

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee	Overview and Scrutiny Board	
Date of Committee	10th November 2010	
Report Title	Key Messages from recent consultation and engagement and some issues concerning the future of the Council's approach	
Summary	This Report summarises some key messages from consultation and engagement exercises undertaken by the Council during 2009/10, and suggests ways in which the Council could improve and gain greater value from its consultation and engagement activities	
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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?	No.	
Background papers		

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-

Details to be specified

Other Committees

Local Member(s) Via their involvement to date in the Community Forums

Other Elected Members

Cabinet Member Councillor Colin Hayfield

Assistant Chief Executive Monica Fogarty

Legal Jane Pollard

- Finance
- Other Chief Officers Strategic Directors
- District Councils Each of the District/Borough Councils via their involvement in the Warwickshire Joint Consultation Group (WJCG)
- Warwickshire PCT Via WJCG
- Warwickshire Police & Warwickshire Police Authority Via WJCG
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION NO

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

- To Cabinet On 28th November 2010 Details to be specified
- To Council
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation It is suggested that, if agreed by the Cabinet, the proposals should be discussed at the next meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board (scheduled for January 2011)

Overview and Scrutiny Board

Report of the Strategic Director for Customers Workforce and Governance

10th November 2010

Key Messages from recent consultation and engagement and some issues concerning the future of the Council's approach

Recommendations:

The Board is asked to:

- 1) Consider the key messages from the corporate, directorate and partnership consultation and engagement activities conducted over the period between 1st April 2009 and 30th March 2010.
- 2) Consider the proposed improvements to the Council's approach to consultation and engagement
- 3) Make such comments as it thinks fit to be relayed to the Cabinet (18th November 2010)

1.0 Introduction

Our Vision for public services in Warwickshire is to *Work in Partnership to put Customers First; Improve Services and Lead Communities*. It reflects our commitment to engaging our customers and residents through a range of mechanisms including a variety of consultation, engagement and participation activities.

The Council is committed to ensure that all of these activities are conducted in an effective and efficient way, and that they truly influence our decision and policy making. Wherever possible and appropriate these activities should be carried out in partnership.

The statutory guidance states that we have a “duty to inform, consult and involve” local communities and residents¹. This also constitutes an integral part of the Big Society agenda and reinforces the corporate messages of:

- **Transformation 2013** across its work streams with the focus on promoting inclusion, choice and control, improving community engagement and empowering communities to be fully involved;
- **One Front Door** with the focus to enable access to our services and promote ways of engagement;
- **Locality Working** with the focus to engage local communities to identify and address local needs;
- **Closing the Gaps / Addressing Inequalities** which is about improving the quality of life for the most disadvantaged individuals and communities in the County, and which cannot be achieved without their effective engagement.

The County Council has many examples of consulting and engaging successfully and this report presents a summary of key results from public consultation and engagement undertaken between 1st April 2009 and 31st March 2010.

The report also identifies the need for greater coordination and more effective management of consultation and engagement across the County Council and its partners and provides some ideas as to how these needs could be met.

2.0 Key messages from public consultation and engagement activities in 2009-10

Warwickshire County Council conducts approximately 250 consultations each year. In all our efforts to carry out consultation and engagement activities as efficiently as possible, we cannot achieve this without full understanding of the outcomes of previous consultations. This section provides information on key consultation and engagement exercises conducted in 2009-10 and draws key messages from them.

2.1 Partnership Place Survey 2009

¹ Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities Statutory Guidance, <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/doc/930696.doc>

The survey was conducted in partnership with District and Borough Councils in Winter 2009, and provided updates on information measured in the 2008 Place Survey, including the results for 18 of the National Indicators before they were reviewed and then lost credence in 2010 following the election of the coalition government (see Table 1).

The consultation was distributed to households across the whole of Warwickshire, with 3,600 postal questionnaires being sent out in each Borough / District; a total of 18,000 questionnaires. We received back 3,034 responses with the response rate at almost 17%.

The survey included the usual questions on satisfaction with the area as a place to live, anti-social behaviour, satisfaction with public services and what most needs improving in the local area.

Table 1

NI	Definition	2008	2009	Change
37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area	15.5%	30.2%	+14.7%
42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem *	25.6%	21.9%	-3.7%
41	Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem	25.3%	22.1%	-3.2%
22	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area	30.5%	33.7%	+3.2%
23	Perceptions that people in the area treat one and other with respect and consideration *	26.9%	24.3%	-2.6%
21	Dealing with local concerns about ASB and crime issues by the local council and police	23.0%	25.2%	+2.2%
138	Satisfaction of people aged 65 and over with both home and neighbourhood	86.4%	88.4%	+2.0%
5	Satisfaction with local area as a place to live	82.9%	84.7%	+1.6%
140	Fair treatment by local services	75.1%	76.6%	+1.5%
4	Percentage of respondents who feel they can influence decisions in their local area	28.3%	29.7%	+1.4%
17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour *	16.2%	15.0%	-1.2%
1	Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together	81.1%	81.1%	0%
119	Self-reported measure of people's overall health and well-being	77.7%	77.5%	-0.2%
139	The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently	30.7%	30.5%	-0.2%
3	Civic participation in the local area	14.0%	13.2%	-0.8%
6	Participation in regular volunteering	26.0%	25.1%	-0.9%
27	Understanding of local concerns about ASB and crime issues by the local council and police	22.3%	20.7%	-1.6%
2	Percentage of people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood	60.2%	58.5%	-1.7%

The Partnership Place Survey also asked questions about satisfaction with services provided or supported by local authorities. Satisfaction with environmental services such as refuse collection, doorstep recycling and recycling centres are rated highly by respondents, lower levels of satisfaction have been recorded with some transport and recreational services.

