



CITIZENS' PANEL RESULTS SPRING 2006

**Prepared by:
Consultation Unit
Stratford-on-Avon District Council
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EXTRACT

Citizens' Panel Results – Spring 2006

1. Introduction

The Council has a Citizens' Panel, which contains a representative sample of people living in the District of Stratford-on-Avon. By surveying this Panel, it is possible to obtain views and opinions broadly representative of local residents.

2. Methodology

1,141 questionnaires were mailed in April 2006, with 589 returned in the timeframe allowed. 18 questionnaires were returned not completed for various reasons. This represents a response rate of 52.5%.

3.5 THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT – THE LYONS ENQUIRY

- 57% felt that Stratford District Council should be responsible for deciding what the priorities are for the District as a whole.
- Just under half felt the District Council should decide where the money be spent, I if more was made available to spend on public services in the area.
- A half of residents felt the local community should decide where cuts in public services be made to save money.
- Asked what three things would increase their satisfaction with SDC, the top answers were: more consultation with local people; improved planning procedures/decisions; and more concern for villages and outlying areas.
- 65% of those surveyed trust SDC to do the best for the local area as a whole.

4.5 THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT – THE LYONS ENQUIRY

On 20 July 2004, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer commissioned Sir Michael Lyons to undertake an independent inquiry to consider the case for changes to the present system of local government funding in England and make recommendations, including on the reform of council tax. On 20 September 2005 the Government announced an extension to the Inquiry's terms of reference to cover questions relating to the function of local government and its future role as well as how it is funded. SDC have been asked to consult its residents on a number of issues surrounding local government.

Overall, 57% of Panel members felt that Stratford District Council should be responsible for deciding what the priorities are for the District as a whole.

Almost two thirds of Avon respondents believe that Stratford-on-Avon District Council should be responsible for deciding what the priorities are for their area. This compares with under 47% of Arden respondents.

Over half of Arden respondents believe that the local parish or town council should be responsible for deciding what the priorities are for their area, compared with less than 32% of Stour respondents.

Table 14: Respondents' views on which tiers of government should be responsible for setting standards – who should be responsible for deciding what the priorities are in their area.

	Nos.	%
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	331	57.2
Your local parish or town council	231	39.9
Warwickshire County Council	96	16.6
Regional government, e.g. Govt. Office for the West Mids.	24	4.1
Central government	22	3.8

Eight out of ten respondents felt that minimum standards for immigration should be set by central government. Over 90% of respondents felt that the local area should decide on minimum standards for street cleaning, local transport and local enterprise.

Table 15: Respondents' views on which of the following services central government should be able to set minimum standards for all local areas to meet and which should be decided by the local area.

	Central government	Local area	Don't know
Immigration	453 80.3%	99 17.6%	12 2.1%
Schools/education	353 62.5%	202 35.8%	10 1.8%
Trading standards	333 58.6%	223 39.3%	12 2.1%
Police	319 56.2%	242 42.6%	7 1.2%
Fire and community safety	309 54.9%	245 43.5%	9 1.6%
Social services	307 54.6%	244 43.4%	11 2.0%
Health services, e.g. GP	306 54.2%	250 44.2%	9 1.6%
Childcare and nursery	288 52.0%	242 43.7%	24 4.3%
Roads	262 46.4%	294 52.0%	9 1.6%
Environmental services	232 41.7%	316 56.8%	8 1.4%
Licensing	148 26.0%	407 71.5%	14 2.5%
Sport and culture	141 25.1%	407 72.4%	14 2.5%
Housing	108 19.5%	433 78.2%	13 2.3%
Planning	89 15.8%	464 82.4%	10 1.8%
Libraries	85 15.0%	471 83.4%	9 1.6%
Youth services	83 14.8%	459 81.7%	20 3.6%
Street cleaning	43 7.6%	519 91.5%	5 0.9%
Local transport	29 5.1%	529 93.8%	6 1.1%
Local enterprise	26 4.7%	520 93.4%	11 2.0%

Just under half of respondents felt the District Council should be responsible for deciding what the priorities are for the District as a whole.

Table 16: Respondents' views on who should decide where money should be spent in their area if more money was made available.

