

Welcome

We have recently recruited some new members of Herefordshire Voice, and for these people this will be the first panel survey they receive. Thank you very much to everyone who has agreed to take part in Herefordshire Voice. We hope you find your involvement with the panel interesting.

New website for facts and figures about Herefordshire

Herefordshire Council Research Team has a new website, which contains a wide range of facts and figures about the county: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures

Herefordshire Voice survey reports are now published on this new website - you can go straight to the Herefordshire Voice section at this address: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/hv

If you don't have access to the internet, reports are also held in Herefordshire libraries.

Herefordshire has its say

In the last newsletter we gave you a summary of results from the focus groups some panellists took part in, which looked at the Sustainable Communities Act. This was a new law that gave local people and organisations the opportunity to put forward ideas for improving the sustainability of their local community. We then used focus groups to see what you thought of the ideas that were put forward locally, and 14 that received a positive response were submitted to central government.

In total, around 300 ideas were put forward by Councils around the country. Prior to the change in government, the Department for Communities and Local Government announced the first ten which will be taken forward. These were chosen as a starting point because they offer the best potential to bring real benefits to the community.

The good news is that one of the ten ideas came from Herefordshire. The proposal was for a wider role for Post Offices in communities, including the provision of banking and financial services. This was put forward by a number of Councils including Herefordshire. This ties in with a planned major expansion of the financial services offered by the Post Office, including £180 million of new funding which was announced recently by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Although there is currently a certain amount of uncertainty following the change in government, it is expected that other ideas which weren't included in the first ten will be considered in future. The report on the focus groups held in Herefordshire can be found at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/hv or in the library.

Planning and development in Herefordshire

In July 2008, panellists answered a survey about planning and development in Herefordshire. This contributed to one of a number of rounds of consultation that the Council is carrying out, as part of producing a framework for the development of the county up to 2026. You may have noticed a further round of consultation recently, which is also part of this process. The answers you gave in 2008 contributed to the proposals considered in the next stage, but we decided not to use Herefordshire Voice for any further rounds of research on this topic, in order to have a wider range of topics in our questionnaires.

Another 'Herefordshire Voice'?

In the run-up to the general election, you might have noticed another publication going by the name "Herefordshire Voice". This was a Liberal Democrat election pamphlet and has no connection with our Herefordshire Voice citizens' panel.

This survey

The new survey has questions on two topics. First we're asking about the new kerbside recycling service in Herefordshire, which has been running since last November. Then there are some questions about Council Tax bills. We hope you find the survey interesting.

If you have any questions, please contact
Michael Brown on 01432 260 495