

'HAVE WE GOT VIEWS 4 U'

A report on a survey of young people's views
in the Wealden District of East Sussex



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Introduction

During October and November 2006 an adapted version of the '2006/07 General BVPI User Satisfaction Survey' was posted on the Wealden Youth Website (www.w4y.co.uk). Wealden District Council were keen to learn what young people in the district thought about the area in which they live and study.

The 'General BVPI User Satisfaction Survey' is postal survey, which has to be undertaken every three years. In Wealden's case the survey was sent to 2,500 households in the district. 1,126 people responded during the survey-time frame of 1st September to 30th November. The purpose of BVPI Survey is to measure the general public's satisfaction levels across a number of criteria. The information gained from the survey provides the authority with vital information about the importance of a range of issues to local people.

This is a report on the findings of the youth version of the survey administered through the Wealden youth website, the purpose of which is to inform discussion by a number of groups.

Methodology

An adapted and shorter version of the '2006/07 General BVPI User Satisfaction Survey' was posted on the Wealden Youth Website (www.w4y.co.uk), during October and November 2006. Visitors to the site were invited to complete the survey on-line.

The survey was advertised by the use of posters in schools, colleges and youth centres throughout the district. As an incentive to complete it, young people could enter themselves for a prize draw to win an iPod. (The iPod was won by Matthew from Uckfield).

It should be noted that more young people started the survey than finished it, therefore some questions show more respondents completing that question than others. Tables have been created for the results of each question in the survey. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest 0.25%.

The questions, for the purposes of presenting the results, have been divided into four groups:

- Making somewhere a good place to live
- Community safety
- Views about Wealden District Council
- Making a positive contribution

Some limited interpretation is offered in the short discussion feature at the end of each section. This discussion section also contains a content analysis of the qualitative data from the survey.

Results

Demographics

57 young people completed the survey on-line. However more started the survey than completed it, therefore the earlier the questions were posed in the full survey the more answered them. The 57 who completed the survey can be broken down as follows:

Table 1: Respondents by gender (n = 57)

Gender	Numbers	Percentage
Males	35	61.50%
Females	22	38.50%
Totals	57	100%

Table 2: Respondents by age on last birthday (n = 57)

Age Last Birthday	Numbers	Percentage
10	3	5.25%
11	8	14%
12	6	10.50%
13	8	14%
14	6	10.50%
15	7	12.50%
16	9	15.75%
17	9	15.75%
18	1	1.75%
Totals	57	100%

Table 3: Respondents by ethnic origin (n = 57)

Ethnic Origin	Numbers	Percentage
White British	54	94.75%
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	1	1.75%
White Irish	1	1.75%
Black African	1	1.75%
Totals	57	100%

Table 4: Respondents with long standing illness, disability (n = 57)

Longstanding Illness, Disability	Numbers	Percentage
Yes	8	14%
No	49	86%
Totals	57	100%
Does the illness, disability limit your activities (n = 8)		
Yes	2	25%
No	6	75%
Totals	8	100%

Answers to the questions with discussion

Making somewhere a good place to live – Results

Table 5: What things are most important in making somewhere a good place to live? (n = unknown) (Respondents were asked to select up to five).

Criteria	Numbers	Percentage
Activities for teenagers	45	16.75%
Clean Streets	39	14.50%
Education provision	34	12.50%
Health Services	33	12.25%
Affordable decent housing	24	9%
Job Prospects	21	8%
Access to nature	20	7.50%
Community activities	19	7%
Facilities for young children	18	6.75%
Cultural facilities (e.g. cinemas, museums etc.)	16	6%

Table 6: What things need improving locally to make it a good place to live? (n = unknown) (Respondents were asked to select up to five)

Criteria	Numbers	Percentage
Activities for teenagers	48	24.75%
Cultural facilities (e.g. cinemas, museums etc.)	27	14%
Clean Streets	26	13.50%
Facilities for young children	26	13.50%
Health Services	15	7.75%
Community activities	13	6.75%
Access to nature	12	6%
Job prospects	12	6%
Affordable decent housing	11	5.75%
Education provision	4	2%

