

Worcestershire Viewpoint November 2010

Feedback of Results

In November 2010, we sent out our third Worcestershire Viewpoint Survey. The survey included questions asked previously in our first Viewpoint survey (November 2009) about aspects of the quality of life in your local area, such as local public services, community safety etc. We also had questions regarding county council budget priorities, health services in Worcestershire and renewable energy. A total of 5,581 responses were received.

The results of the survey have been passed onto the relevant departments within the partner organisations to inform their forward planning processes and are being used to develop and improve local public services. This feedback sheet highlights the main findings from the survey. The full results analysis can be viewed and downloaded from our website: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/viewpoint

Perceptions of local area

The majority of respondents, 85%, are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared to only 5% who were dissatisfied. Road and pavement repairs, activities for teenagers, and level of traffic congestion were selected as the top three things that most need improving in Worcestershire (49%, 40%, and 31%, respectively).

Local public services

The majority of respondents think that local public services are working to make Worcestershire safer (66%), cleaner and greener (69%), and that they treat all types of people fairly (74%). However, under half of residents think local public services act on the concerns of local residents (48%) and promote their interests (44%). The five measures have all increased from last year, indicating more favourable views on actions of local public services.

About 4 in 10 people agree that their district council (44%), parish/town council (42%), and Worcestershire County Council (40%) provide value for money. These figures are higher than last year where just 36% and 31% were satisfied with the value for money provided by their district council and county council, respectively.

Overall satisfaction ratings for district councils and county council have also risen since last year. Satisfaction for how district councils run things has increased from 48% to 51% and for the county council from 43% to 46% since last year.

Respect and consideration

Over three quarters (76%) of residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. This hasn't changed since last year. Older residents, people who own their homes outright and Wealthy Achievers are all more likely to agree.

Another key measure concerns how much of a problem people not treating each other with respect and consideration is in a local area and this has improved since last year from 25% to 21% who think it is a problem. Renters, younger residents, and residents who live in hard pressed areas are all more likely to think this problem exists in their local area.

Community safety

Perceptions of crime and safety are often a driving factor to whether residents see an area as a good place to live or not. Most people feel safe in their local area (93%) during the day and after dark (63%). However, 21% feel unsafe after dark and this number is higher for people from hard pressed and urban areas.

The largest anti-social behaviour problems are teenagers hanging around on street and rubbish or litter lying around (27%), although both have reduced greatly over the past few years. One in five residents (21%) see drunken behaviour as a problem and a similar proportion (22%) see drug use and drug dealing as a problem.

NHS Worcestershire

The most important things needing improvement in the health service are cleanliness of hospitals (45%), waiting time before getting a hospital consultant appointment (35%), services for treating cancer (33%), and screening for diseases (30%).

Most respondents have used GP services (89%) and acute hospital services (56%), and NHS dentistry (54%) in the last 12 months. Residents were asked how satisfied they have been with each service and those that have used it within the past 12 months were more satisfied. 84% of residents were satisfied with local health services overall.

There has been a shift towards lower expectations of health services since last year. More residents (33%) expect services to get worse or much worse, compared to just 19% who were of this opinion a year earlier.

Worcestershire County Council Budget and Service Priorities

This section formed part of a wider consultation with residents using paper surveys in public buildings and newspapers, an online survey and face-to-face surveys, plus a survey tailored to 11-18 year olds circulated through our Youth Cabinet, youth groups and schools. A separate overall budget consultation report has been produced and the results have informed the Corporate Strategy planning process. A feedback document can be found online at <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/pdf/Worcestershire%20County%20Council%20Budget%20Feedback.pdf>

The Viewpoint results on service priorities are broadly consistent with those from other channels and show that residents attach greater importance to social care services than other areas such as supporting children and families to access education and subsidising bus routes. Residents allocated the highest proportion of spend to social care for older people.

Renewable Energy

There is good support for renewable energy generation both in general (81%) and in Worcestershire (78%). When asked about specific technologies in respondent's immediate local area there is less support, though still a small majority in support in all cases. Biomass power plants have the least support (52%), while wind turbines have the most opposition (18%).

Greater consultation with local people over proposed schemes (63%) was selected the most as a way to achieve greater acceptance of large-scale renewable energy.

Small scale renewable energy is gaining increased acceptance, as respondents indicated they would consider having wind turbines (32%), solar thermal panels (71%), ground source heat system (54%), and wood fuel (39%)

To the best of our knowledge all information was correct at the time of printing: May 2011