

SMETHWICK PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS

2025 Summary Engagement Report

November 2025



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Introduction

Smethwick is one of 75 towns across the UK identified to receive up to £20 million of Government funding over the next 10-years, through the Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme.

This funding is a real opportunity for change but more importantly, **it puts power where it belongs - in our hands as a community**. This programme is designed to ensure that we, the people who live and work in Smethwick, lead the way in setting priorities and shaping projects for our town.

Our Smethwick Partnership Board, working closely with Sandwell Council as the Accountable Body, will ensure community voices guide all decisions. Together, we will create a 10-year Regeneration Plan and a 4-year Investment Plan, aligned with the Government's three core objectives: **Thriving Places, Stronger Communities and Taking Back Control**.

These plans, due for submission by 28 November 2025, will focus on Government-approved themes including regeneration and heritage, education, skills, safety, housing, cohesion, health, wellbeing and transport.

Engagement methodology

Staying connected with our community is a top priority. We want to make sure that everyone in Smethwick - individuals, groups, businesses and local organisations - has the chance to get involved and share their ideas.

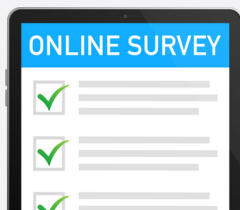
On 15 May 2025, the Smethwick Partnership Board Subgroup - responsible for organising the programme's initial engagement activities - reiterated a strong message: the plan must be shaped by, and for, Smethwick communities.

A short online survey ran from 1 July to 22 August 2025 to gather views on what matters most to residents and workers, helping to inform the Smethwick Plan for Neighbourhoods and guide future funding decisions.

Community workshops were also held across the town, enabling businesses, community groups and faith leaders to meet Board members, discuss key issues, share ideas, and suggest how funding should be used.

Have your say on Smethwick's future

Take the short survey to help set priorities and guide funding for improvements in Smethwick.



Online survey social media graphic



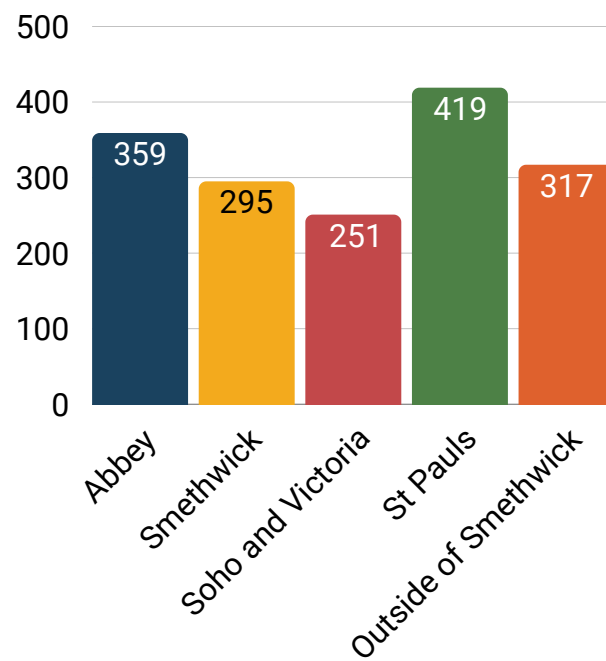
Workshop set up at Windmill Community Centre, Smethwick

Engagement findings

The engagement data is based on current ward boundaries prior to confirmation of the new ward boundaries under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) review.

Online survey

A total of 1,641 surveys responses were submitted by midnight 22 August 2025.



Community workshops

Eight community workshops were held across Smethwick from 28 July to 22 August 2025. The workshops were attended by 150 people, where 60 community groups and organisations were represented.

Community workshop
(West Smethwick Park Pavilion)



