

2009/10

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

SURVEY NEWS



CONSULTING THE DISTRICT ON THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

CONSULTATION, EVENTS, ENGAGEMENT, INVOLVEMENT, FEEDBACK, GUIDE, NEWS.

Your Voice Matters Survey



The top three factors making an area a good place to live were:

- low levels of crime,
- health services; and
- clean streets.

There were opportunities for detailed responses through an online survey and The Forester Magazine. There were over 200 hundred online responses.

A Consultation on the future development of the district and wellbeing of the people who live in Epping Forest

One Epping Forest, the Local Strategic Partnership, is made up of public, private and voluntary organisations working together to deliver a wide range of important local services.

One of the aims of One Epping Forest is to listen and communicate effectively to all our communities, promoting opportunities for local people to shape, direct and help review what the partnership is working to achieve and how it goes about its task.

The aim of the survey 'Your Voice Matters' was to give everyone in the district the opportunity to engage with the production of the new Community Strategy. This report shows a summary of the results from an in-depth questionnaire.

A range of consultation activities and events were organised through:

- street stalls,
- local meetings,
- and a survey distributed in the Forester Council magazine, on
- high streets and tube stations, and
- online.

More than 1,000 people contributed to the programme. A full report of this consultation can be found on the One Epping Forest website at: www.oneeppingforest.org.uk and Epping Forest District Council's website: www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk

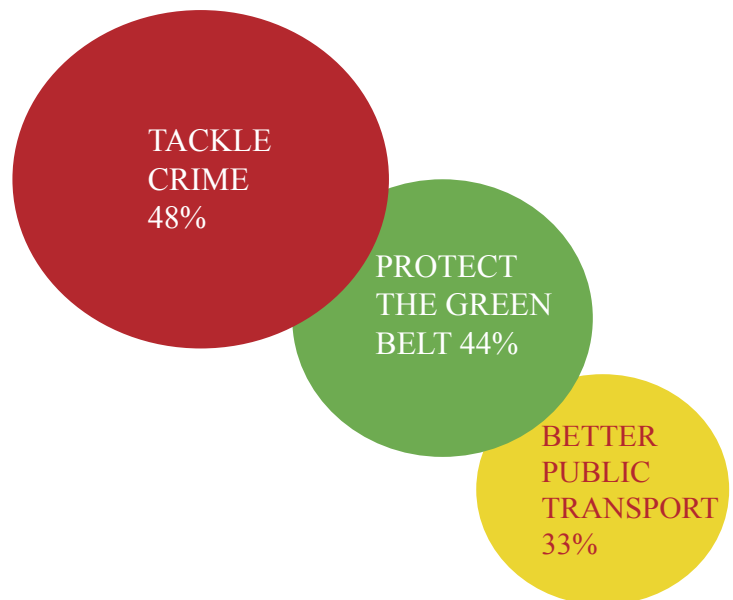
Top Priorities

What is important to you?

We asked residents about things that are important to their quality of life in our district and which of the following issues would be their priorities. The issues below rank these priorities in order of respondent preference.

Highest ranked priorities now

- 1. Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and reducing the fear of crime 48%;*
- 2. Protection of the green belt and the unique character of the district 44%;*
- 3. Better public transport facilities and improved access to services 33%;*
4. Investment and improvement in education to raise attainment levels for all 30%;
5. Improvement in the range and availability of activities for young people 28%;
6. Work to reduce carbon emissions and promote a greener way of living 24%;
7. Supporting the growth of businesses and employment opportunities in the district 24%;
8. Tackling health inequalities and promoting healthier living 21%;
9. Initiatives to provide more affordable housing; 21%; and
10. Enhancement of local shopping opportunities 17%.



Future priorities

Question - Looking further forward, what do you think will be the most important issue in the next 20 years?

The top three issues for residents to enable a better quality of life in the district and areas which can be improved by future investment would be to:

- tackle crime;
- protect the Green Belt; and
- improve transport and education facilities.

Tackling Crime

Overall

Crime is the highest priority amongst all respondents in all age groups. It was selected in the top three by 67%. 89% of respondents feel safe in their local area during the day.

Your Views

More detail

Most people describe concerns as either not a very big problem or not a problem at all and report anti-social behaviour issues to be fairly unproblematic where they live. For a small percentage of people, the reasons given for feeling unsafe were:

- A lack of street lights;
- A lack of visible policing; and
- The apprehension of anti-social behaviour.

Young people felt that knife and weapon crime and gang culture were their greatest fears (34%). It was felt that the types of crimes committed in the district were theft, vandalism and behavioural problems. The main issues cited were:

- Teenagers hanging around on streets (48%);
- Rubbish or litter lying around (33%); and
- Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles (29%).

Young people also want more visible policing and more activities or places to meet.

