

Fratton Big Local



Finding the way forward

Community Profile



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Introduction

What is Big Local?

Big Local is a Big Lottery investment of at least £1million in Fratton, to leave a lasting legacy in the neighbourhood. But it's not just about the money – its over-arching aim is to 'bring together all the local talent, ambitions, skills and energy from individuals, groups and organisations who want to make their area an even better place to live'.

It's NOT about...

- Government or big organisations telling us what to do
- Little local groups pursuing their pet issues without talking to a wide range of different people who live and work in our neighbourhood
- Short-term thinking and 'quick fixes' – we've got 10 years or more to plan and deliver the things that will make a lasting difference for our neighbourhood

What's in this profile, and where has it come from?

Fratton Big Local Community Profile is one of the first important steps along the 'Big Local 'Pathway' (see Appendix 1). It goes hand in hand with 'A Day in the Life of Fratton', a short film featuring the voices and views of local people and a series of recorded 'Vox Pops'. This profile attempts to describe Fratton as it is now – what's good, what the issues are – and also the visions for the future that local residents already have for it. It draws a little on maps and statistics, but mostly on the views of local people, which have been collated through consultations, workshops and other visioning activities during 2011 & 2012.¹

¹ See Appendix 6 for details



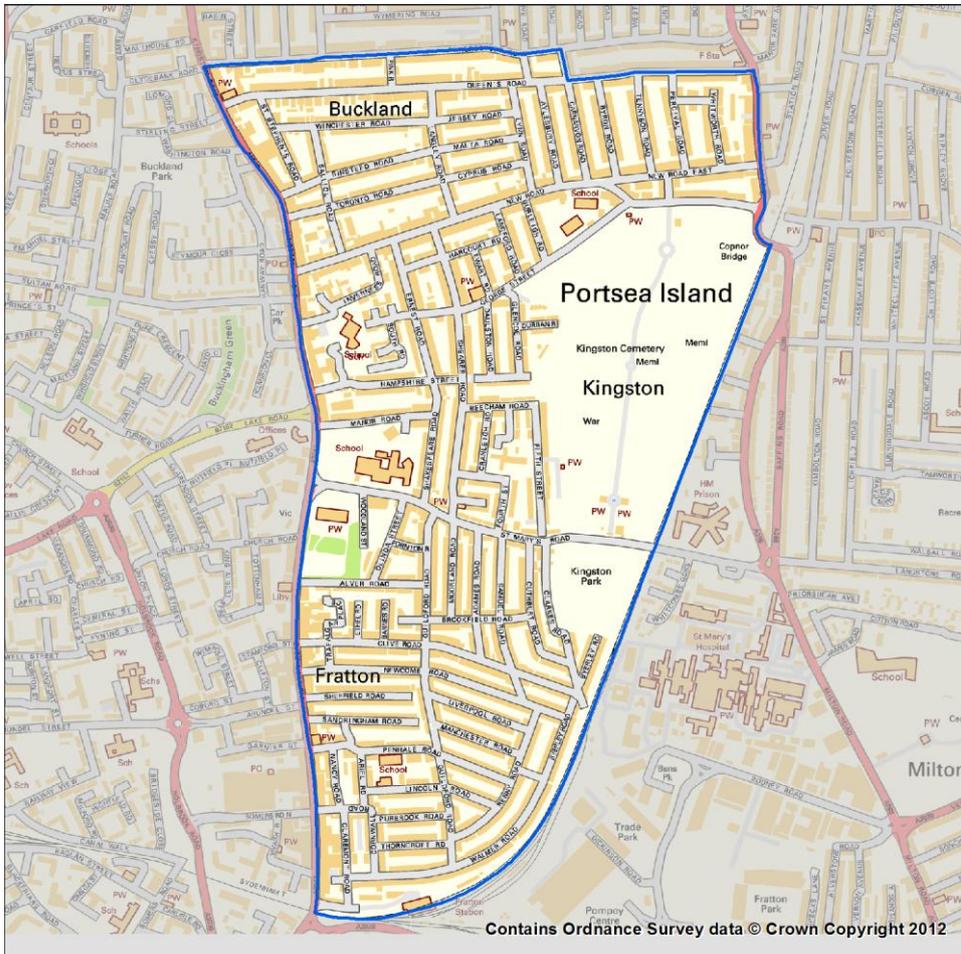
History

Fratton, like most inner-city areas, experienced a great deal of rapid growth in the latter part of the 19th century. The area quickly became populated with dockyard and railway workers living in Fratton's now rather distinctive terraced streets and alongside them, light industrial activity as well as an array of pubs and shops.

The Second World War saw much of the area suffer bomb damage and new groups of houses built to replace those that had been demolished. The following decades saw a trend in industrial decline with factories and shops being replaced with residential properties.