Online survey: who we heard from

Breakdown of the 1,342 respondents who provided a Smethwick postcode



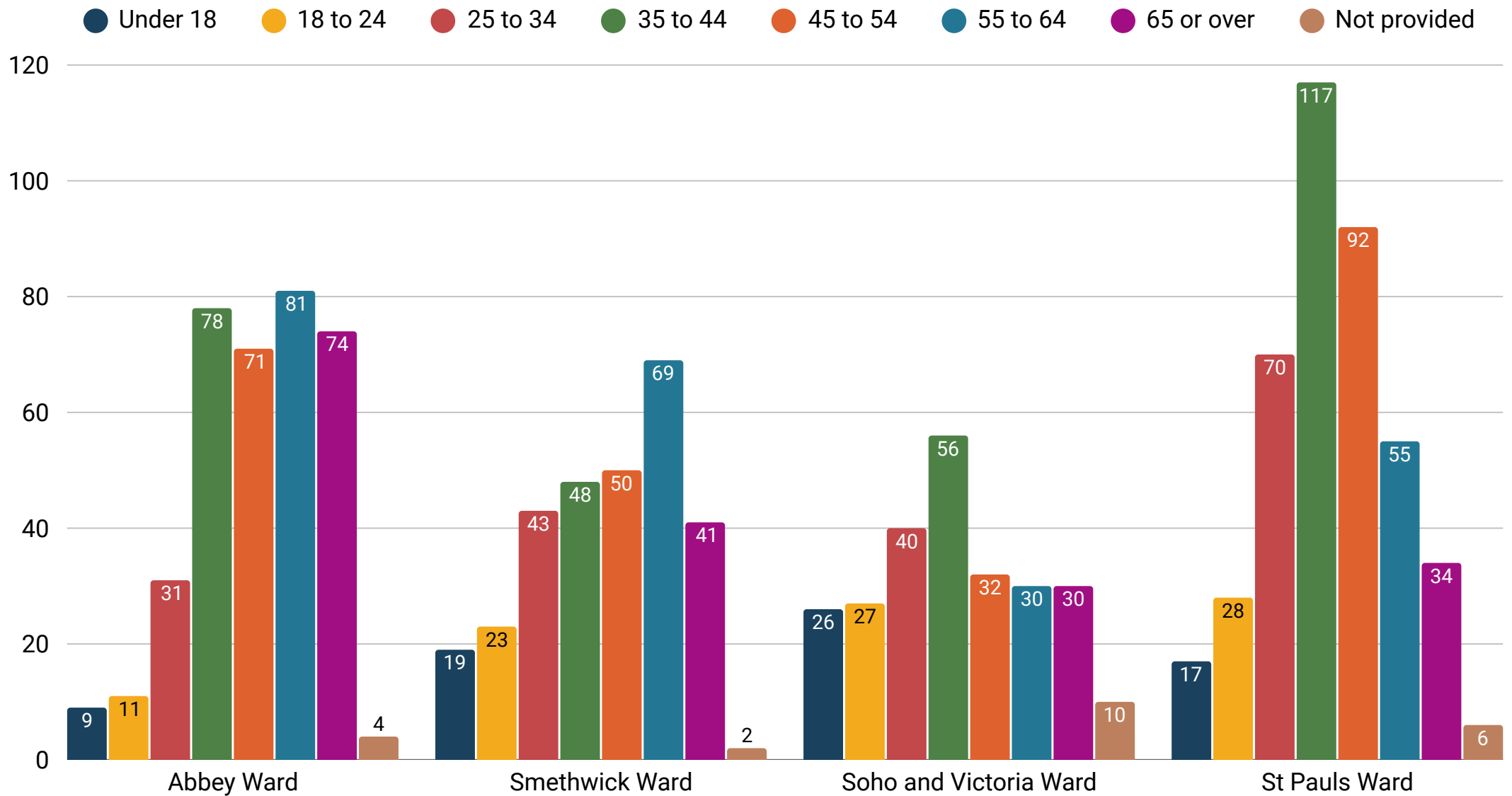
● Male (575), 43% ● Female (702) 53% ● Non-binary/ Non-conforming (12) 1% ● Prefer not to say (35) 3%