Table 7: Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? (n = 74)

Satisfaction Rating	Numbers	Percentage
Very satisfied	6	10.50%
Fairly satisfied	36	63.25%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	17.50%
Fairly dissatisfied	3	5.25%
Very dissatisfied	2	3.50%
Totals	57	100%

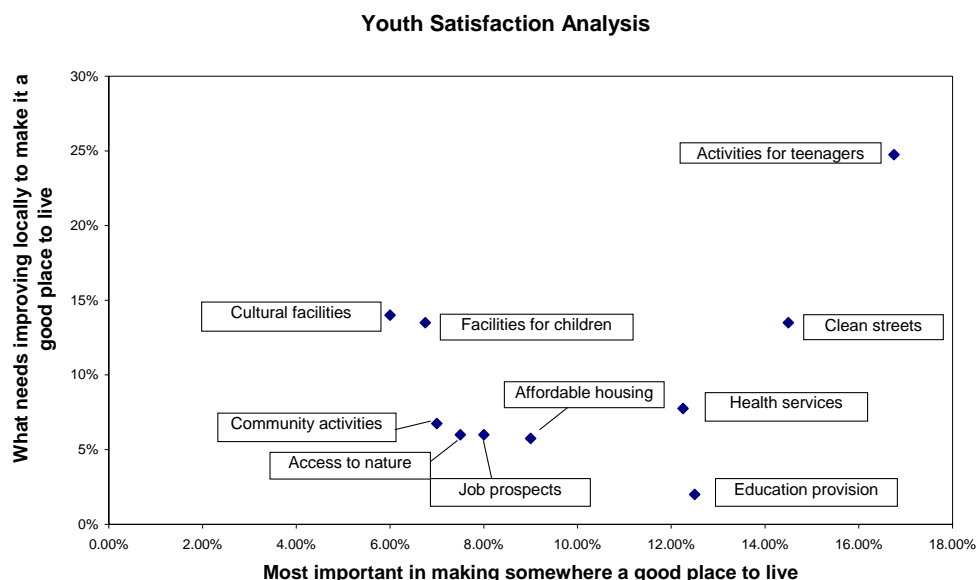
Making somewhere a good place to live – Discussion

The answers to these three questions provide an interesting insight into what respondents think is generally important in any area for young people and what specifically needs improving in Wealden area. The two lists are not prioritised in the same order or with the same numbers voting for that criteria, with the exception of ‘activities for teenagers’ and to a limited extent ‘clean streets’. This could be interpreted as, young people’s key aspirations for an area in which to live, are mainly being met in Wealden, with the exception of ‘activities for teenagers’ and to a lesser extent cleanliness of the streets.

It is interesting to note that there were 75 less boxes ticked in the ‘what needs improving locally’ question, when compared with ‘what makes somewhere a good place to live’. Respondents were invited to tick up to five boxes for each question clearly they struggled to tick all five for improvements required in this area. When the satisfaction levels are added into the equation (see table 7), then it shows that generally the majority of young people (73.75%) are satisfied with the Wealden area as a place to live.

Figure 1 below shows a scatter diagram which plots what young people responding to the survey thought were the most important things in making somewhere a good place to live against what they thought needs improving locally. If you divide the diagram into four parts those in the upper right hand quarter are the areas where most action is needed – they are high on the agenda for young people as making somewhere a good place to live and they also, in the view of young people, need most attention in this area. An eye should also be kept in the lower right quarter too, these services need to be maintained to continue making Wealden a good place to be.

Figure 1: Scatter diagram plotting most important things in making somewhere a good place to live against what needs improving locally.



