

# **Citizens' Panel Festive Event 2007 - Summary of Results**

## **Activity Groups**

### **Worcestershire Hub 4 U**

The Worcestershire Hub is currently exploring the use of text messaging and digiTV as a two-way communication method with customers to access council services. Panel members were split into two groups and each group received a Dragon's Den style presentation on text messaging and digiTV, with panel members taking on the role of the Dragons.

Questionnaires were handed out at the start of the session to gauge awareness of the Hub and individual attitudes towards text messaging and digiTV. Panel members were asked to complete the first side of the questionnaire before the presentations and the reverse afterwards. This was to see if Customer Services team members had convinced them of the benefits of text messaging and digiTV.

The evening provided the Customer Services team with some very interesting and useful feedback. Some of the panel members had been swayed by the presentations, whereas others stated that they still preferred more personal contact with the Hub through face-to-face or telephony options. It was impressed upon the panel members that these options, along with the online facility, will remain in place and that text messaging and digiTV are being considered as additional communication and access methods. Feedback and questionnaire results will be used to feed into project plans.

### **Environmental Games Room**

Environmental Services is a diverse directorate and the games in the Environmental Games Room were designed to give the group a taste of what Environmental Services do.

The group were split into 3 groups to and spent 15minutes at each game.

### ***Trading Standards - Who wants to be a successful consumer***

Trading Standards asked members of the groups to participate in the game "Who wants to be a successful consumer?" in the Environmental Services Games Room.

The quiz based on the popular game show format "Who wants to be a millionaire?" set the panel members 15 question about the various functions Trading Standards enforce and investigate. Subjects covered included age restricted products, consumer rights, buying on the internet, counterfeit items, toy safety, weights and measures and Trading Standards legislation.

Players were able to use lifelines of 50:50, ask the audience and phone a friend with the Trading Standards representatives conducting the game taking the roles of friend and audience. Successful contestants received a small prize and the results will be collated to discover what elements of consumer law people were aware of.

### **Waste Services**

There were five receptacles representing a kerbside recycling collection, a Household Recycling Centre for recycling, a general waste bin, a compost bin and a food waste disposer.

The game was a fun way of testing people's knowledge and understanding of what could and could not be recycled in current recycling schemes across the county. It highlighted the fact that people wanted to recycle more of their plastic packaging and many of them weren't aware that they could only currently put plastic bottles in their kerbside collection schemes. It was good to see that many people were aware that they could compost their cardboard and paper.

### ***Safe and Sustainable Transport***

#### Pin the tail on the bus timetable

The groups were asked to pin descriptions on an enlarged bus timetable and were then asked to find suitable times of travel based on certain criteria.

There was a very good success rate for the exercise. This is a relatively new design for our timetables so the positive feedback was very reassuring.

#### Walking and cycling map symbols

Symbols and description from the walking and cycling map were laid out and the groups were asked to match the symbols to the description.

This was quite a tricky exercise but we had some very determined participants! It showed that certain symbols would benefit from a slight re-design and that some of the symbol descriptions are in need of clarification.

The group finished with a discussion on what they had learnt from the games and any questions that had arose. There were some excellent suggestions and comments.

### **Climate Talk, Our Planet, Our Say**

8 panel members attended this workshop that gave them a chance to engage with a Democs activity produced by NEF (New Economics Foundation) ~ with some input from WCC colleagues, around the theme of Climate Change. The activity revolves around three sets of cards that introduce the theme (c. 40 cards), introduce personal perspectives on it (8 cards) and look at ways of dealing with the challenge (c.50 cards)!

The main emphasis of the activity is to encourage discussion and sharing of views and priorities, and where the session was particularly interesting was that the group came to a consensus on the need for action, but for different reasons and from different standpoints! A few panel members remain unconvinced around the science of climate change, but there was widespread agreement that we need to change the ways we live for a more sustainable future!

### **Worcestershire: A healthy place to live?**

Participants viewed a presentation by Dr Richard Harling, Joint Director of Public Health on the principal public health challenges that lie ahead for Worcestershire. He was also able to show that some of these issues, and especially those relating to health inequalities, were also faced a century ago by his predecessor, the County Medical Officer of Health.