Fratton Now

For the purposes of the Fratton Big Local project, the area is defined as the electoral ward and is outlined in the map below:





It should be noted that whilst there are people who live just outside the electoral ward, giving their address as Fratton, equally there are others who live in the electoral ward who give their address as one of the other surrounding areas. This was particularly evident in the discussions with local residents.

This is also true of 'Fratton Park', the ground used by Portsmouth Football Club, and 'Fratton Shopping District' also known as The Bridge Centre: neither of these is situated inside the electoral ward but both are used frequently and any changes to them will have an impact upon Fratton residents.

People

Fratton's population stands at just over 14,000 living in an area of 0.49sq miles which makes it the second most densely populated ward in the city of Portsmouth, which is the most densely populated city in the country outside of London. The population is predominately White at 94% (2001 census figure) though Fratton, like the rest of Portsmouth, has seen a change in ethnic mix since the 2001 census with a growing Eastern European population evidenced by the growing number of Polish supermarkets opening across the city. There is an increase in non-British residents evidenced by the doubling forecast to be shown in the census 2011 (from 6 to 12%). This is an issue referred to in many consultations, sometimes invoked as a reason for the perceived loss of cohesion and community togetherness.

At 94%, much of the population resides in owner occupied (71%) or privately rented accommodation (23%); 4.6% are in local authority housing and the remaining 1.4% in social or other rented accommodation. There are pockets of well-established residents, some of whom have been living in Fratton since just after the war and others whose families have lived in Fratton for generations. There are also highly mobile clusters, for example students, and the number of multiple occupancies continues to increase. There is more statistical data in "Fratton Facts".²

² See Appendix 4



Environment

Fratton lacks green spaces. The three biggest green spaces are heavily used and are concentrated much in the same area: the churchyard, the cemetery and 'The Rec'. People use all three places as somewhere to walk their dogs, sit and enjoy the sun and in the case of the cemetery – somewhere to feed the squirrels! People we've spoken with have commented about the lack of green space and feel The Rec in particular could be improved. We'll refer to this later.

Whilst St. Mary's Churchyard is used regularly by the residents, there has been an increase in anti-social behaviour, drinking and violent crime here and in other parts of the ward (source: Safer Portsmouth Partnership). Attempts to tackle these issues have been carried out by local Police Community Support Officers and Outreach workers but many residents commented that they wanted Fratton to be a safer place

Many of the residential streets are narrow and the majority have parking on both sides of the road, (this issue is referred to later) leading to congestion at peak times of the day. Some are enhanced by trees having been planted. (Many are now being taken out to give more parking.) The majority of houses are pre-1900 terraced. Walking around the area, it's interesting to see that some houses open directly onto the street, others have forecourt gardens with hanging baskets. Some terraced houses are much larger and have more ornate doorways and windows. Some of the pubs that have closed have been imaginatively converted into residential accommodation.

Local Economy

The average household income sits just below Portsmouth average (£32,900 pa) at £31,000 (2001 census data) and although this is not generally classed as being in the low income threshold, it is however recognised that the majority of households lack financial resilience and would be sensitive to any changes in their outgoings or income. There is no single major employer in Fratton and the majority of residents work outside the electoral ward. The largest sectors of employment are wholesale/retail at 17%, manufacturing at 15%, real estate/rental/business at 11% and health and social care at 10%. Roughly one third of households have no car or van, just under half have one car and the remainder have two or more vehicles. The railway station is on the southern edge of the ward and provides good links to London, Southampton, Winchester, Basingstoke, Wales and smaller towns in between.



Good bus networks are very much dependent upon where you live and when and where you want to go!

Business

There are very few active shops within the area although the city shopping areas are a short walk or bus ride away. Much like the population, there are shops which are well-established and have been here for a couple of decades yet there are others which appear and sadly have to close after a few years. The current economic climate has hit some of the businesses in the area; for example, a well-established craft shop was forced to move to smaller premises before closing. A long established family ironmonger closed earlier this year. There are no banks within the area though there are cash machines situated inside retail units. Fratton Road becomes Kingston Road and together they form the western boundary of the ward. This arterial route has traditionally been the site of many small shop businesses, many of which have closed, and we have received many comments about the eyesore caused by abandoned shops, leading, perhaps, to a more general view that the road is tatty, down-at-heel, untidy and dirty.

Services

There is no Doctors' surgery in the area; the one surgery that was within the ward moved to new premises near Fratton Park Football ground and consequently, it is difficult for older residents to get there as there's no direct bus route. The closest surgery to the ward is just out of area. There is a library just outside the ward with the main city library a 20 minute walk or bus ride away. There are five places of worship within the area with a further four just outside the ward boundary.³

³ These and all the public facilities, meeting places and organisations can be seen logged on the map – see Appendix 5. This map is available to be accessed electronically on the website, where hovering over an item provides further information, all of which can be kept up-to-date. It is NOT, however, available to the many without access to modern technology, a communication issue we address later.