However, as Table 2 shows, it is encouraging that users of the services have a more positive outlook on services compared to all respondents.

Table 2

Service	Overall satisfaction	User satisfaction
Keeping public land clear of litter and refuse	62%	N/A
Refuse collection	84%	N/A
Doorstep recycling	79%	N/A
Local tips / Recycling centres	74%	77%
Local transport information	42%	48%
Local bus services	49%	59%
Sport / leisure facilities	47%	55%
Libraries	68%	76%
Museums / galleries	45%	63%
Theatres / concert halls	42%	59%
Parks and open spaces	70%	74%

There are still issues which need to be addressed, and the key messages from this consultation include:-

- Activities for teenagers have once again been highlighted as the issue that most needs improving in the local area. This issue has been considered as in need of improving by more respondents, compared to issues such as education provision, health services, the level of crime and job prospects. This should be and has been investigated further, as it may have been a result of various perceptions of what young people actually do and/ or young people's lack of awareness of available activities.
- Most respondents (85%) remain satisfied with their local area as a place to live, with those in the south of the County slightly more satisfied (90% in Warwick compared to 73% in Nuneaton and Bedworth).
- Satisfaction with many services supported by local authorities is relatively high; 84% are satisfied with refuse collection, 79% with doorstep recycling, 74% with recycling centres and 70% with parks and open spaces. Encouragingly, satisfaction levels with users of these services are even higher.
- Approximately one-third of respondents (34%) believe that the County Council provides value for money, whilst less than one-half (46%) are satisfied with the way the County Council runs things. Whilst these findings may seem disappointing, both measures have improved slightly since the 2008 Place Survey results.

- Almost twice as many respondents feel informed about civil protection arrangements in their local area compared to 12 months ago (30% compared to 16%). This significant increase is probably due to the large amount of publicity and information distributed about Swine Flu in the last 12 months.
- The local media, the Council website and information (e.g. local media, Warwickshire View, website, service leaflets etc) provided by the Council are the most popular ways respondents find out about the County Council.
- Perceived levels of anti-social behaviour continue to decrease year on year. The survey results suggest that approximately one in five respondents believe that drug use or drug dealing and drunk or rowdy behaviour are a problem in their local area. Significant differences exist across the County, with respondents in Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough nearly twice as likely to believe these issues to be problems compared to respondents in Stratford District.
- Similarly, the fear of being a victim of crime has also decreased, with one-half (51%) of respondents now stating they are worried about having their home broken into and having something stolen, compared to 65% in 2008.

2.2 Community Forums

Many issues have been identified and then resolved through the Community Forums which have become a highly effective vehicle (see recent Review of Locality Working) for taking various issues and consultations forward. In 2009-10 these issues included:-

- Changes to the Council's winter gritting policy following feedback and consultation with residents across the County;
- Facilities for the youths improvements – Multi Use Games Area has opened in Alcester and £175k funding been secured via Norton Foundation;
- Fire and Rescue Improvement Plan consultation – some of the forums were entirely dedicated to the consultation and helped inform the County Council's decisions;
- Improvements to road crossing facilities following concerns raised at the Rugby Town West Community Forum;
- Introduction to the "Youth Consortium" project in Rugby in order to ensure better coordinated youth provision;
- Flooding and drainage issues which have been identified as one of the priorities to feed into the localities plans in Stratford and Warwick Districts;
- Litter picking was one of many suggestions that North Leamington Forum came up with, as something it thought children could do in their area. The Forum was consulted by a cluster co-ordinator based in North Leamington Community Forum area in December 2009 and the co-ordinator contacted Warwick District Council who provided equipment for groups of children and their families to collect recyclable and non-recyclable items;
- Major cleanup operation of the Crown Way shopping precinct in Warwick District - In response to issues raised by residents about the state of the Crown Way shopping precinct at the North Leamington Community Forum in September 2009, Warwick District and Warwickshire County Councils have worked in partnership,

identifying grants and mainstream funds totalling £40,000 to transform the area. Further work and consultation with residents and the local Forum is currently being undertaken in a bid to transform a nearby disused area in Lillington into a community garden;

- In January 2010 Rural Community Forums in Warwick District were consulted, at the request of Warwick Area Committee, on a draft Joint Protocol for WCC/WDC involvement in and responding to Parish Plans, Parish Appraisals and Village Design Statements. The Protocol was subsequently endorsed by the Area Committee in March 2010, taking into consideration feedback from these Community Forums and Parish Councils;
- High speed rail consultation has been fed through local Community Forums for coordinated local discussion and in response to concerns raised at Forum meetings;
- Mental Health provision has been improved in the Keresley area after the issue was raised at the local community forum. Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership Trust are now providing services specifically designed for the local community from the local Community Centre;
- Ant-social behaviour and criminal damage close to Nuneaton town centre related to drug dealing from a property has been eliminated thanks to the issue being raised at the community forum.

