

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

23RD JUNE 2009

The Place Survey 2008

OPEN	
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	All Themes
CORPORATE PLAN AIM	A Well Run and Responsive Council
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APPENDICES	Full Place Survey Report – Appendix A <i>The appendix to this report has been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (See front cover for details).</i>

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report the provisional results of the statutory Place Survey 2008.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE that:

2.1 The provisional results of the statutory Place Survey 2008, as set out in Appendix A be noted, and used to inform the Council’s service and improvement planning for 2009/10.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Since the publication of the 2006 Local Government White Paper ‘*Strong and Prosperous Communities*’, there has been a new focus in the way local public sector agencies work and report performance. Improving outcomes for local people and places is now at the heart of local service provision, with a move away from the previous emphasis on processes, institutions and inputs.

3.2 The Place Survey plays an important role in trying to measure these improved outcomes. It replaces the Best Value User Satisfaction Survey, which focused much more on Council specific issues and services. The Place Survey captures local people’s views, experiences and perceptions about the local area, rather than the Council specifically, so solutions for the district can reflect local opinions and preferences. It will also track people’s changing perceptions over time as a way of

determining whether interventions made in an area result in the right outcomes for local people. The Place Survey will be undertaken on a bi-annual basis.

- 3.3 Importantly, results from the Place Survey will be used to measure 18 of the ‘citizen perspective’ indicators, which government has charged local government and its partners to monitor and deliver on. These indicators are drawn from the government’s new National Indicator Set and will form an important part of the new streamlined local performance framework, the Comprehensive Area Assessment, which came into effect on 1st April 2009.
- 3.4 The six District Councils in Worcestershire, together with Worcestershire County Council outsourced their first Place Survey to the external market researcher Ipsos MORI, which was undertaken in Autumn 2008 (from 24th September to 19th December). This approach enabled financial economies of scale to be achieved.

4. KEY RESULTS

- 4.1 The overall response rate to the 2008 Place Survey was 42.6%. This represented 1,702 returned and valid surveys from an effective sample of 4,000 addresses.
- 4.2 A copy of the full Place Survey Report 2008 is attached at **Appendix A**, however in summary the key findings for Wyre Forest were as follows:

4.3 Progress against national indicators

- 4.3.1 Despite this being the first year of the Place Survey, a number of trends can be identified over time because a number of the questions from the old BVPI surveys were incorporated into the Place Survey questionnaire. Table 1 identifies progress made against six of the new national indicators collected through the Place Survey 2008/09 – drawing on comparator data from two previous waves of the BVPI General User satisfaction Survey.

Table 1

National Indicator	Definition	BVPI 2003/04 (%)	BVPI 2006/07 (%)	Place 2008/09 (%)
NI 1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	n/a	64	72
NI 4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality	n/a	30	25
NI 5	Overall / general satisfaction with the local area	n/a	73	79
NI 23	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with a lack of respect and consideration	n/a	55	34
NI 41	Perceptions of drunk and rowdy behaviour as a problem	57	32	30
NI 42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem	68	47	32

- 4.3.2 It can be noted that satisfaction with the local area has increased since 2006/07 by 6% to 79%. Perceptions of various forms of anti-social behaviour as a problem in the local area are also continuing to fall and are now substantially lower than 2003/04 and 2006/07, although perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem had

already fallen a great deal by 2006/07. The proportion of residents who believe their area is socially cohesive has also moved in a positive direction in the last two years by 8% to 72%. Respect and consideration is another area that has seen similar improvement and while around a third (34%) still think that a lack of respect and consideration is a problem locally, this has fallen substantially since 2006/07 when 55% of residents took this view. This district's results are now significantly more positive than the National average of 50%. With regard to local decision making only a quarter of residents agree that they can influence decisions affecting their area (25%). A slight downward trend on this measure is evident across most districts for whom Ipsos MORI has conducted the Place Survey with a district average of (29%). Wyre Forest's score is also below the Worcestershire district average of (27%). However nine in ten people would like to be involved in the decisions that affect this district in some capacity. This suggests that there is considerable scope to increase engagement with the district's communities.