Community Safety – Results

Table 8: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in Wealden during the day? (n = 72)

Safety Rating	Numbers	Percentage
Very safe	29	40.25%
Fairly safe	32	44.50%
Neither safe nor unsafe	7	9.75%
Fairly unsafe	4	5.50%
Very unsafe	0	0%
Totals	72	100%

Table 9: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in Wealden after dark? (n = 75)

Safety Rating	Numbers	Percentage
Very safe	5	6.75%
Fairly safe	31	41.25%
Neither safe nor unsafe	12	16%
Fairly unsafe	23	30.75%
Very unsafe	4	5.25%
Totals	75	100%

Table 10: Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think teenagers hanging around on the streets is? (n = 72)

Size of problem	Numbers	Percentage
A very big problem	15	20.75%
A fairly big problem	30	41.75%
Don't know	1	1.50%
Not a very big problem	22	30.50%
Not a problem at all	4	5.50%
Totals	72	100%

Table 11: Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think people being drunk or rowdy in public places is? (n = 69)

Size of problem	Numbers	Percentage
A very big problem	12	17.50%
A fairly big problem	19	27.50%
Don't know	2	3%
Not a very big problem	22	31.75%
Not a problem at all	14	20.25%
Totals	69	100%

Table 12: Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think people using or dealing drugs is? (n = 66)

Size of problem	Numbers	Percentage
A very big problem	14	21.25%
A fairly big problem	11	16.75%
Don't know	8	12%
Not a very big problem	18	27.25%
Not a problem at all	15	22.75%
Totals	66	100%

Table 13: Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children is? (n = 65)

Size of problem	Numbers	Percentage
A very big problem	13	20%
A fairly big problem	21	32.25%
Don't know	3	4.50%
Not a very big problem	20	30.75%
Not a problem at all	8	12.50%
Totals	65	100%

Table 14: Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think noisy neighbours or loud parties are? (n = 63)

Size of problem	Numbers	Percentage
A very big problem	2	3.25%
A fairly big problem	15	23.75%
Don't know	0	0%
Not a very big problem	40	63.50%
Not a problem at all	6	9.50%
Totals	63	100%

Table 15: Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think rubbish and litter lying around is? (n = 71)

Size of problem	Numbers	Percentage
A very big problem	14	19.75%
A fairly big problem	26	36.50%
Don't know	0	0%
Not a very big problem	24	33.75%
Not a problem at all	7	10%
Totals	71	100%

Table 16: Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think abandoned and burnt out cars are? (n = 68)

Size of problem	Numbers	Percentage
A very big problem	5	7.50%
A fairly big problem	8	11.75%
Don't know	8	11.75%
Not a very big problem	18	26.50%
Not a problem at all	29	42.50%
Totals	68	100%

Table 17: Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think vandalism, graffiti, and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles is? (n = 68)

Size of problem	Numbers	Percentage
A very big problem	12	17.50%
A fairly big problem	18	26.50%
Don't know	2	3%
Not a very big problem	31	45.50%
Not a problem at all	5	7.50%
Totals	68	100%

Table 18: Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think people not treating other people with respect and consideration is? (n = 73)

Size of problem	Numbers	Percentage
A very big problem	17	23.25%
A fairly big problem	23	31.50%
Don't know	2	2.75%
Not a very big problem	29	39.75%
Not a problem at all	2	2.75%
Totals	73	100%

Table 19: To what extent do you agree or disagree that this local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together? (n = 62)

Level of agreement	Numbers	Percentage
Definitely agree	8	13%
Tend to agree	41	66.25%
Tend to disagree	6	9.75%
Definitely disagree	1	1.50%
Too few people in local area	3	4.75%
All the same background	3	4.75%
Totals	62	100%

Community Safety – Discussion

There is a marked difference between the numbers of young people feeling safe during the day (84.75%) and after dark (48%). It is thought that these figures maybe comparable with adults completing a similar survey.

Tables 5 and 6 eluded to the fact that activities for teenagers are important in making somewhere a good place to live and it was the thing that needed most improving in Wealden. The same respondents highlighted teenagers hanging around on streets of Wealden as a problem (62.50%), see Table 10.

