubs.

*“There is a demand now and we should organize something. We are in the process of organizing a welfare society and we have to have a constitution.” BME*

*“They do need a Mosque in Stroud because it is too small places. There would be demand. My manager told me that the room is very small. They were thinking about saving money altogether and get a big building but it is really hard at the moment”. BME*

*“100 people would go to Mosque”. BME*

*“There is just a few Bangladeshi and some in Forest Green it is not enough for a Mosque.” BME*

One Polish couple had wished to get married in this country, but the Polish Mass is no longer said in Stroud and the nearest was Gloucester. It is unclear whether there is sufficient demand here for a regular Mass but there appears to be a lack of information about who to contact. Certainly, there was a social need for a Polish Association of some sort:

*“That would be great. There is not so many places that you can go. We don’t meet any other Polish people. We don’t know many Polish people but we know there are*



*many Polish people in Stroud and Stonehouse. There is no place for us to go. That would be good, that would be great if they were doing something like that.” EU*

The LGBT community did not feel that there was enough going on for them to meet people. Although some were happy to go to Bristol, they wondered whether there was anything that could be done locally. Although they thought the community was not maybe large enough to have much going on, they thought there could be an improvement on the one local gay venue in Stroud. Some weren't happy with using the venue because they thought it was 'too seedy'. In addition, the services from GayGlos seemed to have a low awareness and were not considered effective enough, especially for younger people:

*“There is a gay night on a Monday in a Gloucester night club but nobody can get to it.” LGBT*

*“In London, everyone knows each other and you always meet people. There will be a women only club or a café with women only, gay-based but straight people will go there but you now what you are going in to. Just not having that here”. LGBT*

*A gay pride in Stroud! There would only be about 20 of us! That wouldn't go down too well! LGBT*

It appears therefore that 'cultural identity' is important to people within the BME, EU and LGBT communities. Whilst on the whole the Stroud District seems to have attracted self-starters and motivated people, there may well be some help that the LSP can give to help getting networks started to provide services that are available in more urban areas.

People with disabilities who are younger also seem to need a better social scene. This was generally echoed elsewhere with a desire for more social activity in the District:

*“Bigger festivals for Stroud. Because when I came about 2 years ago it was better but I know now people are going out to Gloucester and Cheltenham. People have stopped going out here. It was really busy and at the moment there was about 100 people only.” EU*



## 10. Housing

Finding accommodation was not so much of an issue for the disabled communities who (by and large) were well settled, although some with mobility constraints mentioned the high price of bungalows or single-storey accommodation.

For some young people private renting was felt to be better than trying to buy a house or going on the housing list. The only difficulty with this was having to have a guarantor for a deposit, which some could not manage as they did not have family back-up in the District.

Many people had employers who arranged accommodation for them, usually very cramped. This was satisfactory until someone decided they wanted to settle in the District, then finding accommodation around working hours was hard. Buying a house seemed to be out of reach for many unless they had been used to London prices, in which case it seemed like a more realisable goal:

*“I think it is one of the best areas to live in Britain. Really beautiful place, quite expensive because we have started to look to rent or buy but it is expensive compared the rest of UK.” EU*

*“It is quite difficult to find accommodation. First we started through newspapers but when you’ve decided on something they say it is too late. Somebody else has got it”. EU*

*“It’s so much cheaper than London. When I get myself sorted I will try to buy somewhere maybe with my sister.” BME*

*“I’ve decided to rent because I don’t want to go on the housing list. The waiting time is 7 years and hopefully I will be on the ladder by then.” LGBT*



## 11. Overall Priorities for the Sustainable Community Strategy

It would be fair to say from this research that the Stroud District doesn't have great tensions from a social cohesion point of view. People are relatively content and optimistic. However, their needs and concerns can be more fundamental than some of the more sophisticated issues put forward in the SCS.

This is not to downplay their importance philosophically to people but they would focus on the immediate issues that affect them more in terms of running their lives. So for example, aims for a low carbon economy or encouraging bio-diversity can be concepts that are difficult to engage with if a person's priority is making a life for themselves in a new country.

*"I would be a bit of hypocrite if I said that I cared about a low carbon economy."  
LGBT*

The preceding sections have highlighted the spontaneous issues raised by respondents, revealing that the following needs are at the top of their list:

- having good, regular and reliable public transport
- having access to a variety of English language courses at appropriate times and locations (EU)
- ability to find employment
- education campaigns for employers (D)
- awareness-raising to reduce ignorance and fear about disability and afro-caribbean people
- encouraging diversity
- enabling cultural organisations and support groups to flourish eg. a Polish association, a gay society
- there was interest in new resource centre for
  - a language school
  - young people with special needs
  - counselling for mental health
  - a 'Mosque'
- interest in a well publicised helpline for new EU immigrants.

Through an analysis of the needs expressed, we can pick out a number of themes from the SCS that are appropriate to the needs of the different communities researched. It is obvious that the following language used, for example, could encompass some of their ideas:

- easy access to appropriate skills development and learning opportunities
- access to key services as close to home as possible
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society: Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well being, social cohesion and inclusion and creating equal opportunity for all
- engaging people's creativity, energy and diversity
- increasing business investment, including skills development, lifelong learning and re-skilling
- creating entrepreneurial culture



- a mixed economy
- promoting improved accessibility across the District for disabled people
- improving local public transport
- ensuring new land uses attracting large public patronage are accessible by road, foot, bike and public transport
- investing in arts and culture.

Finally, whilst there is a high level of contentment, there are probably a number of more specific objectives that could be developed, emerging from the research to deal with new communities and the growing workforce in the Stroud District.