4.4 Non national indicator trends

4.4.1 The Place Survey remains an important tool through which to collect perceptions data and monitor performance around some of its key universal services such as waste and recycling. Table 2 illustrates the Council's performance in these key service areas and against the old BVPIs that local government was monitored against under the previous performance assessment framework.

Table 2

BVPI	Definition	BVPI 2003/04 (%)	BVPI 2006/07 (%)	Place 2008/09 (%)
BV3	Overall satisfaction with the Council	53	50	42
BV89	Satisfaction with cleanliness	56	62	53
BV90A	Waste Collection	79	66	62
BV119A	Sports/leisure facilities	52	65	49
BV119C	Museums/galleries	42	42	43
BV119D	Theatres/concert halls	39	32	33
BV119E	Parks and open spaces	71	75	70

4.4.2 Overall satisfaction with the Council has declined by 8% since 2006/07. However, it is important to note, that based on the results of local authorities that Ipsos MORI have worked with, overall satisfaction ratings of Councils have fallen quite markedly in the majority of cases, so Wyre Forest is by no means unique in this regard. The survey findings suggest that one of the biggest influences on satisfaction with Council is whether it is perceived to provide good value for money. Given that, the Place Survey was distributed at the same time as the collapse of the Icelandic Banks and high levels of negative media commentary Nationally, it is likely to have impacted upon some residents views.

4.4.3 There has also been a slight decline in the satisfaction of specific council services. The most notable is with overall waste collection, where satisfaction has fallen by 17% since 2003/04. However, following local tips/household recycling centres at 77%, doorstep recycling was the next most highly rated environmental service that residents were satisfied with at 73%. Satisfaction with sports/leisure facilities is also somewhat lower than in 2006/07 (49% versus 65%).

4.4.4 Some of the other key results to note are as follows:

4.5 Priorities for the local area.

4.5.1 The level of crime and clean streets emerge as residents top priorities in terms of both importance and scope for future improvement. This is in line with the results of the previous BVPI surveys.

4.5.2 Residents see road and pavement repairs as a higher priority now than they did in 2006 with 56% now stating that these are one of the things that most need improving compared to 44% in 2006. However less priority has been given to health services. In 2006 two in five (40%) prioritised this, compared to one in five (21%) now.

4.5.3 Over the coming months, further analysis of the Place Survey results will be undertaken by both the Corporate Performance Clinic and the Corporate Development and Performance Management Officer working group, in order to identify key areas for improvement to further inform service design, planning and delivery during 2009/10.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The 2008 Place Survey is a statutory requirement of the Council and has been undertaken in accordance with the prescribed Audit Commission guidance.

6.2 A number of the questions asked in the Place Survey are also statutory National Indicators, as identified in the full report attached at Appendix A.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The data published in this report has not yet been signed off by the Audit Commission as they have yet to finalise the weighting system for the Place Survey questions. Local authorities were advised that this process would be complete by February 2009, however at the time of writing this report, we are still waiting. Therefore the results can only be treated as provisional until the weighting scheme has been finalised, although we are confident there will be little change to them. All other district councils in Worcestershire have adopted the same approach as ourselves as we can't wait any longer for reporting and using the results to support our business planning processes for 2009/10.

7.2 Effective improvement planning and further communication and engagement with our residents will be instrumental in improving the current satisfaction ratings of services.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The results of the survey provide a robust framework for the future design, development and delivery of services which meet the needs and expectations of our residents and improve the social, economic, health and environmental well-being of the District.

9. CONSULTEES

- Cabinet Member for Community and Partnership services

- Head of Community and Partnership Services

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Department of Communities and Local Government, Place Survey Manual 2008-09 – July 2008
- Ipsos MORI Tender for 2008 Place Survey – July 2008
- Report to Cabinet – The Place Survey 2008 – August 2008