The findings in Table 15, rubbish and litter lying around, was thought to be a problem by the majority (56.25%). This environmental improvement was also key, according to respondents in making somewhere a good place to live. However the respondents did contradict themselves slightly by giving Wealden District Council a high satisfaction rating (71%) for keeping the streets clear of litter and rubbish (see Table 21). However continued action to reduce litter, including dog faeces may prove popular with young people.

It was extremely encouraging to learn that the majority of young people (79.25%) consider Wealden a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, see Table 19, this bodes well for the future. However a lack of respect and consideration for each other is something that needs improving according to respondents – 56.75% thought this to be a problem. Work on this aspect of life may pay dividends.

In addition to the fixed choice type question there was an opportunity for respondents to complete a section entitled 'is there anything else you would like to add about you and your Council'. Many respondents chose to add comments and many of those comments related to community safety. It must be said that the majority of those fell into two categories. Firstly about young people not having enough to do and secondly comments about young people as victims of crime.

These statements typify those about young people not having enough to do: *'..I think there needs to be more activities for teens because of what I know there is only one teen club which is in the church'*. And: *'Give us a skate park and more things for teenagers to do this is why you have so much anti-social behaviour'*.

Clearly young people are fearful of crime typified by these three statements: *'I would just like to be able to walk about the towns with my mates feeling safe'*. And: *'... I feel more needs to be done about the increasing number of young teenagers drinking and hanging around in local parks especially on the weekends. It's terrifying to walk in particular areas especially alone or just with a friend.'* And: *'There is not enough being done about bullying outside of school and the vandalism'*.

Views About Wealden District Council – Results

Table 20: Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the Council runs things? (n = 61)

Satisfaction Rating	Numbers	Percentage
Very satisfied	8	13%
Fairly satisfied	34	55.75%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	16.50%
Fairly dissatisfied	8	13%
Very dissatisfied	1	1.75%
Totals	61	100%

Table 21: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Wealden District Council has kept public land clear of litter and rubbish? (n = 62)

Satisfaction Rating	Numbers	Percentage
Very satisfied	9	14.50%
Fairly satisfied	35	56.50%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12	19.50%
Fairly dissatisfied	3	4.75%
Very dissatisfied	3	4.75%
Totals	62	100%

Table 22: How much do you agree that the Council is working to make the area safer? (n = 58)

Extent Rating	Numbers	Percentage
A great deal	14	24%
To some extent	25	43%
Don't know	4	7%
Not very much	12	20.75%
Not at all	3	5.25%
Totals	58	100%

Table 23: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the sports and leisure facilities run by Freedom Leisure and events supported by Wealden District Council? (n = 58)

Satisfaction Rating	Numbers	Percentage
Very satisfied	24	41.50%
Fairly satisfied	19	32.75%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	15.50%
Fairly dissatisfied	6	10.25%
Very dissatisfied	0	0%
Totals	58	100%

Table 24: How frequently have you used sports and leisure facilities run by Freedom Leisure and events supported by Wealden District Council in the last 12 months? (n = 58)

Frequency Rating	Numbers	Percentage
Almost every day	2	3.50%
At least once a week	16	27.50%
About once a month	17	29.25%
Within the last six months	11	19%
Within the last year	6	10.25%
Longer ago	2	3.50%
Never used	1	1.75%
It does not apply / don't know	3	5.25%
Totals	58	100%

Table 25: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the parks and open spaces in Wealden? (n = 57)

Satisfaction Rating	Numbers	Percentage
Very satisfied	5	8.75%
Fairly satisfied	29	51%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14	24.50%
Fairly dissatisfied	9	15.75%
Very dissatisfied	0	0%
Totals	57	100%

Table 26: How frequently have you used the parks and open spaces in Wealden in the last 12 months? (n = 59)

Frequency Rating	Numbers	Percentage
Almost every day	9	15.25%
At least once a week	17	28.75%
About once a month	13	22%
Within the last six months	0	0%
Within the last year	14	23.75%
Longer ago	4	6.75%
Never used	0	0%
It does not apply / don't know	2	3.50%
Totals	59	100%