	Nos.	%
Central government	14	2.4
Warwickshire County Council	84	14.6
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	269	46.8
The local community	269	46.8

Panel members were asked if public services were going to be cut to save money, who should decide what services should be cut. 49% felt the local community should make that decision.

Table 17: Respondents' views on who should decide what service should be cut in their area if saving money was needed.

	Nos.	%
Central government	27	4.7
Warwickshire County Council	73	12.7
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	253	44.0
The local community	279	48.5

Overall, over a fifth of respondents rated more consultation of local people and improved planning procedures / decisions as important for increasing their satisfaction with Stratford District Council.

Over a quarter of Avon respondents rated improved planning procedures / decisions would increase their satisfaction with SDC compared with just over 11% of Dasset respondents.

Less than 2% of Dasset respondents stated that limits on / reduced new housing would increase their satisfaction with Stratford-on-Avon District Council compared with almost 14% of Avon residents.

Better pavement maintenance was mentioned by almost 9% of Arden respondents compared with just over 1% of Stour respondents as one of three things which would increase their satisfaction with Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

Almost one fifth of Arden respondents rated better road maintenance would increase their satisfaction with the Council compared to less than 4% of Avon residents.

Over 14% of Dasset respondents quoted better public transport would increase their satisfaction compared with less than 6% of Avon respondents.

Better recycling would increase almost one in five of Dasset's respondents' satisfaction with the Council compared with only 6% of respondents in the Avon area.

Over three out of ten of Avon respondents said that more consultation of local people would increase their satisfaction with the Council. This compares with less than 10% of Dasset respondents and almost 12% of Arden respondents.

Almost one in five Dassett respondents quoted lower Council Tax as a means to increase their satisfaction with the Council compared with less than 8% of Avon respondents.

Almost half of the respondents in the Dassett area said more concern for villages / outlying areas would increase their satisfaction with the Council as opposed to less than 7% in the Avon area. The figure for the Arden area was almost a quarter compared with less than 16% in the Stour area.

Table 18: Respondents' three things which would increase their satisfaction with Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

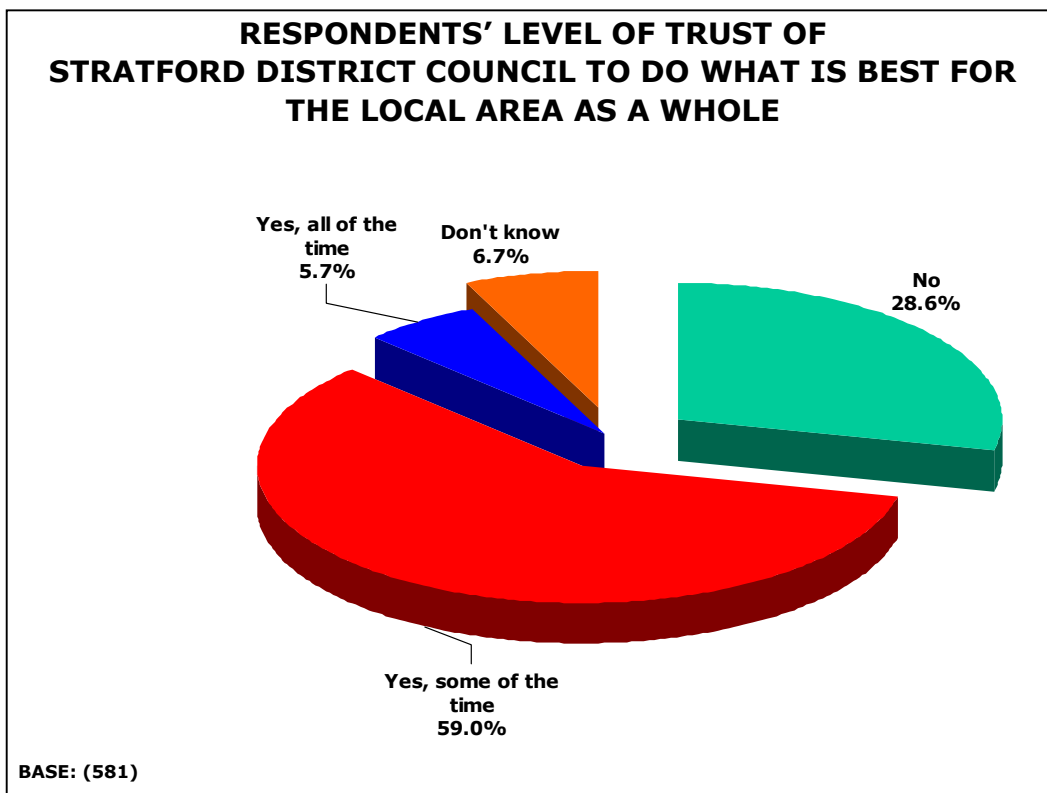
(Shows responses of 3% or more)