Schools

There are five schools in Fratton. The primary schools which are catchment area schools for Fratton are Manor Infant School, Penhale Infant School and Newbridge Junior School. Some parents choose to send their children to schools outside the area. For children over 11, the City of Portsmouth Girls' school is the only secondary school in the area and accepts girls throughout the city, although a large proportion is from the local area. The fifth school is The Harbour School, a city-wide, split site school for children with special needs. Within the ward boundary it has a specialist unit for secondary aged pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schools in the city. This is attended by pupils from across the city. Other senior schools attended by Fratton children are: Mayfield School in North End, Priory School just south of Fratton Bridge, St Edmund's Roman Catholic School and the Charter Academy which remains a Church of England foundation, Milton Cross School and the City of Portsmouth Boys' School in Hilsea.

Community Facilities and Groups

Fratton Community Centre, situated to the south-west of the area, was originally built in the 1920s as the maternity facility in Portsmouth and was later used as a family planning clinic and then a children's health clinic before the building fell out of use. In 1980, the building was re-opened as a community centre and, last year, had in excess of 129,000 visitors. The building does need improvement but currently offers a wide range of activities from a thriving pre-school to the community gym 'Fitzone' as well as a wide range of groups catering for all ages such as children's dance classes, football club, faith groups, knitting group and handicrafts group. Despite a wide offer, it appears there are still many who remain unaware of the community centre as some of the residents' responses included requests for a community centre. Finding a way to inform residents of the opportunities available here has become an important part of raising community awareness, togetherness and spirit.

There are a few other places within the area offering community-based activities and these can be located on the interactive map.

Tenants' groups exist within the area; youth groups such as Scouts and Girl Guides exist and are linked to the local church. There is a Neighbourhood



Forum funded by the council and run by local people and in the northern part of the area, there is a Neighbourhood Watch group.

There is also a group of local community workers, and others (Fratton Federation) who seek to support the community and its development who meet regularly. This group includes local schools, the Community Association, St Mary's Church, local businesses, local councillors and many others. The members of the group seek to ensure that gaps in provision are identified and work together to see how they can be met.

What next for Fratton?

We've been out and about talking to as many people as we possibly can. This has helped us not only to talk to people about Fratton but also to promote the project and encourage others to take part. We have tried to go out and talk to the largest cross section of residents possible, so we have seen and talked to parents of young and school age children, the elderly and others attending the community centre or community groups within the area. We have had a presence at a variety of events such as a charity day at the community centre, the May Fayre, the Strawberry tea and Olympic torch event based at St. Mary's church. This work continues⁴.

As well as going out to meetings, we've asked members of the Steering Group and key members of the community to use their networks to gather information from Fratton residents. This information has been collected in a variety of different ways such as interviews, flip cameras, informal talks with people, the film and the more conventional questionnaires⁵.

We've also managed to form a small but committed group of volunteers who are passionate about their area and the project and want to make a difference. It's likely that these people will be involved and play an integral part in the key projects that come out of the community plan.

In this process we have identified the gaps in aspects of the local community we have not fully been able to engage with – notably young people and the full range of the ethnic community and the 'hard to reach'. In discussions

⁴ A full list of consultations, visioning sessions and meetings can be found in Appendix 6

⁵ See Appendix 7 for Vox Pops & the film: "A Day in the Life of Fratton"



about this we believe this reflects one of the reasons why the area was identified as a suitable recipient of the Big Local funding – the lack of previous funds or community based initiatives. Part of the work of the first year will need to be to seek to develop relationships with these parts of our community and to find ways of engaging with them.

What are the Issues?

From consulting in various ways with different groups, we have identified some key issues for local people. These begin with people’s answers to the questions ‘what don’t you like about Fratton?’, but they also move into more positive responses when people are asked ‘what would make Fratton a better place?’ and ‘what are your hopes and dreams for the future?’ For many people, contemplating a future 10 years away was impossible; we found that for most, a horizon of 3 years was their maximum. This is an issue we shall need to address when we build the local Partnership. Skilful leadership of discussion at that point may allow development from “where we are now” through a Plan for the first year, set within a medium-term context, and glimpses of where that may take the community in ten years may become more obvious.

From our consultation, some clear issues emerged. ⁶

What do people like about the area?