31% of respondents requested that they be added to our mailing list

39% of respondents asked to be included in future surveys

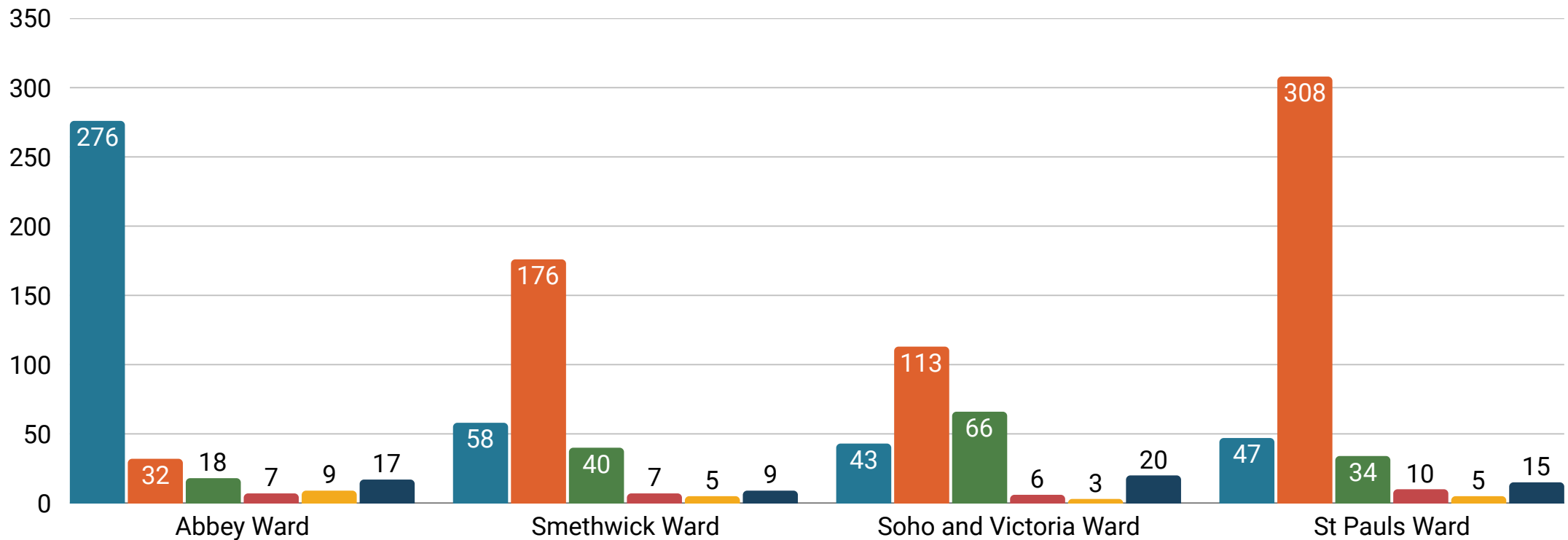
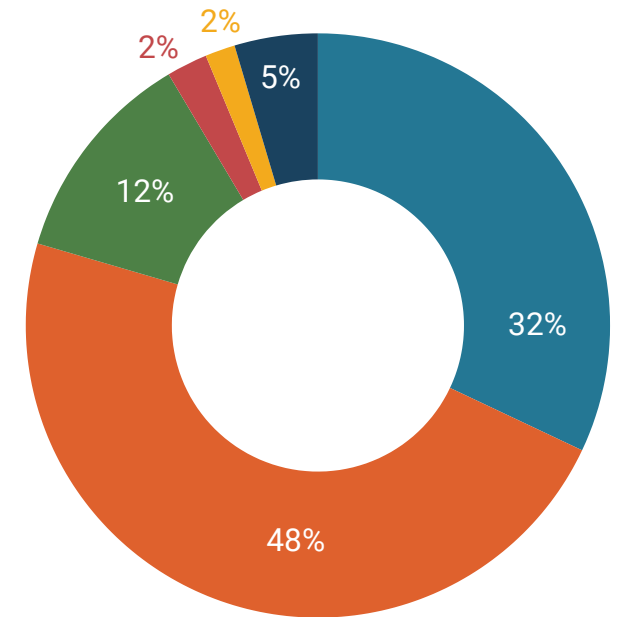
Age breakdown by Ward of the 1,342 respondents who provided a Smethwick postcode¹



[1] The survey data is based on current ward boundaries prior to confirmation of the new ward boundaries under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) review.

Ethnicity breakdown by Ward of the 1,342 respondents who provided a Smethwick postcode

● White
 ● Asian or Asian British
 ● Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
● Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
 ● Other ethnic group
 ● Prefer not to say



Online survey – Priorities

The main body of the survey required respondents to choose their top three themes in order of priority from the eight provided. Respondents could choose a theme more than once, if they felt extremely strongly about its importance.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents cited Regeneration, high streets, and heritage as a top-three priority, indicating it is the issue of greatest concern to the community.

Priority Area	Total citations (%)
Regeneration, high streets and heritage	63%
Community cohesion	48%
Health and wellbeing	44%
Safety and security	43%
Education and opportunity	37%
Work, skills and productivity	24%
Transport	24%
Housing	18%

Priority Area 1 (Top three)	Response (%)
Regeneration, high streets and heritage	33%
Safety and security	17%
Community cohesion	13%

Priority Area 2 (Top three)	Response (%)
Community cohesion	21%
Regeneration, high streets and heritage	17%
Safety and security	15%

Priority Area 3 (Top three)	Response (%)
Health and wellbeing	22%
Regeneration, high streets and heritage	13%
Community cohesion	14%

Sub-priorities within investment themes

Each theme was divided into a set of sub-priorities, and respondents were asked to identify which they felt were most important. Comparing these top choices with the issues and solutions raised in the workshops shows a strong alignment, for example, concerns about uneven pavement on Smethwick High Street.