	Nos.	%
More consultation of local people	108	21.8
Improved planning procedures/decisions	106	21.4
More concern for villages/outlying areas	88	17.7
Better use of Council Tax/stop wasting money	58	11.7
Lower Council Tax	51	10.3
Better road maintenance	48	9.7
Better recycling (gen)	47	9.5
More efficiency (gen)	45	9.1
Limits on/reduced new housing	40	8.1
Better traffic management/control	40	8.1
Better/more visible policing/security	40	8.1
More communication/willingness to listen (gen)	40	8.1
More openness/less secrecy/more transparency	39	7.9
Better public transport	38	7.7
Cheaper/free parking	35	7.1
Better parking (gen)	32	6.5
Deal with yobs/vandalism/ASB	27	5.4
Less party politics/point scoring/in-fighting	27	5.4
Maintain/improve character/cleanliness/condition of town	26	5.2
Less litter/more street cleaning	25	5.0
Increased free parking time/from 20 minutes	21	4.2
Preservation of countryside/green spaces	21	4.2
Cut back on/stop (over) development/offices	20	4.0
Improve infrastructure/to cope with rising population	19	3.8
More affordable housing	19	3.8
Faster response to queries/return phone calls	18	3.6
Better pavement maintenance	17	3.4
Less emphasis on tourism/at expense of locals	17	3.4
More recreation/leisure spending/facilities	17	3.4
More accountability	16	3.2
More facilities for young people	15	3.0

Overall, over six out of ten respondents trust the Council some or all of the time for doing what is best for the local area as a whole.

Just over 2% of Avon respondents said that they currently trust Stratford-on-Avon District Council all the time. This compares with just under 9% in the Arden area.

Figure 17:



Over a fifth of respondents quoted more / better public consultation / more rounded / local improvement as increasing their trust in the Council.

Table 19: Respondents' three things which would increase their trust in Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

(Shows responses of 3% or more)

	Nos.	%
More/better public consultation/more rounded/local involvement	90	21.2
Better budgeting/funding/decision-making/financial management	77	18.2
More openness/transparency/honesty	75	17.7
Willingness to listen/take notice...	70	16.5
Better planning procedures/decisions	66	15.6
More/better communication/keeping the public informed	59	13.9
Deliver/act on promises/be more proactive/prove are working for public	58	13.7
Less bureaucracy/party politics	46	10.8
Put local people first/over tourism	41	9.7
Spend more money outside of SoA town centre	38	9.0
Better town planning	31	7.3
More accountability	28	6.6
Improve traffic management/highways	22	5.2
Improve cleanliness	22	5.2
Stop Council Tax rises higher than inflation/lower Council Tax	20	4.7
Improve parking services	19	4.5
Get to know councillors/more personally/more public appearances	17	4.0
Reduce crime levels/improve policing	17	4.0
Better/improve housing/housing policies	16	3.8
Other	20	4.7

Over a fifth of respondents said the fact that it was my duty / responsibility / right to vote made them vote in local government elections.

Table 20: What makes respondents vote or not vote in local government elections.

