

Understanding Our Customers

Consultation and Survey Results 2007

This is the third 'Understanding our Customers' document that Wrexham County Borough Council has produced. It sets out how local people have responded to questions they have been asked about their views of the Council.

Wrexham County Borough Council consults with local people on major projects and decisions. It also manages a customer survey panel – the People's Voice – which provides a statistically valid panel of 800 people who agree to complete a detailed survey three times a year. This allows us to compile detailed information on local people's priorities and opinions.

Similarly to last year, 'Understanding Our Customers 2007' analyses the survey and consultation data held by the Council and presents the findings in the context of the Council's Corporate Priorities. Its production each year is timed to feed into the budget, corporate and service planning cycles.

This allows us to take your views into account in setting work plans and planning projects. Increasingly, we can also compare current findings against previous results, to show trends and changes in people's opinions over time.

Information collected in 2006/07 related to Wrexham County Borough Council's corporate priorities to:

- Strengthen Community Cohesion
- Improve Housing Stock
- Improve Customer Contact
- Improve Health, Social Care And Well-Being
- Reduce Crime And The Fear Of Crime
- Promote Welsh Language and Culture
- Prosperous businesses, a skilled workforce & regenerated communities

This paper also briefly sets out:

- Signpost information on consultation exercises undertaken by specific departments
- Consultation fora that Wrexham County Borough Council uses and supports



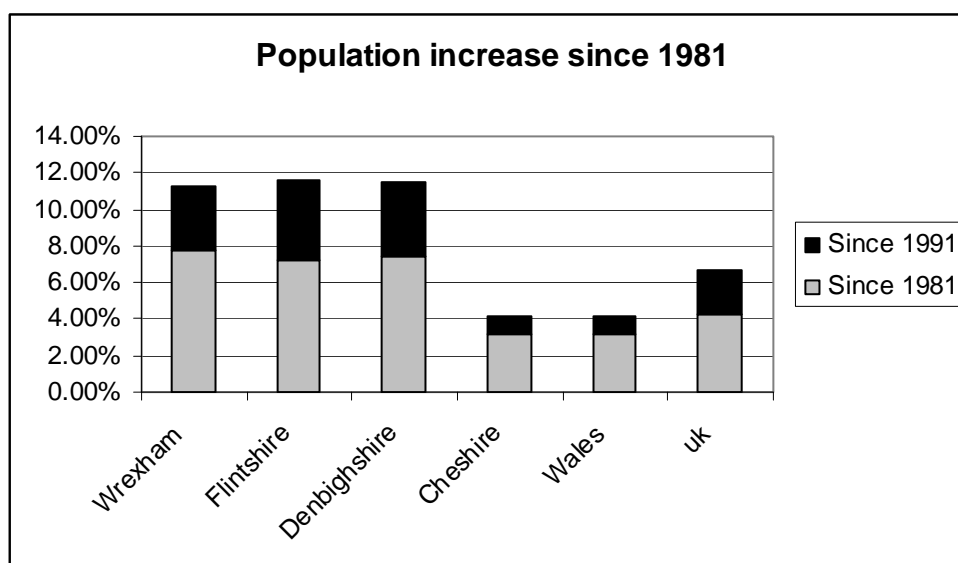
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Who are our Customers?

According to the 2001 census¹, Wrexham County Borough was home to 128,476 people, just over half of whom (51%) are female. 2006 Mid Year estimates put the population at around 131,100 people, continuing the trend of an increasing population that has been shown over the past thirty years. This population increase is far higher in Wrexham, and North Wales, than either Wales or the UK as a whole.

This total figure does mask differences within the Borough though – ranging from a 25.5% population increase in Holt, to a fall of 3.4% in Rhosnesni.