Following Dr Harling's presentation, participants were asked to identify their priorities for action for health for all in Worcestershire. The results are as follows:  
Physical activity and tackling obesity

- Insuring organisers of walking groups against possible claims

- Restore playing fields, tennis courts etc and ensure this infrastructure is in place in villages as well: guarantee access to the open space that exists
- Better action needed to clear blocked footpaths
- Specific example: HMP Long Lartin owns open space that it will not permit football games on- instead the grassed area is misused
- Walking the finest thing you could do, so create age-specific groups to encourage participation rather than expect all ages to mix well immediately
- Could we persuade existing organisations like Weight Watchers or Rosemary Conley groups to offer services in areas where the biggest challenges are?

#### Healthy public policy

- Local authorities prone to take cuts from 'soft areas' like libraries, countryside service, arts and so on
- IT provision in public libraries especially welcome

#### Safer communities are healthier communities

- More consistent use of CCTV
- Adequate street lighting will reduce perceived ASB from young people

#### Action needed on binge drinking

- Reduce number of BOGOF offers on alcohol
- Ensure enforcement of under age legislation on alcohol sales in village shops – less well-policed than major sports

#### Getting people fully engaged with health and wellbeing

- Get local communities engaged with the necessary action- got to be a bit of self-help
- We must make it easier to volunteer: a perceived difficulty in meeting formal requirements, especially in the youth field
- How are we going to enthuse people for health promotion, rather than just be seen to harangue them?
- We need more positive messages about what we have achieved, rather than focus on what we haven't done or the problems before us

#### Real action on recycling will make for a healthier world

- Just how serious are Councils about recycling? We can only recycle a fraction of what could be recycled. We should start at the top with supermarket packaging. We should also take waste reprocessing far more seriously.

### **Making Life Better**

Children's Services' workshop was focussed on Worcestershire's new Children and Young People's Plan, which is currently being developed. Participants had the opportunity to rank the 12 main priorities of the plan and arrived at the following order of importance (highest priority first):

- Raise the educational achievement of all children and young people, from those who find learning challenging to the most gifted and able
- Protect children and young people from domestic violence
- Prevent bullying and support children and young people who have been affected by it
- Prevent youth crime and anti-social behaviour and support children and young people who have been affected by it.
- Protect children and young people who are at risk from harm and neglect
- Make sure all children and young people and their families live in satisfactory accommodation.

- Actively involve children, young people and their families in decisions that affect their lives.
- Improve the emotional well being of children and young people
- Make sure that all children and young people and their families have things to do and enjoy in their communities
- Increase the participation of young people aged 16 and over in education, employment and training
- Support children and young people to lead healthy lifestyles
- Make sure that children and young people are respected and valued in their communities.

There was also an exercise to identify the top priority area under each Every Child Matters Outcome:

<b>Every Child Matters Outcome</b>	<b>Citizen's Panel Priority</b>
Children and Young People are Healthy	More children and young people take part in exercise
Children and Young people Stay Safe	Families who are living with domestic violence should know where to get help
Children and Young People Enjoy and Achieve	To raise the educational achievement of all children and young people there is a wide range of learning experiences giving children and young people skills for life.
Children and Young People Make a Positive Contribution	Youth crime and anti-social behaviour is reduced
Children and Young People Benefit from Economic Well-Being	Make sure that families live in satisfactory accommodation.

The comments of all the participants are greatly valued and will have a direct influence on the Children and Young People's Plan 2008.

### **Buying Freedom**

Adult and Community Services' workshop was about a little known service for children and adults called Direct Payments. The event was preceded with a short introduction to the work of the Directorate and Direct Payments service in particular. Panel guests were shown three extracts from a longer film entitled 'Buying Freedom'. The film has been jointly produced by the Directorate and the Department of Health as a means of providing information and training for staff and others interested in promoting or taking up use of this service.

Following the film show, panel guests worked in 5 small groups to take part in a light hearted bingo game using a Directorate internet web site to help them identify the answers. The film and web site generated many useful questions from the panel about this little known service. The Directorate will use the feedback received to modify and promote its information on access to its services both in hard copy and on the internet.

For more results and photographs from the evening log onto [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/citizenspanel](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/citizenspanel), click on the Citizens' Panel Festive Event 07 link on the left hand side of the page.