Community Forums are considered as an excellent opportunity to clarify local issues such as highways, footpaths, parking, youth issues and youth provision, housing, recycling and anti-social behaviour. Many of these issues have been identified as priorities and will be fed into the forthcoming Locality Plans which are being established through discussion with local people.

Following the Localities Review which has been completed in July 2010, it is clear that good progress has been made in engaging citizens through the Community Forums, and providing them with an opportunity to engage not just with the County Council but also all other key public service providers. However, there is still a clear need to develop different approaches for under-represented groups, with particular efforts to ensure that those who are unable to attend, or choose not to attend the forums can still contribute.

2.3 Warwickshire LINK

The Warwickshire Local Involvement Network (LINK) is the umbrella organisation that brings together other networks, organisations, and individuals in the county concerned with health and social care. The LINK aims to help local people and organisations to speak with one voice, to influence key decision-makers and to be instrumental in improving health and social care services across all communities. The LINK does this by working in a collaborative and inclusive way, bringing together the skills, expertise and experience of people who use health and social care services with people and organisations that can represent the diverse needs of their communities.

The County Council is under a legal responsibility to ensure that there is a functioning and effective LINK that fulfils its statutory purposes.

Some examples over the past year of projects that the LINK has either successfully completed or is currently carrying out are:

- Gaining a patient perspective to the GP Out of Hours Service
- Examining the suitability of health information for blind and partially sighted people
- Mental Health Users Experience
- Dignity in Care Homes
- Warwickshire Healthline / Single Point of Access
- Access to maternity services for Traveller and Gypsy communities

The outcomes from this work are fed back to NHS Warwickshire, Adult Health and Community Services and to the appropriate Scrutiny Committees.

It is crucial that LINK carries on to develop its activity, so that its current achievements continue to be built on during and post its transition into the HealthWatch in 2012.

2.4 Citizens' Panels

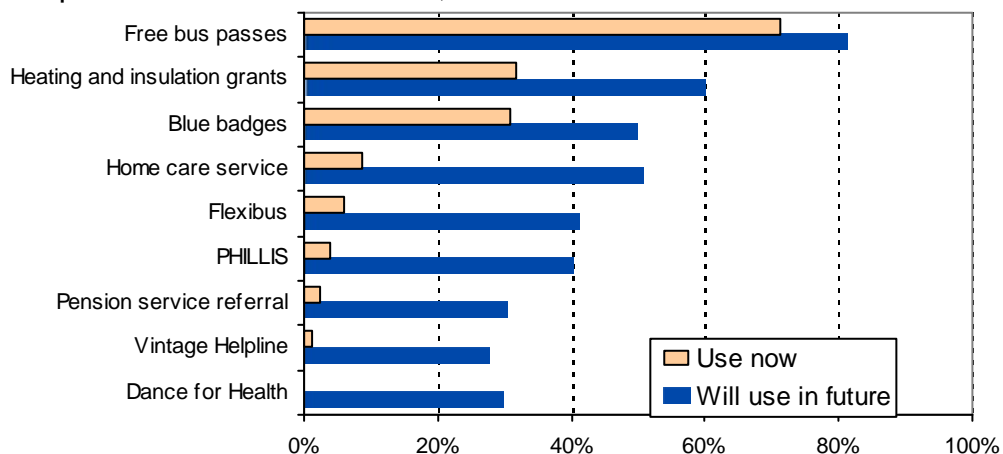
In 2009-10 the County Council conducted two Citizens' Panel surveys.

The first wave no. 29 focused on "Growing Old in Warwickshire". 1305 Panel members were given a list of nine services for older people provided by the County Council, and asked which they have heard of, which they currently use, and which they would use in the future. The response rate for this particular wave was 50%.

The survey revealed that at least three-quarters of respondents have heard of free bus passes (89%), heating and insulation grants (83%), the Home Care Service (81%) and blue badges (75%). However, less than one in five panel members had heard of the Vintage Helpline (7%), Dance for Health (9%), the Pension Referral Service (16%) and PHILLIS (18%).

Although free bus passes (71%), heating and insulation grants (32%) and blue badges (31%) are the only services currently used by a significant number of respondents, many more panel members say they will use each of the services shown in Table 3 in the future.

