# Reform UK’s Stockport branch removes website after AI-generated testimonials spark criticism



Reform UK's Stockport branch has removed its local website after being criticised for publishing testimonials featuring fabricated individuals and questionable claims. The site, stockportreform.co.uk, displayed computer-generated images of people accompanied by vague descriptions such as "community leader" and "business owner." One testimonial attributed to a supporter named "Jane Doe" claimed that the party had "transformed our community with their forward-thinking policies," without citing any specific examples of achievements or initiatives.

Additionally, the website included an image of Manhattan, New York, in a section outlining Reform UK's vision for Stockport, which drew attention due to its apparent lack of relevance to the local context. The web page was taken down on April 30 after the Local Democracy Reporting Service raised concerns with Reform UK.

Jack Moore, interim chair of Stockport Reform UK, acknowledged that the website had been "accidentally made available" to the public and explained that the images and claims were intended as "placeholders" pending the development of genuine content. "The images, names, and wording are filler only, purely for internal, illustrative purposes and there as placeholders whilst genuine content is being developed," he said. Mr Moore also suggested that criticism from local Conservative councillors might reflect their "anxiety about facing Reform UK at the ballot box in next May's local elections," emphasising the branch's efforts to build a political presence offering an alternative to the established parties.

The controversy drew a response from Cllr Peter Crossen, a member of the Conservative group on Stockport Council, who accused Reform UK of misleading residents with what he termed "AI platitudes." Speaking to Stockport Nub News, Cllr Crossen said, "If they can't be bothered to write their own website, why should anyone trust them to deliver real change?" He added: "Nothing says 'I care about my community' quite like a stock image of Times Square [New York] and a series of spurious claims about 'infrastructure improvements' and 'changing lives'. Myself and my Conservative colleagues will continue making a difference in our communities, engaging with residents, and knocking on doors. I'd love to see how they could get AI to do that for them."

Stockport Council currently operates under no overall control, with the Liberal Democrats holding the largest number of seats and leading the administration. Reform UK does not currently hold any elected seats on the council but maintains an active presence on social media platforms such as Facebook and X, where discussions concerning local matters take place. Although no local elections are scheduled for Stockport in 2024, Reform UK has expressed intentions to participate in the county's local elections next year.

Nationally, Reform UK is led by Nigel Farage, MP for Clacton. The party has sought to expand its local branches and electoral presence in various parts of the country, positioning itself as an alternative to the traditional parties.

The website's removal followed immediate action once the issue was brought to light and signals an ongoing effort by the party to develop legitimate local engagement material as they prepare for upcoming elections.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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