This summary engagement report presents the top ranked sub-priority identified within each theme. A full breakdown of all priority rankings and sub-priorities can be found in the [full engagement report](#).

Regeneration, high streets and heritage	Response (%)
Improving high street and town centres: pavement repairs, painting public spaces, street cleaning, public toilets, and better disabled access.	47%

Community cohesion	Response (%)
Improve community cohesion across different groups and faiths: bring people together, build relationships, and create social mixing opportunities.	45%

Housing	Response (%)
Providing support for voluntary sector homelessness services and accommodation.	66%
Safety and security	Response (%)
Tackling anti-social behaviour, crime and reoffending: sports initiatives, mentoring, CCTV, and a police-led model for young offenders.	56%
Education and opportunity	Response (%)
School based programmes for youth development: support children and young people with wellbeing and mental health and provide activities.	29%
Health and wellbeing	Response (%)
Support for community health and integrating wellbeing services: mental health hubs, healthy eating schemes, and more health centres.	56%
Work, skills and productivity	Response (%)
Improving awareness and access to employment and skills development: support for unemployed people, disabled people and work experience.	58%
Transport	Response (%)
Funding for local bus services: improvements to bus stops, stations, lanes, punctuality and information.	29%



Galton Bridge, Smethwick

“Quick Wins”

The online survey asked respondents to identify specific locations for “quick wins” - places where a smaller project would have a rapid impact. Several locations came up consistently, as shown below.

Location	No.	%
Bearwood High Street	322	20%
Cape Hill	259	15%
Smethwick High Street	241	15%
Victoria Park	210	12%
Warley Woods	98	6%
Thimblemill Area	86	4%
Lightwoods Park	81	4%

Our Vision

91% of respondents agreed with the Smethwick Plan for Neighbourhoods vision:

“A connected, green and thriving community

In 10 years, Smethwick will be a vibrant, inclusive town powered by opportunity, innovation and community pride.

With thriving high streets, modern transport, green spaces, and world-class learning and job opportunities, it will be a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can live, grow and belong.”

Survey Respondents providing a non-Smethwick Postcode

The priorities of the 317 respondents who did not identify as residents, community group members, or workers in Smethwick aligned closely with those identified within Smethwick, although in a slightly different order: Community Cohesion, Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage, Education and opportunity, Health and Wellbeing, and Safety and Security.

Community workshop feedback

The workshops were designed as interactive, inclusive spaces to:

- Introduce the Smethwick Partnership Board and the Plan for Neighbourhoods
- Facilitate honest dialogue about local issues, opportunities, and aspirations
- Identify quick-win projects and long-term priorities through mapping and visioning exercises