Table 3: Comparison of service use now, and in the future



On top of that, the Panel members were asked about their interest in and awareness of leisure and arts services, including the library service, results for which are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Services expected to be required in the library

Services	
Borrow books	77%
Borrow CD's, videos and DVD's	46%
Obtain information from books	45%
Obtain information from leaflets	45%
Take part in activities to develop new skills as a hobby	24%
Attend any meetings about local issues	24%
Read newspapers	23%
Take part in activities to further your learning	21%
Read magazines	20%
Borrow talking books	20%
Use the computers to surf the Internet	18%
Borrow large print books	15%
Use the computers to send or receive e-mails	14%
Attend any exercise classes	10%
Use the computers for any software packages	9%

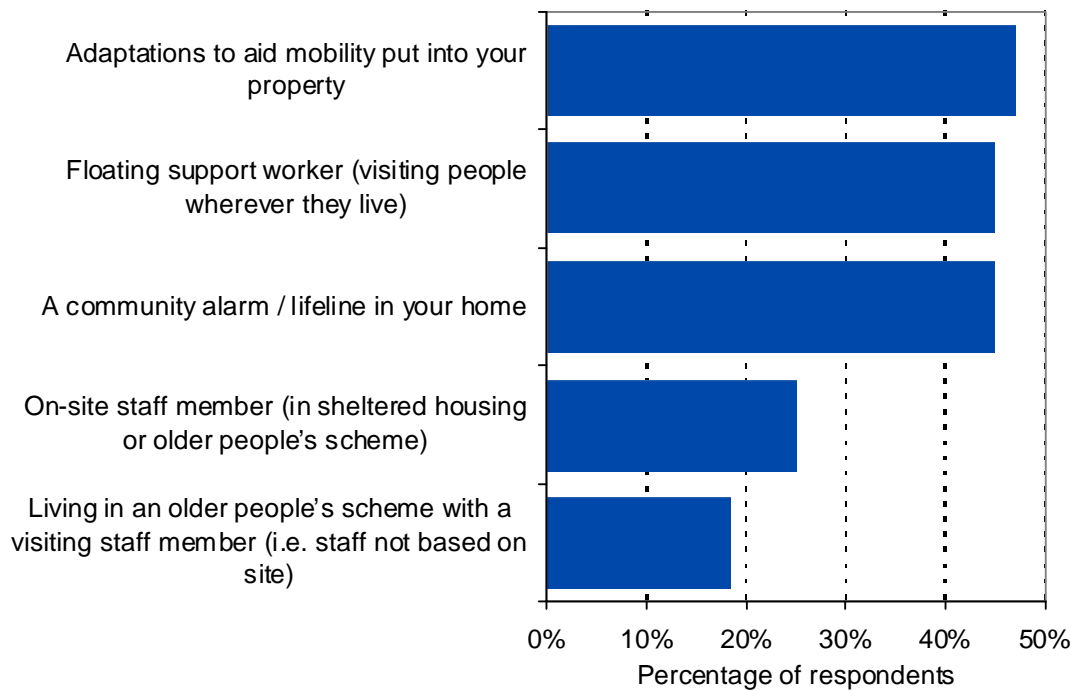
When asked where they would prefer to go to receive information or advice on health related issues, and where they would go more in the future, the Panel members voted for GP and dental surgeries, however they believe that their use may drop over time. Instead, panel members believe they will access information and advice via the Internet and through Social Services.

Housing and independence issues were also picked up by this survey and are being addressed by service managers.

Panel members were asked what help they would like to receive to help them to continue to live independently. 'Support with care needs', 'support with cleaning / gardening' and 'home visits' were each selected by approximately three-quarters of respondents.

Panel members were asked that if they needed housing support in the future to help to continue to live independently, which type of support service would be most suitable, they were given five options. Table 5 shows that the top three options were all well supported by respondents.

Table 5: Percentage of respondents to questionnaire



The results of this survey also showed that issues such as independence, safety and help in an emergency are things that become more important as people get older, whilst the quality of the property and having their own front door become less important.

Table 6: Important factors about where people live now, and for when they are older

Important now		Important in the future	
Quality of the property	76%	Feeling independent	75%
Having own front door	74%	Feeling safe	74%
Good relationship with neighbours	72%	Good relationship with neighbours	70%
Location	70%	Quality of the property	66%
Size of the property	68%	Having own front door	65%
Feeling independent	62%	Near to family and friends	65%
Feeling safe	61%	Location	64%
Near to family and friends	56%	Transport links	56%
Use of garden / allotments	54%	Being able to get help in emergency	53%
A home for life	47%	Accessible / easy to get around	53%

All of the above findings have informed the Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate's improvement plans and the Libraries transformation programme.

The second wave of the Citizens' Panel survey which was conducted in 2009-10 concentrated on the following three subjects:-

- Road safety
- Accessible transport
- Love food/ hate waste

The road safety questionnaire came about following a desire to further improve current performance regarding the number of accidents on Warwickshire roads. Road traffic accidents in 2008 were 9% lower than in the previous year and fell by a further 11.5% in 2009.

The vast majority of casualties were caused by human error. The County Council used the Citizens' Panel survey as one of means to identify effective road safety solutions. The survey was sent to 1288 members, 590 responded to it.

Table 7 presents some of the survey results.