Table 27: How do you find out about Wealden District Council and what the Council is up to? (n = 57)

Information source	Numbers	Percentage
Word of mouth (e.g. family or friends)	19	33.50%
Local media (newspapers, television, radio)	15	26.25%
Other source	9	15.75%
Information provided by the Council (newspaper, magazine, leaflets, posters)	5	8.75%
Direct contact with the Council	4	7%
From local Councillor	3	5.25%
Council website	2	3.50%
Totals	57	100%

Table 28: How much do you agree that the Council is making the local area a better place to live? (n = 57)

Extent Rating	Numbers	Percentage
A great deal	12	21%
To some extent	27	47.50%
Don't know	2	3.50%
Not very much	15	26.25%
Not at all	1	1.75%
Totals	57	100%

Table 29: How much do you agree that the Council is working to make the area cleaner and greener? (n = 57)

Extent Rating	Numbers	Percentage
A great deal	18	31.50%
To some extent	25	44%
Don't know	6	10.50%
Not very much	7	12.25%
Not at all	1	1.75%
Totals	57	100%

Table 30: How much do you agree that the Council is efficient and well run? (n = 56)

Extent Rating	Numbers	Percentage
A great deal	13	23.25%
To some extent	24	43%
Don't know	8	14.25%
Not very much	9	16%
Not at all	2	3.50%
Totals	56	100%

Table 31: How much do you agree that the Council provides good value for money? (n = 57)

Extent Rating	Numbers	Percentage
A great deal	8	14%
To some extent	23	40.50%
Don't know	17	29.75%
Not very much	5	8.75%
Not at all	4	7%
Totals	57	100%

Table 32: How much do you agree that the Council is trustworthy? (n = 57)

Extent Rating	Numbers	Percentage
A great deal	17	30%
To some extent	18	31.50%
Don't know	12	21%
Not very much	8	14%
Not at all	2	3.50%
Totals	57	100%

Table 33: How much do you agree that the Council is remote and impersonal? (n = 58)

Extent Rating	Numbers	Percentage
A great deal	9	15.50%
To some extent	24	41.50%
Don't know	13	22.50%
Not very much	5	8.50%
Not at all	7	12%
Totals	58	100%

Table 34: How much do you agree that the Council promotes the interests of local residents? (n = 56)

Extent Rating	Numbers	Percentage
A great deal	13	23.25%
To some extent	30	53.50%
Don't know	3	5.50%
Not very much	10	17.75%
Not at all	0	0%
Totals	56	100%

Table 35: How much do you agree that the Council acts on the concerns of local residents? (n = 57)

Extent Rating	Numbers	Percentage
A great deal	17	30%
To some extent	24	42%
Don't know	5	8.75%
Not very much	8	14%
Not at all	3	5.25%
Totals	57	100%

Table 36: How much do you agree that the Council treats all types of people fairly? (n = 58)

Extent Rating	Numbers	Percentage
A great deal	21	36.25%
To some extent	21	36.25%
Don't know	1	1.75%
Not very much	14	24%
Not at all	1	1.75%
Totals	58	100%

Views About Wealden District Council – Discussion

Overall the respondents gave Wealden District Council a ‘thumbs-up’ for their performance, 68.75% were satisfied with the Council’s performance, see table 20. And 68.50% think that Wealden is making the local area a better place to live.

However one young person in the comments section of the questionnaire took the opportunity to raise the cost of leisure: *‘Me and most of my mates feel that Freedom Leisure costs too much and would rather play football in the park for free’.*

There was also concern for the environment in some of the comments made, firstly: *‘Stop litter in parks and woods and stop main roads going through villages which pollutes the area’.* And: *‘I like to cycle, I have my own road bike but I find the roads are of a bad standard, I have bent a wheel and nearly been in an accident’.*

The results for each question generally speak for themselves and will need to be considered by a variety of individuals and Council working groups.