What's Important To You

- *more visible Policing;*
- *more activities or places to meet for young people;*
- *more control over the sale of alcohol to young people; and*
- *more CCTV.*

Protecting the Green and Unique Character of the District

Overall

We know that the countryside and unique character of the district are among the most important features in Epping Forest district for many people that live here. We asked which was the most important feature of the district.

Residents were asked about how they used the countryside for recreation purposes.

Your Views

More detail

For those using the countryside for recreation, access to the countryside and opportunities for exercise, enjoyment of the landscape and views of the woods, hedges, trees and wildlife are all important to residents.

Residents enjoyed walking, cycling and enjoying the forest landscape and woodland.

The extent of accessible open countryside and the proximity and easy access to London were the most important characteristics of the area.

What Needs Improving

- *Awareness of countryside; and*
- *Clearance of rubbish from hedgerows.*

What's Important To You

- *protect the Green Belt;*
- *invest in Countrycare activities;*
- *ensure the opinions of local people are taken into account and the Council acts upon them; and*
- *protecting our village environment.*

Transport

Overall

Transport was the third highest ranked issue from this survey.

Your Views

More detail

The priority issues for improving local transport and enhanced Central Line services are:

- Better links between rural areas and in rural areas;
- Better links between parts of the current bus system to other public transport services;
- Increased frequency and cheaper transport;
- More evening services;
- Improved transport information;
- Bus routes in Loughton, Debden, Harlow; and
- Opportunities for developing park and ride to service users of the Central Line.

For young people, 24% said transport difficulties were the main barrier stopping them from doing the activities they would like.

Safety at Bus Stops

Some further suggestions were for:

- Better lighting 53%; and
- Better bus stop shelter design 47%.

What's Important To You

- *increase parking;*
- *keeping roads in repair;*
- *cheaper transport;*
- *links to London and other large towns; and*
- *timetables to be readily available.*

Education

Overall

School results showed that many children and young people being educated in this district were not achieving as highly as in other parts of the country.

The One Epping Forest Partnership want to see improvements in achievement and aspirations for children and young people.

We asked residents where future investment should be directed and if they were satisfied with education provision. People were asked to describe what improvements they would like to see if they were not satisfied with the provision for education for post 16 year students.

Your Views

More detail

- Concentrate investment in education for the over 16's and Secondary Schools;
- Teach life skills and discipline in schools in order to help young people achieve their aspirations; and
- Provide more vocational courses for post 16 year students.

What's Important To You

- *invest in Secondary and Primary Schools;*
- *invest in worked-based learning/apprenticeships; and*
- *invest in education for over 16s including 6th forms within each school.*

Activities for Young People

Overall

We asked residents if there was need for improvement in the range and availability of activities for young people, about the barriers to young people accessing activities and services and the priority age group to which provision of activities and facilities be directed. We also asked if there were enough organised activities for young people locally.

Your Views

More detail

88% said 'No' when we asked if they thought there was enough organised activities for young people.

The age ranges 11 to 18 should be our priority.

Indoor and outdoor sports were preferred although youth centres, music and arts activities and other educational activities were also indicated.

Nearly one in ten people wanted a cinema. Other types of activities suggested were:

- More places for youngsters to meet where a variety of activities can be provided;
- Youth organisations such as Air Training Corps/ Army Cadets/Scouts etc;
- Financial support for cubs and brownies; guides, scouts and cadet corps, etc;
- A complete mixture of activities should be organised by young people themselves; supported by the Council; and
- Ask young people what they want.

What's Important To You

- *more activities for young people locally;*
- *develop land for more indoor and outdoor sports facilities; and*
- *improve publicity.*

Promote a Greener Way of Living

Overall

Climate change is one of the most important issues that must be addressed individually and collectively. We asked residents how the One Epping Forest Partnership could encourage a reduction in carbon emissions across the district.

Your Views

More detail

The majority of respondents wanted the Partnership to protect and enhance the countryside by ensuring that opportunities for access to the countryside are well publicised eg, footpath signs, good use of online information and encourage volunteer groups to work in their local area. Initiatives to reduce carbon emissions were:

- Not to build on Green Belt land or car parks which will directly raise our carbon footprint;
- To encourage more recycling by better informing the public about how recycled goods are reused;
- A better design of light bulbs;
- Stop foul smelly fires;
- Safer cycling facilities for commuters; and
- Make solar power and wind power cheaper.

We asked young people about recycling and if they recycled goods.

56% of young people said they recycle rubbish regularly; and

37% felt there was not enough information and resources available to people to improve recycling.

What's Important To You

- *protect and enhance the countryside;*
- *do not build on Green Belt land or car parks; and*
- *encourage the reduction of carbon emissions.*

Supporting Business

Overall

The One Epping Forest Partnership aims to support existing and new businesses in the district.

Respondents were asked how the Partnership could help improve employment opportunities and skills in the district.