Table 7

Q9	Which three of the following measures do you think are most important in reducing road traffic accidents in Warwickshire? <i>Please select up to three</i>
	52.5% Enforcing speed limits
	29.3% Educating children in road safety
	56.1% Enforcing the drink / drive laws
	33.6% Training drivers to drive more safely
	13.5% Improving the quantity and quality of road signs and road markings
	13.5% Traffic calming measures e.g. road humps and chicanes
	17.6% Training children to cycle more safely
	11.6% Enforcing the use of seat belts
	16.1% Reducing speed limits
	64.0% Enforcing mobile phone laws
	8.4% Providing motorcycle training

The second part of the wave 31 of the Citizens' Panel dedicated to transport was released in order to inform the review of the County's Accessibility Strategy and formed a part of the Warwickshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP3) consultation which has continued into 2010-11. It has produced some interesting findings as shown by Table 8 and 9.

Table 8

Q18	Do any of the following factors limit your ability to access services and facilities when travelling to <u>work</u> ? <i>Please tick one box in each row</i>		
	Does not limit	Small limitation	Severely limits
Lack of available public transport services	57.1%	11.6%	31.3%
Congestion of the road network	30.6%	49.4%	20.0%
Cost of transport (either private or public)	54.8%	27.9%	17.4%
The location of services and facilities	63.9%	25.4%	10.7%
Safety and security whilst travelling on any other mode of transport	71.1%	21.3%	7.6%
Lack of information on public transport services	63.1%	25.2%	11.7%
Personal physical mobility	90.0%	6.0%	3.9%
Lack or cost of parking at the destination	59.5%	26.5%	14.0%

Table 9

Q21 Do any of the following factors limit your ability to access services and facilities when travelling to healthcare facilities?			
<i>Please tick one box in each row</i>			
	Does not limit	Small limitation	Severely limits
Lack of available public transport services	69.0%	16.5%	14.4%
Congestion of the road network	54.0%	39.2%	6.9%
Cost of transport (either private or public)	73.8%	19.2%	7.0%
The location of services and facilities	66.3%	25.8%	7.8%
Safety and security whilst travelling on any other mode of transport	79.9%	17.6%	2.5%
Lack of information on public transport services	73.2%	20.0%	6.8%
Personal physical mobility	86.6%	9.6%	3.9%
Lack or cost of parking at the destination	52.8%	27.4%	19.8%

The survey has also revealed that only approximately 24% of all respondents were aware of any community transport initiatives, and so they predominantly used their private vehicles for travel.

The overall message from the Citizens' Panel surveys is that they remain to deliver quality information, with a response rate for each survey at around 50%.²

The make up of the Panel and its use is, however, being reviewed to increase its take up of consultations, ensure its full potential is utilised and the Panel is fairly representative.

2.5 Mystery Shopping

In 2009-10 the authority undertook two waves of a mystery shopping exercise in spring (mini wave) and autumn (main wave), and one benchmarking exercise in autumn.

The spring and autumn mystery shopping exercises brought very similar results. As every year since November 2006 four communication channels have been assessed by an independent external company Mystery Shoppers Ltd:-

- telephone
- email
- visit
- letters

The Mystery Shoppers measured each channel on 8 - 79 occasions, using rigorous criteria in terms of quality of information/ advice, customer care, adherence to corporate standards, etc.

The overall results are shown in Table 10 overleaf.

² The Citizens' Panel is made up of approximately 1,300 members.

Table 10: Overall satisfaction

Target	Calls	Emails	Visits	Letters	Overall
WCC Wave 7	87%	71%	85%	68%	82%

The overall satisfaction levels were 3% below the set target of 85%.

The results of the Benchmarking exercise were consistently high in comparison with previous years³.

The key messages from the Benchmarking exercise conducted in November 2009 are as follows:-

Calls

Warwickshire County Council consistently achieves high scores in this area always achieving over 79% satisfaction and has reached 91% satisfaction. Although we have failed to reach the benchmarking average in the last five waves we still scored highly in the last wave achieving 84% satisfaction with our calls compared with the benchmarking average of 87%.

Emails

Warwickshire County Council have consistently improved and exceeded the benchmarking average in this area in the majority of waves. In the last wave we exceeded the benchmarking average again scoring 71% compared with the benchmarking average of 69%.

Website

Warwickshire County Council have exceeded the benchmarking average score in this area many times and have consistently increased and maintained high levels of satisfaction, achieving 83% satisfaction in the last wave, although not quite reaching the benchmarking average of 86%.

Visits

Warwickshire County Council has consistently achieved high scores for satisfaction with visits always scoring above 77%. In Autumn 2009 our satisfaction score was 91%, our highest score to date, exceeding the benchmarking average of 85%.

Letters

Warwickshire County Council has improved in this area from 54% in Spring 2009 to 60% in the last wave compared with the benchmarking average of 57%.

Both types of Mystery Shopping exercised have stopped being commissioned via an external provider with a cost saving of approximately £10,000, and 2 new “replacement” projects have been developed, instead.

³ Warwickshire County Council was part of the Benchmarking exercise carried out by Mystery Shoppers Ltd. since 2005. This involved being tested against the 35 (approx) participating authorities across the UK. The exercise has discontinued in 2010.

The first one called Joint Peer Mystery Shopping project involves our partners from District and Borough Councils and Coventry City Council. In this project we use each Council's staff to mystery shop another authority's service on a reciprocal basis.