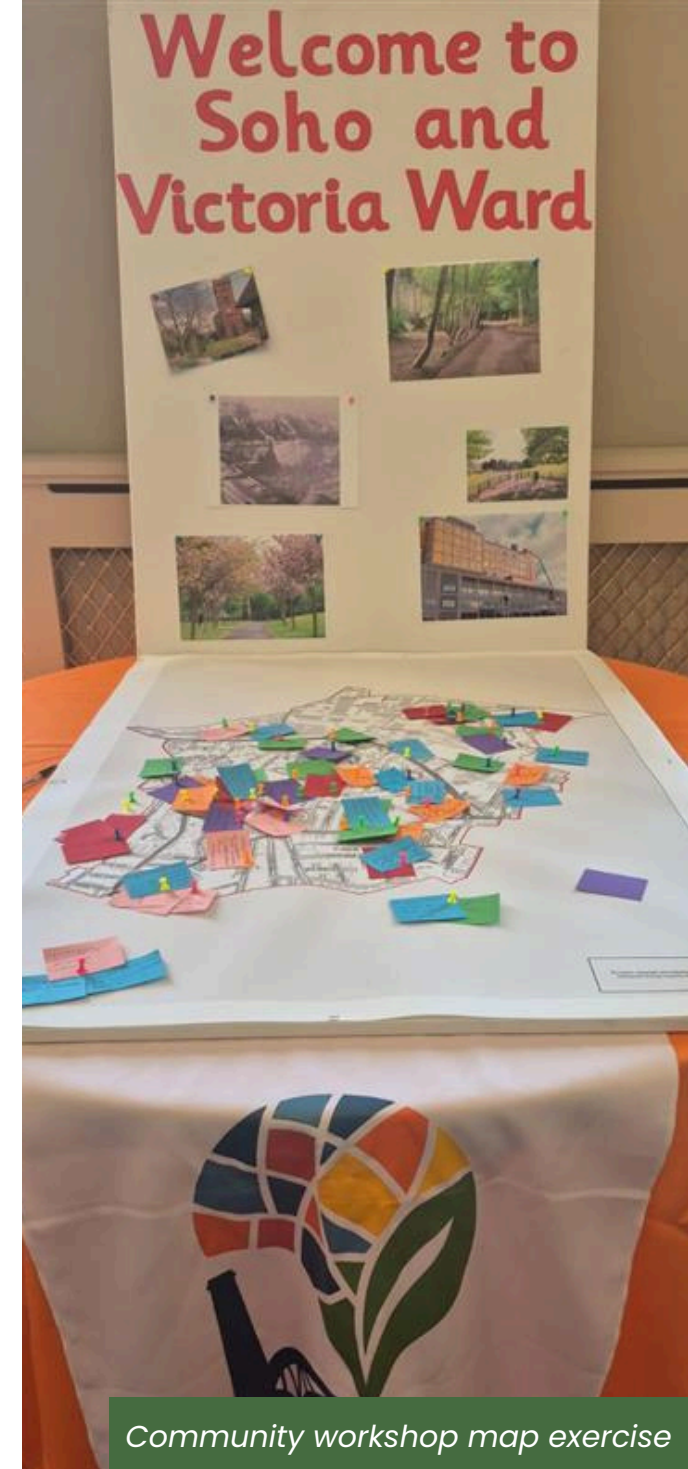
Each session followed a structured format:

- Welcome and introductions by Board members
- Screening of the Smethwick Plan for Neighbourhoods video
- Roundtable discussions among residents, community leaders, businesses, and service providers
- Mapping exercise to pinpoint priority locations and potential interventions
- “Postcard” activity inviting attendees to articulate their long-term vision for Smethwick

Attendance and representation

- **150 attendees** across workshops
- **60 groups represented**, including community, faith and informal organisations
- **Attendees self-identified** as residents, business owners and group representatives
- Some **workshops were over-subscribed** and ran overtime, indicating strong community appetite for participation

The minutes from all eight workshops were collated and analysed to identify recurring themes and issues. The next page presents a summary of the key findings, highlighting the common priorities and areas for improvement that emerged from across the discussions. Full details can be found in the full engagement report [here](#).



Community workshop map exercise

Regeneration, high streets and heritage



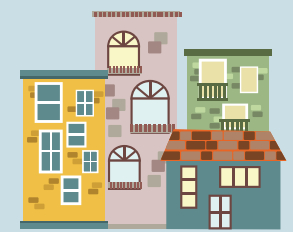
Cleanliness and waste management issues



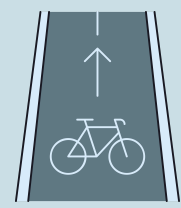
Poorly maintained public spaces and pathways



Strong support to bring derelict buildings back into use



Community facilities need improvement



Improved walking and cycling routes

Community cohesion



Social isolation and loneliness



Community spaces not being fully used



Poor promotion of services and activities



Limited collaboration and communication between groups



Closure of services on high streets reducing accessibility

Safety and security



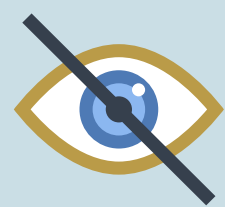
Knife crime and violence, including drug dealing



ASB hotspots, aggressive begging and break-ins



Traffic and poor parking concerns causing safety issues



Lack of visible or effective consequences for crime



Safety concerns in public spaces

Housing



Homelessness



Poorly managed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)



Poor insulation and low energy ratings in existing housing stock

Education and opportunity



Limited engagement with young people



Perception that young people's skills set is low



Youth activities are limited due to opening hours

Health and wellbeing



A shortage of disabled changing rooms and limited access for disabled residents



Underutilised community settings to offer health and wellbeing services across the town

Work, productivity and skills



High demand for ESOL provision



Lack of digital skills or technology

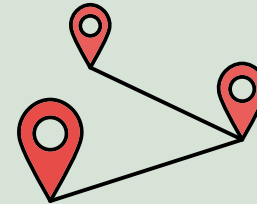


Unethical or illegal activity in the local area.