- Friendly
- Close to town
- Easy access to city centre, seafront and shops
- Diverse – cultures, nationalities
- Take-aways and mix of food outlets
- Sense of history
- Flat – good for bikes
- Fratton station
- Architecture – schools and cemetery
- Ward Cllrs live in ward
- St Mary’s Church building and yard

⁶ See Appendix 3



- Shopping facilities
- Modernised developments
- Green areas
- Crime is relatively low
- Good neighbours
- Fratton Station- walk to trains for London
- Kingston Rec

What could be improved?

Responses were collected from a number of visits to community groups and speaking to residents at community events⁷ and the same comments have come up time and time again: Empty/lack of shops, something for young people to do and improving 'The Rec'. Dog fouling, litter and parking are issues that are regularly raised. Although some aspects are matters for the local authority, all are within the sphere of this group to address. For example, abandoned shops can be given attractive fronts, perhaps with designs painted by local school children, open access to computer clubs hosted by the major local school, dance classes and "free running" or Parkour (mentioned by several people) and volunteering projects may all be relevant. The "Rec" has been mentioned by many, and often in very warm terms, being somewhere mothers take their kids, having spent many happy hours there themselves. A splash pool project is also frequently spoken of.

Responses have been categorised as follows with the top four items in each shown⁸:

Amenities:

- re-invigorating the shopping areas and include a bank and advice centre
- supporting work through training and more varied employment
- developing educational and entertainment facilities/activities, both indoor and outdoor
- providing volunteering activities to engage people of all ages

Infrastructure:

- improving the environment eg less litter, more flowers

⁷ Listed in Appendix 2

⁸ The full range of responses, separated into categories, can be found at Appendix 2



- proactive approach to redundant facilities
- reducing parking issues and improve cycling facilities
- invest in the green spaces

Youth and Employment:

- enterprise workshops and supported new job opportunities
- greater range of activities for young people
- small green space projects, eg splash pool, green gyms
- support for work, eg nursery provision

Not for us, but we may be able to help:

- improved policing esp. re fly-tippers/anti-social behaviour
- cheaper/better housing
- more available health facilities
- more support services eg for older people.

What would you like to see in 10 years' time that would make Fratton a better place?

One of the questions that were posed was what changes we would like to see in the area over the 10 years of the Big Local funding and what the legacy would be. The following responses were given and will help us in forming the Fratton Big Local Community Plan.

- More youth clubs and out of school activities and opportunities that can raise self-esteem, engage and open horizons for young people and the unemployed
- Family friendly area
- Improved parks, adventure playground, activities for children of all ages e.g. zip wire, roundabout, big slide, graffiti wall, climbing wall
- Improved facilities for children
- Safer, cleaner environment for families
- Feeling safer after dark. Better lighting
- More police patrols
- Better dispersal of funding for disadvantaged families
- Community centre bus
- More community wardens
- Green areas
- Less dog fouling
- Better shopping and small businesses in the area



One thing you would change and how?

- Parking restrictions - need periods of free parking
- Greater police presence and therefore more funding
- A cleaner area - more street cleaning and change in people's attitude & awareness
- Uncoordinated road works
- Improve communications through community network - notice boards, virtual and physical, and neighbourliness
- Improve library facilities- greater usage and mixed use/more services
- "Dowdy appearance" needs smartening up

Underlying Issues

Statistical data⁹ for Fratton also highlights these issues:

- Very low levels of achievement in education (across generations)
- Low literacy levels
- High (and increasing) levels of worklessness
- Mental health, drug and alcohol issues
- Poor perceptions of crime & anti-social behaviour
- Poor quality housing
- Low levels of trust in neighbours and young people
- Low levels of confidence in influencing decision-making

What happens next?

The next two steps on the Big Local pathway (see Appendix 1) are to develop a **Local Partnership** and to create a **Big Local Plan**. The Fratton Community Profile and the film help us tell our story and will help Fratton Big Local be clear about the community's priorities so that the £1 million investment can best meet community needs.

In more detail the next stages are:

⁹ More detail in Appendix 4



LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

Our Local Partnership will guide the overall direction of Big Local in Fratton. The Partnership will be made up of at least 51% local residents, who will be joined by others who might represent agencies, or “champions” with a particular contribution, relevant to the developing Plan. The members of the Partnership will change, over time, as the priorities identified and built into the Plan change.

The members of the Partnership will emerge from local consultation meetings and will be the people to put together the Plan for submission to Big Local.

BIG LOCAL PLAN

The Big Local Plan is a document that will outline our shared **vision** (using all the thoughts and ideas in this profile) and then further outline our **priorities** to meet our vision and what **positive changes** these priorities will lead to for the community. The Big Local Plan will outline how we want to invest our £1 million. The Plan will go into quite a lot of detail for the first few years. The Big Local Plan will also say how we will know if we are successful in making a change, and how we will measure this. We can have help to write our plan, and ensure we get it right for Fratton.