The other project called Internal Mystery Shopping involves rating the County Council's internally facing services by the Council's consultation practitioners.

Both projects have been developed in order to continue rating our services via the mystery shopping mechanism at the lowest cost possible, and both have had completed phase 1, which measured telephone interactions.

2.6 Directorate consultation and engagement

Below are presented some of the outcomes and key messages from major consultation and engagement activities across Directorates which were conducted in 2009-10.

Adult, Health & Community Services

- National Older People's Week (October 2009) – two events were held in the north and south of the county. They were an opportunity to engage customers around the personalisation agenda and raise their awareness of the subject. The overall feedback from participants was good. A large majority of participants had not engaged with the team previously, these events therefore opened the door to future communication and engagement. As a result, 44 referrals were made to a variety of organisations and events. Excellent partnership working was demonstrated at these events, and it provided a platform for a wide range of local and national agencies to share practice and experience. It has been envisaged that an annual conference will be held during national older people's week each year to focus on a particular theme of importance to older people representing an increased opportunity for older people to have their say.
- International Club (March 2010) – a cultural event took place bringing together many communities from a variety of cultures from across South Warwickshire to encourage community integration and knowledge sharing.
- Older People's Forums – these are held regularly in order to strengthen links with local communities, provide and share valuable information, make referrals. 36 referrals were made as a result of the North Warwickshire Older People's Forum.
- PHILLIS service evaluation focus groups – it formed a part of a 3 year evaluation process, which involved gathering the views of existing and potential customers of the PHILLIS service and obtaining views of "valuing age" to maintain independence. Report of findings was sent to PHILLIS for service progress and development. As a result of attending the focus groups, participants joined their local Older People's Forum.
- Day Opportunities Consultation (July 2009) – This project involved consulting with a wide range of people who reside in Warwickshire and who are not currently receiving a day care service, in order to obtain their views, needs and experiences regarding service provision and day opportunities. This consultation has informed a report of findings to be presented to the day services review project team, and will be considered when designing a new service model for future day opportunities.
- Charging Review (November 2009) – The aim of this project was to undertake a planned and timely consultation process on the adoption of a full cost recovery

model and inform existing customers and carers about future charging arrangements as well as to undertake a review of the contribution customers make to their care packages in line with the transformation of adult social care.

- Charter of Domiciliary Care (August 2009) – The aim of this project was to obtain customers' views in order to develop a charter for domiciliary care and support that reflects the needs of customers and of what they expect of a good quality service. This has helped to promote choice and control in relation to domiciliary care support.
- Libraries Transformation Programme consultations – As a result of surveys and engagement with users, plans to improve the facilities have been developed and implemented. These included the implementation of the self-service and new Children's Centres.

Children, Young People and Families

- Hear by Right and "Tell Us" surveys – These consultations enabled CYPF to develop action plans and pledges in response to key findings.
- Area Youth Forums – These are regular weekly meetings now in partnership with Area Children's Trust. Its key themes include bullying, nothing to do, safety, etc. As a result of these forums decisions are being made at a local level. They also influence policy amendments.
- County Youth Panel (Vox) – The Panel consists of young people representing each of the 5 areas of the County Council which meets on a monthly basis to discuss a variety of issues and concerns. These meetings are attended by a Head of Service.
- United Kingdom Member of Youth Parliament – During monthly meetings with an access to a portfolio holder and strategic directors to ensure ongoing influence and involvement, key issues including lowering voting age, increasing political education in schools, subsidised travel, etc. is pursued.
- Positive about Young People Programme – a wide consultation and engagement with young people which took place last year to evaluate satisfaction levels of young people, their parents/ carers with various services. Due to its success and popularity, the programme will continue during 2010-11.
- BIGMOUTH! Teenage Parents' consultation and forums in Rugby and Nuneaton – Three main issues have been highlighted during these events around housing being poor, lack of information on benefits and substandard treatment by midwives. As a result, parents in Rugby received support in raising complaints about housing; they were helped by Family Information Service to receive information on benefits. Also, the young parents contributed to the development of a specialist midwifery service for teenage parents.
- Respect Yourself Mystery Shoppers Programme – It involved young people visiting local sexual health services and feedback on their experiences. The PCT received the feedback and is looking at improving training for receptionists as well as improving signposting within their facilities.
- Every Child Matters (ECM) survey – This is an online survey offered to school pupils. The wide ranging information from the survey relating to school life, health, safety and careers will be used to inform the Needs Analysis and Young People's Plan. The survey has been followed by more consultation. Its results revealed that there was a lack of information available on how to support children's online usage, that practitioners did not feel as comfortable as they should in delivering parenting programmes. Using this information the Family Information Service developed a booklet on internet safety, including information on locally and nationally available

support, for example free software available to parents living in Warwickshire. The Parenting Development Team (PDT) set up peer support groups where practitioners could discuss the difficulties they were finding with delivering parenting programmes and use each other's experiences and advice, as well as that of the PDT, to support them.

- Joint Commissioning Strategy consultation – As a result of this annual feedback and survey, some services were identified as unhelpful and de-motivating for young people. The results were fed back to services and measures have been put in place to monitor levels of service user satisfaction, etc.