Transport



Unreliable bus services



Limited connections across the four wards



Road safety and parking issues



Overall priorities from mapping exercise

The second workshop activity invited participants to map their concerns and proposed solutions directly onto large-scale maps of each Ward. This information was subsequently recorded in spreadsheets to enable analysis of recurring keywords and locations.

The priorities identified through the mapping exercise closely aligned with those highlighted in the concurrent survey consultation (see earlier tables).

Priority Area	Response (%)
Regeneration, high streets and heritage	33%
Safety and security	30%
Community cohesion	13%
Transport	11%
Health and wellbeing	6%
Education and opportunity	4%
Housing	1.5%
Work, skills and productivity	1.5%

Community workshop map exercise

Postcard visioning

Attendees were invited to write or draw their hopes for Smethwick's future. Themes included:

- A safer, cleaner town with vibrant public spaces
- More opportunities for young people and families
- Stronger community connections and visible improvements to high streets
- Better access to health and wellbeing services

These qualitative insights added emotional depth and narrative richness to the engagement data.

"Increased sports and leisure facilities"

"Renovation and re-purposing of derelict buildings"

"Paving repairs on Smethwick high street"

"Events to celebrate diversity and boost local pride"

"Reduction of fly-tipping and litter"

"Better behaviour on the roads and better parking"

"Reduction in ASB and crime - increased CCTV and lighting"

"Support for existing youth provision"

"Clear communication and cooperation between community organisations, faith institutions and other providers of facilities and services"



www.sandwell.gov.uk/SmethwickPFN

If we've truly succeeded in 10 years time, what will have changed in Smethwick?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Feedback provided on vision cards above

Collective “Quick wins”

A variety of “quick wins” were repeatedly suggested via the survey and range of workshop activities.

Abbey Ward

- The ability to offer more street radios on Bearwood Road.
- Additional cameras on Bearwood Road.
- The development of an Enforcement Officer role to enforce the policies around commercial and domestic waste and fly-tipping, as well as to improve parking provision and monitor and enforce parking infringements.
- Additional lighting in Lightwoods Park.
- Improving the aesthetics of Bearwood Road to include flower boxes.

Soho and Victoria Ward

- Improved lighting in Victoria Park.
- CCTV cameras in Victoria Park.
- A refurbishment and refresh of the exercise area in Victoria Park.
- An increase in provision for Youth Engagement around Victoria Park.
- The development of an Enforcement Officer role to enforce the policies around commercial and domestic waste and fly-tipping, as well as to improve parking provision and monitor and enforce parking infringements.
- CCTV cameras in Black Patch Park.

Smethwick Ward

- The development of an Enforcement Officer role to enforce the policies around commercial and domestic waste and fly-tipping, as well as to improve parking provision and monitor and enforce parking infringements.
- CCTV cameras to be installed on Smethwick High Street.
- Improved footway along the High Street from Guru Nanak Gurdwara to the Baba Sang Ji Gurdwara.
- An increase in provision for Youth Engagement around the Sandwell Aquatic Centre.
- Increase services offered at faith and community organisations with under-utilised facilities

St Pauls Ward

- Improved lighting around the Sons of Rest building in West Smethwick Park.
- CCTV cameras in West Smethwick Park.
- An increase in provision for Youth Engagement around West Smethwick Park.
- The development of an Enforcement Officer role to enforce the policies around commercial and domestic waste and fly-tipping, as well as to improve parking provision and monitor and enforce parking infringements.
- Increase services offered at faith and community organisations with under-utilised facilities.

Thanks and acknowledgments

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who took the time to participate in the online survey and community workshops. Your contributions have been invaluable in shaping the vision and priorities of the Regeneration Plan.

The ideas, experiences, and perspectives you shared have provided deep insight into what matters most to local residents, businesses, and community organisations. Your input has helped to ensure that this Plan truly reflects the aspirations, challenges, and opportunities within our community, and that regeneration is guided by the voices of those who live and work here every day.

We are also grateful to the officers at Sandwell Council for their ongoing support throughout the process. Their assistance in organising, facilitating, and promoting the engagement activities was instrumental in reaching a broad and diverse audience.

Together, your collective input and commitment have helped shape a Regeneration Plan that is rooted in shared values, local knowledge, and a vision for a better future for all.

The Smethwick Partnership Board



This is a summary of the 2025 engagement report. You can view the full engagement report by [clicking here](#).

