

Introduction

Are there differences between residential areas in and around Stoke On Trent?

Aims

- What sort of differences exist and why?
- Is the environmental quality of one area better than the others and why?
- What do the local residents feel about the quality of life in their residential areas?
- Is there a link between environmental quality and the quality of life in each area?

The term environmental quality means making a judgement on how good or bad the surroundings are in and around an area. An example of an area with a good environmental quality is a place that has well paved areas, a lot of space, a lot of open space for recreational use, clean roads, grassy areas well kept and a safe and friendly environment to live in. An area with a bad standard of environmental quality is an area that has a lot of noisy areas, like a factory, a school, a busy road, noisy neighbours etc, dirty roads, paving areas that may be covered in dog excrement, graffiti on the walls, cramped, a lot of houses all cramped together with no area for recreational pursuits, high population density, overgrown weeds and plants and litter on all of the streets are also examples of an area with a poor standard of environmental quality.

The term quality of life means a judgement on how good or bad a life people have and how happy or unhappy people are. If a person is to have a good quality of life then qualities of the area surrounding and the way they lead their life that help to give them a better quality of life are safety, if people feel safe where they live they can live how they want to and have a much better quality of life, a well paid job is also a good thing, if a person is to have a very good quality of life. An area with free space for activities such as football and other leisure pursuits provides a good quality of life for both parents and their children, another thing that can lead to a good quality of life is if all of the shops and places that people need to go, like pubs for example, are close to their homes. Examples of things that can make somebody's quality of life poor are if a person is in danger in the area, they cannot feel as free to go out and do things; this could be a problem for the elderly more than for the younger generation. If a person works long hours and receives very poor pay, their quality of life suffers greatly, if a person lives in the countryside away from shops, pubs, leisure facilities and other important things then their quality of life can be good but would mostly be poor.

The four residential areas are found in different locations around the city. Baddeley Green, which we went to first, can be found approximately 4 kilometres from Burslem and 4.5 km from Hanley in a North Easterly direction travelling on the A53 then onto the A504 from Hanley. The second place we visited, Birches

Introduction

Head, can be found approximately 1.5 km North East of Hanley. It is reached from Hanley by travelling along the B5047 then off onto a smaller road. Bentilee, the third place we visited, is approximately 4km from Hanley in an Easterly direction. To reach Bentilee by road from Hanley you would have to travel along the A52, onto the B5040 then off again onto a smaller road. The final place that we visited, Trentham, is approximately 4.25 km away from Longton in a South Westerly direction. To reach Trentham from Longton you would travel around the A50, onto the A500 following it around until you reached the A34 then following the A34 all the way into Trentham.

The first place visited, Baddeley Green, was a place with a lot of varied land uses. The houses around the area were a mixture of different types with semi-detached houses, bungalows and a few terraced houses. In the centre of Baddeley Green a range of shops were available for residents to visit with a post office, a newsagents, a pharmacy, an estate agents, a launderette, a hairdressing salon, a mini market and a butchers all around the same complex. We noticed that the owners were renovating a lot of the homes around Baddeley Green, with most gardens containing building materials. In Baddeley Green there is a main road going right through which generates a lot of noise due to passing traffic, the side roads that come off the main road are mainly quiet, with only the odd sound of building work breaking the silence. The residents around the areas were friendly and appeared to be mostly old. The roads around were very well kept and the pavements, grassy areas and plants were quite well kept and also clean. On my Burgess Model, which is included as part of this work, Baddeley Green can be found inside the third ring which denotes the Inner Suburbs.

After Baddeley Green we visited Birches Head. The houses in Birches Head were not quite as rangy as the houses in the previous area. The only houses that we could find were terraced houses owned by the council that had undertaken a lot of repair work to the walls, so many repairs were probably made to cover up cracks caused by subsidence due to much of Birches Head being built upon a site that was formerly used for mining. Another large land use that was noticeable was the pet food factory emitting the foul smell of cat biscuits. There was also a few corner shops a glass shop, a pub and a workingmen's club. There was a small park up a large main street, a butcher, a fish and chip shop, two primary schools and a card shop. The alleyways that ran behind most houses were very poorly kept with all sorts of litter lying around and poorly kept shrubbery. In terms of The Burgess Model, Birches Head is in the second circle, meaning that it is in the Inner City.

The third place we visited was Bentilee and it presented a lot of variety in regards to land uses. Houses around the area were council owned bungalows, semi-detached and town houses and there were also a few flats dotted around. In the main plaza of shops there was a number of shops, a Kwik Save, a Co-Op mini supermarket, a Boots cosmetic store, a fish and chip shop, a bakery, a butcher and a fruit shop. There was also two primary schools, public toilets (which were locked), a library and two churches. The area around the plaza was full of litter and graffiti, with the public toilets being the worst hit. There was also a great deal of free recreation space and wide roads. On the Burgess Model, Bentilee is inside the third ring meaning that it is in the Inner Suburbs.

The final place we visited was Trentham. Trentham had a lot of open space, large houses, sports cars and a distinct lack of shops. The area was very well kept apart from the privately owned road which was poorly looked after. There was also a golf course, the Trentham Gardens attraction and a high school. On the Burgess

Introduction

Model Trentham appears inside the outer ring, meaning that it is in the Outer Suburbs.

To compare the four areas that we visited we decided to conduct four surveys. The first survey was to be a Quality Of Life survey, which involves interviewing residents, the second was to be a Street Quality survey which involved analysing a street of our choice, A House Details Survey was next where we were to individually analyse a house and finally a Property Quality survey.