Customers, Workforce and Governance

- The Partnership Place Survey messages have been incorporated into the 2010-13 Directorate Business Plan. These are outlined below:-
 - Although satisfaction with the way Warwickshire County Council runs things has increased in comparison with the previous year's statutory Place Survey results by 3% and has risen to 46%, CWG missed its target set at 50%. Areas of improvement have been identified and centred on improving customer services and communications to customers. The Directorate has continued its work on the One Front Door Project, which includes migration of all services defined in the Customer Contact list into the One Front Door, implementation of recommendations for a joint contact centre, a single web presence and continued roll out of one stop shops as agreed with District and Borough Councils. On top of that a new Communications and Marketing Strategy has been developed.
 - The Council has almost met the set target of 30% for percentage of respondents who feel they can influence decisions in their local area. In order to further improve this result, the Directorate is committed to implement the recommendations of the Localities Review and a new joint consultation and engagement strategy with partners. The Council is also committed to manage 30 community forums with partners.
 - The result for participation in regular volunteering has decreased in comparison with the previous survey by 1% reaching 25.1%, and the set target of 27% has been missed. In order to improve this result, a Volunteering Marketing Strategy is to be agreed and implemented.
 - The target for dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police has increased to 25.2%, but we still missed our target set at 26.3%. In response to this a partnership Task and Finish Group has been meeting regularly to implement actions to improve Confidence. A strategy and action plan is under development and partnership communications campaign has been running over summer and autumn 2010.
- Service improvements plans have been developed from the Mystery Shopping findings and actions have been identified for the One Stop Shop and Customer Service Centre Managers to be taken. The Council's contract with Mystery Shoppers Ltd. has come to an end, and the Corporate Consultation service has been looking at alternative ways to of collecting feedback on services via Joint Peer Mystery Shopping exercise, Internal Mystery Shopping exercise and the customer feedback system called GovMetric which measures customer satisfaction levels across all 4 communication channels and enables benchmarking with our 4 District and Borough partners.

Environment and Economy

- County Highways took part in the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey in 2009, which allows the Council to compare its performance with 76 local authorities, including 25 county councils. Warwickshire's scores are comparable with most other counties. In particular, satisfaction has increased with "planning of road works". This has been followed later by the Winter Service Review Questionnaire, the results of which show that 83% of respondents are satisfied in County Highways Winter Maintenance following worst winter in 30 years. It has also informed new service plans.
- The Directorate has also undertaken several parts of an extensive local transport consultation which has continued into 2010-11. The consultation included a stakeholder workshop, issues and priorities from which were carried out through to the community forums and from March 2010 the second part of the consultation was launched with an online and paper survey. This consultation is to inform the Local Transport Plan review and strategy. The Third Warwickshire Local Transport Plan will be published in April 2011. The outcome of it will be a transport strategy for the next 5 years which is based on the views of the people of Warwickshire.
- Some consultation, including a Citizens' Panel survey, took place around Country Parks, which informed the service planning and service improvements.
- Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Survey was also conducted by the Directorate in 2009-10. Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with a range of services and facilities at the site they were visiting. General satisfaction results were very high, overall 98% of respondents were satisfied with the site they were visiting. Information has been incorporated to the HWRC fundamental review, the results of which will be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny in October.
- The Partnership Place Survey 2009 results have also triggered a lot of improvement into the way the Directorate's services are delivered. For example, the Country Parks service is looking at provision of activities for teenagers and play areas for children; the Directorate manages the "workless" agenda for the County Council to maximise opportunities for Warwickshire's disadvantaged residents to reach economic potential and works with partners on existing provision both statutory and voluntary; the Directorate has also been looking at their contribution to reducing crime in Warwickshire – a joint street lighting scheme with the District's community safety; etc.
- The Trading Standards service continued its annual consultation and monitoring of customer satisfaction in 2009-10. The results show that Warwickshire businesses are very positive about the support they receive from Trading Standards Officers, and the majority of customers with consumer problems were very satisfied with the overall level of service they received. Any identified shortfalls in service delivery have resulted in improved quality monitoring systems together with improved data inputting and complaint recording.

Fire and Rescue

- The Fire and Rescue regular surveys showed that in 2009-10 members of the public are generally satisfied or very satisfied with the services they have received, which included after the incident care, post fire safety inspections, home fire safety services, etc. In particular:

➤ Satisfaction with Home Fire Safety Checks 100%

- Satisfaction with quality of services provided 99%
 - Satisfaction with post fire safety inspections 98%
- Also last year the Directorate undertook an extensive consultation on its Integrated Risk Management Plan. Having evaluated the responses to the consultation, the 8 steps of the Improvement Plan were reviewed and amended and a new proposal was out to and accepted by the full Council in July 2010.

2.7 Conclusions

In conclusion, the number and level of service improvements as a result of effective consultation proves our commitment to increasing engagement with Warwickshire residents, stakeholders, service users and partners. It is extremely important that we are able to build on this, share the good practice, work closely together as an organisation and learn from our mistakes to increase the quality in the way we inform, consult and involve.