Making a Positive Contribution – Results

Table 37: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the opportunities for young people to participate in local decision making provided by Wealden District Council? (n = 59)

Satisfaction Rating	Numbers	Percentage
Very satisfied	6	10%
Fairly satisfied	23	39%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	18	30.50%
Fairly dissatisfied	7	12%
Very dissatisfied	5	8.50%
Totals	59	100%

Table 38: Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area? (n = 57)

Level of agreement	Numbers	Percentage
Definitely agree	7	12.25%
Tend to agree	21	36.75%
Don't know	11	19.50%
Tend to disagree	13	22.75%
Definitely disagree	5	8.75%
Totals	57	100%

Table 39: Generally speaking would you like to be more involved in the decisions Wealden District Council makes that affect your local area? (n = 57)

Involvement Rating	Numbers	Percentage
Yes	20	35%
Depends on the issue	34	59.75%
Don't know	2	3.50%
No	1	1.75%
Totals	57	100%

Table 40: How much do you agree that the Council is interested in the views of young people? (n = 57)

Extent Rating	Numbers	Percentage
A great deal	8	14%
To some extent	26	45.50%
Don't know	2	3.50%
Not very much	17	30%
Not at all	4	7%
Totals	57	100%

Table 41: How much do you agree that the Council listens to what young people have to say? (n = 57)

Extent Rating	Numbers	Percentage
A great deal	8	14%
To some extent	26	45.50%
Don't know	2	3.50%
Not very much	17	30%
Not at all	4	7%
Totals	57	100%

Making a Positive Contribution – Discussion

There were a lot of positive comments which related to the visits made to local Community Colleges by Members and staff of Wealden District Council during 'Local Democracy Week'. Thus demonstrating that young people are grateful when agencies like Wealden District Council take the trouble to go and speak to young people about local issues. Here are just three comments:

'Having attended a presentation the Council put on at Hailsham Community College I feel more involved in what happens in the town and have realised that my opinion and vote are very important to the future and I will definitely vote when I become of age to. Big Thank you to the Council for a great morning'.

There were few local Councillors who did a talk at my sixth form today and I was very impressed with some of their views and what they can do to improve the area'.

'I would like to say that the Council came to visit us at Heathfield Community College on local democracy day and I was very impressed by the information you presented and how you made it interesting for us to watch and that is what encouraged me to come on to this site and has also encouraged me to take an interest in local issues – so thank you'.

Young people want to be involved in decisions about things that may affect them and often it would appear feel alienated when things do not happen and maybe no explanation is given. *'What's the point, nothing gets done, it's all red tape and let down, I am only 16 and disabled, who listens, only my parents. Everything is for the old people we don't stand a chance.'* And *'Me and my friends have asked for the past two years to get a bike jumping place in our local rec, but they have said 'no' and we are getting tired of asking and being rejected'.*

Many young people in the survey suggested that the Council could hold meetings in local areas that young people could get to and where they could talk to their local Councillor – *'There should be more meetings to tell you what is going on and to talk to us about our concerns'.*

Conclusions

This survey produced some very interesting results for both Wealden, many of its partners and partnerships. The survey results point the way to where improvements could be made and these need to be explored. However on the whole young people are satisfied with Wealden as a place to live and that is very encouraging.

It is also encouraging that young people take an interest in local decision making and care about the environment, both physical and social in which we all live and or work.

This is the first survey conducted through the Wealden Youth Website (www.w4y.co.uk) and the response was pleasing. Lessons have been learned through it, principally that it was too long – many respondents gave up after starting it at various stages. It must also be questioned, with hindsight, whether all the questions were appropriate for the audience. However there was a balance to be struck between retaining the broad approach of the detailed and prescribed national questionnaire administered locally to 2,500 households, so that comparisons could be made, and keeping it meaningful for young people.

Each individual, agency and partnership will want to take from this survey aspects relevant to their work and interests. Some of the key aspects needing special focus would appear to be: a lack of activities for teenagers; cleanliness of the streets; perceptions of safety after dark; and finally, and it could be argued most important, is the concern amongst young people about a general lack of respect and consideration by people of all ages for others.

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