

REPORT TO: LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
DATE: 26 FEBRUARY 2009



SUBJECT: UPDATE ON BMG RESEARCH – PLACE SURVEY

AUTHOR: LSP MANAGER

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To apprise LSP Board members of the initial results of the public attitude research commissioned by the Board and undertaken by BMG.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That LSP Board members agree to
- (i) Note the initial research findings
 - (ii) Suggest any areas where more detailed analysis would be helpful
 - (iii) Request that a more detailed presentation is given by BMG to the next meeting of the Board covering the full range of results and implications from the research.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Epping Forest LSP has commissioned a public attitude survey, as part of an Essex consortium, to gain a detailed and reliable picture of the major issues affecting local communities, and their quality of life, and also important data on peoples perceptions of public services.
- 3.2 The initial research, in the form of a postal survey, has generated 1350 responses from residents in the Epping Forest area. This phase of the research has now been completed and initial headline figures (unweighted) are becoming available. BMG the company which won the tender to undertake the research are committed to provide a detailed analysis in a final report, including an executive summary and quadrant analysis of quality of life indicators. This final report will include a full set of comparative data for the current survey across participating authorities, and with the last 2 waves of Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) surveys. Weighted data tables, with breaks to include age, gender, residency, tenure, ethnicity, disability, urban/rural split, sexual orientation; and raw data with census output code and postcode, will be included. The written report will explore in detail the demographic and geographic variations in performance against the 18 national indicators covered by the survey and will focus more analysis on the 35 priorities selected by each LSP area where required. It will be structured around the key themes emerging from Comprehensive Area assessment (CAA).

4.0 INITIAL RESEARCH RESULTS

- 4.1 While detailed analysis of the results of the research are not yet available some preliminary data has been released by BMG giving unweighted headline figures for the some of the key questions asked in the survey. These initial figures indicate some of the key concerns of residents and it was felt an initial briefing may be helpful to Board members ahead of the release of the final results. It may be useful if the final detailed analysis with relevant comparison information, across the county, region and nationally was presented to the Board at its next meeting. This would allow for an in-depth review of the findings.
- 4.2 When asked to think generally about which things were important in making somewhere a good place to live, the top 5 issues mentioned where, crime, mentioned by 51%, health services, 46%, clean streets, 36%, Public transport 31% and access to nature, 31%. Perhaps surprisingly 'Job Prospects' was only mentioned by 7%, as was 'wage levels and local cost of living' by 6.5%.
- 4.3 Respondents were then asked which things needed improving most in the area, top of the list came Road and Pavement Repairs (51%), Activities for Teenagers (44%), the level of Traffic Congestion (33%), Public transport (26%) and the Level of Crime (25%). Appendix 1 shows and compares residents' views on the relationship between the 'important issues' for an area, and how much these issues need 'improving locally'.
- 4.4 When asked to think about their satisfaction overall with their area as a place to live residents responses were very positive, with a total of 86% saying they were either 'fairly' or 'very satisfied'. Only 5.4% of residents described themselves as dissatisfied with the area, (3.8%, fairly dissatisfied, 1.6% very dissatisfied). When asked about satisfaction with their 'Home' as a place to live, the approval rate increased further, with almost 91% either 'Very' or 'Fairly' satisfied, and only 3% dissatisfied.
- 4.5 Residents were also asked about the degree to which they felt they "Belonged" to their immediate neighbourhood, 62% felt they belonged, strongly, or fairly strongly, with 34% saying they felt they didn't.
- 4.6 The initial findings also provide evidence of residents' views on a variety of public services, including those concerned with crime and safety, the environment, medical services, sports and leisure services, and how well informed people feel about various aspects of public service provision. More information on this is available from the LSP Manager.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 These initial research results, based on unweighted data provide an interesting insight, at a high level, into how residents felt about quality of life issues in our area. These figures however only provide an initial snapshot of views, and more detailed research, evaluating views over time, against other comparable areas and by factors such as residents ages, locations, gender etc, will provide a much more detailed and reliable picture of local views. LSP Board members may wish to indicate any additional areas where further analysis may prove useful.
- 5.2 This research, when complete, combined with other qualitative and quantitative data will be used to help inform a review of the Sustainable Community Strategy, to ensure it is led by community concerns.

Appendix – Extract from *BMG Place Survey Raw Unweighted Data* spreadsheet

Question Q1 Thinking generally, which of the things below would you say are most **important** in making somewhere a good place to live?

Question Q2. And thinking about this local area, which of the things below, if any, do you think most need **improving**?