3.0 **Developing the Council's Corporate Consultation function**

3.1 Improving the Council's consultation and engagement activities

- 3.1.1 The recent joining up of the Corporate Consultation Function with the Localities and Communities Team gives the Council a greater than ever opportunity to improve our relationships with the citizens of Warwickshire and our partners, and it will enable us to get much closer to Warwickshire communities, including the seldom heard ones. Many projects in the direction of further improvements are already under way.
- 3.1.2 They include a development of a countywide consultation and engagement system, which will be used to share information on all consultation and engagement activities conducted by the County's public services, a delivery of aspects of the Consultation Excellence Scheme, which will enable us to develop and implement reviewed consultation and engagement standards and get a better understanding of what consultation and engagement is taking place and what are its true outcomes.
- 3.1.3 We are in a good position to better coordinate, rationalise and deliver consultation and engagement activities, the aspirations of which are fully explained in the following part of this report.

3.2 Where we are now

- 3.2.1 This assessment of the current role of the corporate consultation function was carried out following the move of the Corporate Consultation function to the Localities and Communities Team. This was carried out via the following means:-
 - meetings with consultation and engagement practitioners from across all Directorates (Corporate Consultation Operational Group – CCOG);

- meetings with consultation strategic leads from across all Directorates (Corporate Consultation Strategic Group);
- meetings with consultation operational staff from across Directorates;
- meetings with consultation and engagement leads from partner organisations (Warwickshire Joint Consultation Group);
- baseline audit of all consultation activities planned to be conducted in 2010-11;
- feedback from Warwickshire residents on communications and access to information received through a Citizens' Panel survey conducted in June- July 2010;
- analysis of the work delivered by the Corporate Consultation Officer.

3.2.2 The research has revealed the following:-

- There is only limited coordinated and planning of consultation and engagement activities a) across the Council and b) with partners
- There are a number of consultation and engagement activities being conducted each year by the Authority, but it has been extremely difficult to obtain any adequate information in relation to these activities before they start, as they progress or at their conclusion
- The Consultation Database (which was supposed to be a central repository of this information) has not been consistently used since January 2009. It is regarded by those who *should* be using it as cumbersome, out of date, and unfit for purpose
- Direct feedback from Warwickshire residents and Citizens' Panel members reveals that they generally find information on consultation activities difficult to find, and that there is not enough information about how their feedback impacts on decision making whilst they are being consulted on numerous occasions.⁴
- There is some evidence of consultation/ engagement duplication and overload.
- Consultation practitioners and strategic leads from Warwickshire County Council and its partner agencies agree that they are not systematically aware of forthcoming consultation and engagement activities being conducted by one another.
- There are no standards for consultation and engagement in the County Council. This results in inconsistent quality and degrees of incoherence.
- The "duty to consult" is often confused with the "duty to inform" where the decisions on significant changes to services had already been made.
- There is evidence of a lack of understanding of what good quality consultation and engagement involves, and best practice is not promoted and shared across the Directorates.

⁴ This statement is based on a number of phone calls and emails received via the Web Feedback system on the consultation web pages and on the outcomes of wave 32 of the Citizens' Panel Survey.

- The consultation mechanisms have not been reviewed and improved for a long time, and some of them are considered as old-fashioned, costly and not fully inclusive. This particularly relates to paper questionnaires and surveys.
- There is only limited information available on the outcomes of each consultation activity and how the activity has informed decision and policy making (if at all)

3.3 Where we want to be

3.3.1 Taking into account the lessons learned from the review we have drafted a fresh vision for consultation and engagement in Warwickshire County Council and across the partnership is suggested as follows:-

Warwickshire residents feel informed, involved in the decision and policy making processes and empowered to make their choice.

3.3.2 We will work towards achieving this vision by ensuring that:

- we use a variety of methods of consultation and engagement including citizen juries and innovative electronic methods;
- all consultation and engagement activities conducted in the County Council are effective and deliver best value for money to Warwickshire residents; in particular we must ensure that the level of all consultation is desirable, sustainable and affordable;
- we have a coherent and coordinated approach to the planning and conducting of all consultation and engagement activities across Warwickshire County Council and the partnership through a joint robust consultation commissioning mechanism and the establishment of an annual Consultation and Engagement Forward Plan;
- we establish a new, user friendly and effective consultation and engagement 'repository';
- we develop a set of standards for consultation and engagement on behalf of the County Council;
- all consultation and engagement activities in the County Council are conducted within an agreed framework, to high quality standards, because they are actually needed, and that they meet current legal and good practice guidelines;
- the methods used for all consultation and engagement activities conducted in the County Council are inclusive and enable the voices of seldom heard groups to be loudly heard;
- the most appropriate and wherever possible innovative methods are used to conduct consultation and engagement activities;
- best practice is shared across Directorates and with / between partners, and that we try to combine consultation where practical to reduce costs, duplication and consultation overload;

- the outcomes of all consultation and engagement activities will be published and that they will inform our decision making, policy development and service planning;
- the effectiveness of all consultation and engagement activities is evaluated.

David Carter
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13th October 2010