	Nos.	%
My duty/responsibility/right to vote	103	20.3
Always do (gen)	64	12.6
Vote for whoever has local interests at heart	51	10.0
Voter's desire to have an effect/make a difference (gen)	49	9.6
So I can complain legitimately	47	9.3
Believe in it/democracy is important	38	7.5
Knowledge of candidate's agenda/policies	35	6.9
So my opinion is heard	34	6.7
Best representation	27	5.3
Voter's desire to improve Stratford/local services	22	4.3
Candidate background	20	3.9
Candidate's desire to have an effect/make a difference	20	3.9
Depends on issues/or feel strongly about something	20	3.9
Everyone's duty/responsibility/right to vote	19	3.7
Makes no difference	17	3.3

Respondents were given a list of services provided by local authorities. They were asked to indicate which of these services were provided by SDC.

Over nine out of ten respondents quoted car parking and household waste collection as services they believe to be provided by the Council. Over 28% thought Stratford District Council provides schools and a third thought it ran social services.

Table 21: Services which respondents think are provided by Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

	Nos.	%
Car parking	528	91.8
Household waste collection	526	91.5
Public toilets	514	89.4
Planning	481	83.7
Recycling facilities	471	81.9
Bus passes/bus tokens	455	79.1
Building control	439	76.3
Pest control	435	75.7
Housing advice	418	72.7
Housing and council tax benefit	412	71.7
Sports and leisure activities	404	70.3
Noise control	393	68.3
Inspections of food premises	381	66.3
Street lighting	380	66.1
Housing for rent	337	58.6
Libraries	321	55.8
Arts activities	293	51.0
Removal of abandoned vehicles	285	49.6
Help to fight fear of crime and community safety	264	45.9
Public transport	249	43.3
Trading standards	224	39.0
Childcare and nursery	196	34.1
Museums	194	33.7
Social services	193	33.6
Roads maintenance	174	30.3
Schools	163	28.3
Economic development	160	27.8

4.6 RESPONDENT PROFILE

GENDER	%
Male	50.3
Female	49.7
BASE:	(576)

AGE	%
16-24	0.7
25-34	6.1
35-44	17.0
45-54	18.9
55-64	26.5
65-74	19.8
75+	11.1
BASE:	(577)

NOS OF ADULTS AGED 18 OR OVER LIVING IN HOUSEHOLD	%
1	22.1
2	66.2
3	7.8
4	3.3
More than 4	0.5
BASE:	(548)

ACCOMMODATION TYPE	%
Owned outright	55.3
Buying on mortgage	33.3
Rent from Housing Association/Trust	6.2
Rented from private landlord	3.6
Other	1.6
BASE:	(577)

LENGTH OF TIME LIVED IN SDC AREA	%
1 year or less	1.0
Between 1 & 2 years	1.0
Between 2 & 5 years	9.3
Between 5 & 10 years	17.0
Between 10 & 20 years	21.0
Over 20 years	50.6
BASE:	(581)

ACTIVITY BEST DESCRIBING WHAT DOING AT PRESENT	%
Employee in full-time job (30 hours+ per week)	27.4
Employee in part-time job (Under 30 hours per week)	12.8
Self employed full or part-time	16.5
On a government supported training programme	0.2
Full-time education at school, college or university	0.5
Unemployed and available for work	0.7
Permanently sick/disabled	2.9
Wholly retired from work	33.3
Looking after the home	4.7
Doing something else	1.0
BASE:	(577)

TOTAL ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME FROM ALL SOURCES BEFORE TAX & ANY OTHER DEDUCTIONS	%
Under £10,000	12.3
£10,000 to £15,000	12.3
£15,001 to £20,000	8.1
£20,001 to £25,000	11.7
£25,001 to £30,000	8.1
£30,001 to £35,000	6.0
£35,001 to £40,000	4.8
Over £40,000	36.7
BASE:	(480)

WHETHER HAVE ANY LONG TERM ILLNESS, HEALTH PROBLEMS OR DISABILITY WHICH LIMITS DAILY ACITIVITIES OR WORK DONE	%
Yes	19.7
No	80.3
BASE:	(564)

ORIGIN OF BIRTH	%
White - British	97.2
White - Irish	0.5
White – Other White background	1.2
Mixed – White & Black African	0.2
Mixed – White & Asian	0.2
Mixed – Other Mixed background	0.2
Asian or Asian British – Other Asian background	0.2
Any other ethnic background	0.3
BASE:	(573)