



TELFORD & WREKIN

safer&stronger communities

PARTNERSHIP

# **NEW AND EMERGING CHALLENGES OF POPULATION CHANGE**

Alex Urka, Performance & Strategy Manager

# SETTING THE SCENE

- Migration from the new EU members states to the UK has been one of the most important social phenomena in recent years

# SETTING THE SCENE - BENEFITS

- Reduced inflation
- Lowered the natural rate of unemployment
- Eased bottlenecks in the labour market
- Increased the flexibility of the labour force
- Improved trade and investment links
- Provided important tax contributions while not being a burden to the public purse

# SETTING THE SCENE – CONFLICTING MESSAGES

- Economic benefits to the resident population of net immigration are small, especially in the long run
- Net immigration is NOT indispensable to fill labour and skills shortages
- Arguments in favour of high immigration to defuse the “pensions time bomb” do not stand up to scrutiny
- The overall fiscal impact of immigration is likely to be small

# FLASHPOINTS

- Rapid migration change can be unsettling and bring tensions
- Migrants, with or without the legal right to work in the UK, are at risk of labour and human rights violations
- In some areas, the increase in migrant workers has increased pressure on the provision of local services including education, housing and medical care.

# FLASHPOINTS

- The combination of open borders and a limited entitlement to benefits means that migrants who fail to find jobs, or who lose their jobs unexpectedly can become homeless and destitute.
- There can be misunderstandings about laws, regulations and community expectations, partly because of assumptions about service arrangements based on experiences in other countries. Minor misunderstandings, for example about refuse collection, can cause preventable problems and bring risks to community cohesion.

# FLASHPOINTS

Community cohesion tensions/differences between:

- migrant workers and the indigenous population
- migrant workers and refugees/asylum seekers
- migrant workers and ethnic minorities
- groups of migrant workers
- 'old' and 'new' members of the same national group
- permanent and agency staff.

# KEY MESSAGES

- Local authorities cannot control migration; but community leadership means helping to manage the consequences of change for the benefit of the whole community
- Community cohesion is a fundamental and growing part of the place shaping agenda and it puts local authorities and their partners at the heart of community building.

# LOCAL CONTEXT

- Community cohesion and its drivers cannot be addressed by the local authority alone; it is vital that partners from all sectors, alongside members of the public, work together to identify problems, develop solutions and deliver on agreed priorities. Telford & Wrekin have developed a multi-agency approach to address issues outlined in this presentation.

# REGIONAL SUPPORT

- Working with the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership to share issues, develop common solutions and pick up on cross boundary issues
- Working with EU Connects team to learn from others within Europe in developing workable solutions and sharing ideas.
- Working with Regional Data Intelligence Network to bring to bear a greater understanding on regional issues.