

Herefordshire Quality of Life Survey 2012

Your community-your say

Summary Results

Context

This survey is a component of the community engagement activity to support the Root and Branch Review programme. Its objective is to provide a statistically robust understanding of the views of residents within the county and to provide some insight regarding how these vary across the localities. It is based on the Place Survey conducted in 2008 with significant changes to support the needs of the Root and Branch Review programme.

The survey was a postal survey to 4,125 households in the county, stratified to reflect the three sub-localities of Hereford and the eight other localities. Fieldwork started on 21st May 2012 and at the time of the cut off for replies, 16th July, 1,346 valid responses had been received, giving a responses rate of 33%.

The overview report presents the results of the survey with the key findings shown below. It includes some analysis showing the variation of results across localities and compares it with the 2008 Place Survey.

Further reports will follow with a locality focus in addition to a full report with analysis by other aspects such as rurality and deprived areas.

Key Findings

About the local area

- The top three factors most important in making somewhere a good place to live were the **level of crime**, **health services** and **affordable decent housing**, as was seen in 2008.
- Whilst **road and pavement repairs** and **activities for teenagers** continue to be in the top 3 most needing improvement, in 2012 **job prospects** has assumed a greater need and is now ranked second compared with 6th in 2008

- When combining priorities for most important to the area and most needing improvement, the aspects standing out are **road and pavement repairs, job prospects and affordable decent housing**
- Across the localities, some variation of views on what is important to make the area a good place to live was seen. For example, **clean streets** were more important in the sub-localities of **Hereford North** and **Hereford South**, **public transport** more important in the more rural localities and **job prospects** seen as more important in **Leominster locality** than Herefordshire as a whole and less so in **Weobley locality** and **Hereford Rural**.
- Similarly, there were differences in views across the localities of what most needs improving. For example, **traffic congestion** ranked around 2nd most needing improvement in **Hereford North** and **Hereford South** and typically 10th in the localities of **Bromyard, Ledbury** and **Leominster**. Improving **job prospects** was ranked lower in the localities of the **Golden Valley, Hereford Rural** and **Weobley**, while the need to **improve sports and leisure facilities** was seen as a greater need in **Ledbury** and **Bromyard**, than the county as a whole
- 91% of respondents were satisfied with their **local area as a place to live** (up from 87%) in 2008 while 94% were **satisfied with their home**.
- While most (60%) of respondents had **contact with family, friends or neighbours** most days of the week, for one in twenty the contact is once a month or less and a similar proportion (5%) felt lonely most or all the time.

Local Public Services

- Satisfaction with **West Mercia Police** and the **local dentist** has risen significantly since 2008 to 69% and 80% respectively.
- Overall satisfaction with **the way Herefordshire Council runs things** increased significantly from 33% in 2008 to 51% in 2012. This indicator has been falling over the years and satisfaction this year is higher than that seen in 2003 when it was 48%. The proportion who were dissatisfied also fell significantly since 2008.

Priorities for Herefordshire Council

- A large majority of respondents (87%+) agree with 5 of the 6 identified high priorities for Herefordshire Council, while support for the sixth one, **promote self-reliance in local communities** was a little lower at 75%
- There was little evidence of variation across localities of support for **creating a successful economy, a resilient and flexible Herefordshire** or an **efficient and accessible Herefordshire Council**. However, compared with the county overall, there was greater support for **improving health and social care** in **Bromyard locality** and for

raising standards for children and young people in **Hereford South**. Residents of **Hereford North locality**, showed less support for **promoting self-reliance in the community** than was seen in the county overall

- Of the six high priorities listed, the top three were clearly identified as **creating a successful economy, improving health and social care** and **raising standards for children and young people**. These were broadly similar in the different localities, though some differences emerged

Helping out

- 8% of respondents give over 20 hours per week of **help or support to family members or others** due to ill-health, disability or problems related to old age. This includes 4% who provide over 50 hours per week
- **Volunteering** at least once a month through clubs and organisations has increased significantly to 34% from 29% in 2008.

Respect and consideration

- Over two-thirds (69%) of respondents agreed that **people from different backgrounds get on well together** in their local area, a significant fall from 76% in 2008. One in five (20%) felt that there is a very or fairly big problem with **people not treating each other with respect and consideration**, little changed from 2008
- The proportion who felt that they had **been treated with respect and consideration by local public services** has increased from 75% in 2008 to 80%
- Compared to 2008, significantly fewer respondents (25%) now agree that **older people get the help they need to live at home** for as long as they want to, down from 33%.

Decision making

- About 16% of respondents were a **member of one or more groups that makes decisions** that affect the local area, little changed since 2008. Also little changed, is the proportion (27%) who felt that they can **influence local decisions**
- Agreement that **communities should have a say** in the running of various service ranged from 44% to 71%, with the most interest being in **road and pavement repairs, public bus services** and **health and care services**. While the desire amongst respondents for **communities to run** certain services if they wished was markedly more muted with **facilities and activities for young children** and **for youths** receiving the most support

Community Safety

- Compared to the Place Survey in 2008, more respondents are **feeling safe in their local area**. 74% feel safe when outside after dark, significantly up from 69% in 2008 and 96% when outside during the day, up from 92%.
- Since 2008, there has been a fall in those who experience a very or fairly big problem in their local area with **speeding traffic** (43% from 50%), **teenagers hanging around the streets** (23% from 28%) and **Vandalism** (16% from 20%).
- Around half of respondents had been **visited by an uninvited seller of goods or services** and around a third of these found it to be a very or fairly big problem.
- 40% of respondents agreed that **public services are successfully dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour**, up significantly from 14% in 2008.

Accessing Services

- Of the one in five respondents who experience a difficulty **using a Post Office**, the most common cause was getting there and back. Around a quarter of respondents have difficulty **seeing their GP**, mostly due to issues with getting a suitable appointment. Of the 30% who have difficulty **seeing an NHS dentist**, the predominant cause was finding an NHS dentist with whom they could register. **Using Public Transport** represented difficulties to around a quarter of respondents most commonly due to lack of services at a suitable time
- 83% of respondents lived in a household that had a **broadband service** and while about half found it adequate for their needs, 44% found it too slow. Of the 17% of respondents living in a household with no **broadband service**, about a quarter wanted it but either had no computer or the service was not available at all or not at an affordable price

About you

- The majority of respondents (80%) said that their **general health** was good or very good, a little higher than 76% in 2008, though not a sufficient difference to be statistically significant
- Around 250 comments were made in response to the invitation to add anything further. The most prevalent, about a quarter, were concerned with the **value of the survey** and the cost that could have been better spent in other ways. Another common theme was a broad range of **transport issues** such a lack of public transport, traffic problems and road safety concerns

What Happens Next?

- The results from this survey will be reported to Cabinet on 11 October 2012 as part of the first Root and Branch Review reports

- We have also produced reports for the 9 localities which will be an important way of informing of the *Your community -your say*, meetings and the other engagement activities that will take place during September and October 2012
- Finally, the overall findings from the survey and the further engagement will be fed into the budget setting process for 2013/14 along with other feedback and information

All the reports on the Quality of life survey can be found on www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/2056.aspx