

## Citizens' Panel Event May 2006

### Summary of Activity Groups

#### **Worcestershire Waste Warriors**

The 'Waste Warriors' split into three groups. Each group had a pile of waste items on their table and were asked to separate them out and place them into the most appropriate receptacles provided. There were thirteen receptacles in total including some for recycling, some for re-use, a general waste bin, a compost bin and a food waste disposer.



The outcome of the exercise highlighted the need for us to raise awareness on the finer details of what can and cannot be recycled in the collection schemes across Worcestershire, in particular we found that the groups were placing many plastic and paper items in the wrong receptacles.

#### **Customer Strikes Back!**

Working in pairs, panel members were asked to undertake various tasks to locate services via the Worcestershire Hub web site ([www.whub.org.uk](http://www.whub.org.uk)). The aim of the exercise was to obtain feedback on the usability of the Worcestershire Hub Website, to determine how users navigate the system and to identify potential areas for improvement and development.



Although the group generally liked the website and were impressed by the amount of information that could be accessed, they did highlight some areas for improvement and/or development that have been taken on board. Actions that are now taking place as a result of this exercise include simplifying and reducing the amount of content per page, highlighting hyperlinks on web pages, reviewing the GIS (Geographical Information System) from the customer perspective to ensure ease of use, simplifying e-forms and implementing a google like search functionality.

### **Worcestershire Watchdog**

In the first part of the workshop, an awareness raising exercise took place about what the Trading Standards Service in Worcestershire is responsible for. The group was then asked to discuss what they thought constituted an excellent Trading Standards service. It was clear from this discussion that the key to good service is to be kept informed at regular intervals.

The second half of the session involved panel members being presented with a set of the 15 key functions of the Trading Standards Service and, with a little explanation of what they involved, being asked to prioritise these functions in order of importance. There were some commonalities and some great differences in responses. In particular, all participants saw high profile functions such as doorstep sales, community safety, underage sales, unsafe goods and animal health as high priorities.



## Wicked Issues

This exercise was based around a community planning exercise. The group split into two and each was given responsibility for a model town. The group had to discuss the issues each of the towns were facing and what the priorities for the towns were. The exercise helped to raise awareness of the complex issues that the Council face when planning services and determining priorities for the future.

At the end of the session, participants were given Councillor status and had to allocate funding within their model towns.



## True Grit

The group started off with a short presentation by officers about the Council's Winter Maintenance Service. The aim of the presentation was to highlight to group members the processes and decisions that are taken throughout the winter season about gritting operations. This developed into a very informative question and answer session.

Following this, group members were invited to participate in a scenario exercise; all were given a weather forecast and a set of data from an actual night during the winter season. They were then asked to make a decision over what winter gritting action they would take. The situation was updated and complicated as further forecasts came in and by the end of the exercise panel members had an appreciation of just how difficult these decisions sometimes are!

The discussions, which took place during the group exercise and the answers to the e-voting question, will feed into the review of Winter Maintenance that is currently underway.