Your Views

More detail

One in five respondents felt that promoting new businesses by providing information and support to new entrepreneurs was the way forward and to assist people to gain new or additional useful employment skills and qualifications.

A third of respondents felt that members of the partnership should encourage local business activity and local sourcing of materials, goods and services in order to support businesses and generate new business.

Other priorities for action were:

- Reduce the cost of business rates to assist businesses for five years and encourage new businesses into the area;
- Increase local business networking and communication resources;
- More apprenticeships;
- Align social benefits payments with willingness to work; and
- Promote higher education in schools and have local employers visit schools.

What's Important To You

- *reduce the cost of business rates;*
- *increase local business resources; and*
- *more apprenticeships.*

Health

Overall

Improvement in the health and wellbeing of those who live and work in the district is an important priority. Opportunities for a healthy active lifestyle plus information about health risks can contribute to this aim.

Your Views

More detail

When asked about their general health, most people responded 'Good' (70%), 'Fair' (21%) and 'Poor' (2%).

78% of those who responded did not consider themselves to have a disability or a long term limiting illness, 14% did. When asked what would be helpful in improving health and wellbeing, the top three responses were:

- 24% want better access to the services provided by a local General Practitioner surgery;
- 23% want better access to a National Health Service Dentist; and
- 21% want initiatives to make it easier to take more regular exercise.

90% of delegates from the stakeholder conference said reducing health inequalities is an important priority for the district.

67% of delegates considered public services were all contributing to tackling health inequalities.

22% felt that support was available for older people to stay at home.

What's Important To You

- *better access to GPs and NHS dentists;*
- *better mental health and obesity prevention; and*
- *initiatives to make it easier to take more regular exercise.*

Housing

Overall

There is considerable need for affordable housing in the district with over 4,700 people on the Council's housing waiting list. The greatest number of new affordable homes will be provided by allocating new land for residential development across the district.

Almost 94% of the district is covered by the Green Belt and people tell us it is very important that it is protected.

Your Views

More detail

- We should protect the Forest;
- Not to build any more new homes in the district at all and locate new housing in another area; and
- More use should be made of old existing housing stock as it comes on the market.

There is insufficient previously developed (or Brown Field) land available outside the Green Belt that can meet development needs up to 2031.

We asked where do you think new homes should be built and what do you think should be the preferred approach to building more homes.

The majority of respondents thought that there should be a higher density development in the larger towns to reduce the amount of Green Belt land needed for development.

What's Important To You

- *more use should be made of old existing housing stock as it comes on the market; and*
- *newly-built housing should be spread evenly across the district and not concentrated in three or four towns and villages.*

Shopping

Overall

There are a number of town centres in the district and each of them has distinctive character.

Residents were asked which town centre in the district they used, what they liked and disliked about it and if there was one thing that they would like the One Epping Forest Partnership to do to improve their local town centre, what would this be?

Your Views

More detail

The shopping and parking experience was a priority for improvement for most respondents of the in-depth survey. The majority of the comments were that Town Centres are valued the most for being closest to home for shopping.

Most respondents did not like the cost of car parking, parking availability and number and range of shops available.

What's Important To You

- *more variety shops locally; and*
- *more cheap parking locally.*



The Future 20 Years

We asked residents, looking further forward, what they thought will be the most important issues for the district in the next 20 years. Respondents cited their highest priorities for the next 20 years were to protect the Green Belt and The Forest. The countryside is very important for recreation and relaxation and for some, it is why they moved to the district.

'Preserving Epping Forest and the green spaces, that's what makes the area so lovely to live in';

and

'by only building new housing in the larger towns with higher density housing in the district';

and

'Tackling anti-social behaviour and trying to engage local people and make them realise that it is their district and they need to work with relevant authorities to protect and enhance it';

and

'Improve access to public services (including leisure facilities for young people) within urban areas with high Indices of Multiple Deprivation';

and

'Improve transport links in rural areas where access to health services are important'.

Key Features Overall

From other recent survey results the majority of residents are satisfied overall with their local area as a place to live (87%). Overall satisfaction with the area as a place to live was up by 10% to 87% from 2006.

The majority of residents were satisfied with their homes (91%).

The highest priority for improvement was road and pavement repairs, activities for teenagers and traffic congestion.

Young people mentioned:

- transport;
- shopping facilities; and
- race relations, as areas to improve.

Most people felt they belonged to their neighbourhood and felt safe during the day and after dark. There were perceptions that anti-social behaviour was a problem and that teenagers hanging around the streets was of most concern.

Epping Forest District is similar in its responses to surveys in other areas but the stand out issues to be given priority are:

- Green and unique issues;
- Transport; and
- Activities for young people.

This is a place people aspire to live and where people generally get on well together.



94% of respondents who use the countryside for recreation say its very important