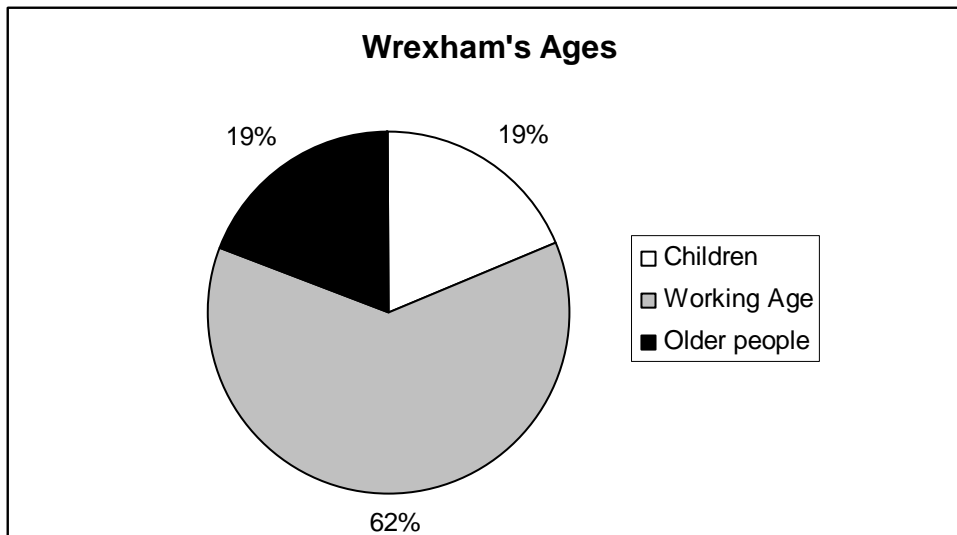


According to the mid-2006 population estimates², Wrexham's population has the highest proportion of people of working age (16-64M/59F) in North Wales, it also has one of the highest proportions of children (0-15). The demographic breakdown of Wrexham is changing though, along with that of the UK as a whole, with the proportion of people over 80 increasing and the proportion under 15 falling. The numbers of people over 75 is expected to increase by 50% across North Wales by 2023.

¹ Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2001

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² Source: ONS Mid-year population estimates: www.statistics.gov.uk



Accurate statistics are hard to find for people with disabilities. The census³ asks whether people have a limiting long term illness and just over a fifth of Wrexham's people said they did in 2001, which is slightly less than the average for Wales (23%). In May 2006, 6.4% (8,400) of the County Borough's residents were claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA). The equivalent rates for Wales and Great Britain were 7.5% and 4.7% respectively.

The geography of Wrexham

Our customers live across the county borough, which is a very varied one, ranging from the densely populated town, which is Wales's third largest retail centre, to the rural Ceiriog Valley where population density is as low as 0.2 per hectare. The Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation⁴ also highlight the contrasts within the Borough, with one area being one of the ten most deprived areas in Wales and another just outside the ten least deprived areas.

Social determinants

Unemployment within Wrexham is low. In November 2007, just 1.8% of people of working age were claiming Job Seekers Allowance, slightly lower than both the rates for both Wales and the UK. Annual Population Survey⁵ data suggest that, by March 2007, Wrexham's employment rate was 76.5% - higher than the rates for Wales (71.0%) and Great Britain (74.2%). This is despite the fact the survey shows that Wrexham has a higher level (17.5%) than the Wales average (16.2%) of persons with no educational, vocational or professional qualifications.

There are also a lower than average proportion (21.2%) of children living in lone parent families when compared with Wales (25.1%)

³ Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2001

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⁴ Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2005

⁵ Annual Population Survey, April 2006 – March 2007, ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copywrite

Ethnicity and Migration

In 2001, Wrexham County Borough had about the same proportion of its population who were born in the UK to most other North Wales local authorities at around 97%. This is about the same as the Welsh average but higher than the England & Wales average at 91% and the UK at about 92%.

The 2001 census also showed that around 1% of Wrexham's population are from black and minority ethnic communities⁶, whilst results from the ONS Annual Population/Labour Force Survey⁷ in 2006 suggest that Wrexham's minority ethnic population had increased to 2.7% of the population. In common with many other areas of the UK, there has been a change in the nature and pace of economic migrants coming to the area, mainly from Portugal, Poland and more recently from other EU Accession states.

Evidence suggests that new foreign migrants tend to be relatively young – and are therefore helping to offset the decline in numbers of young, non-migrant, working-age people.

Who are the People's Voice?

The People's Voice is a panel of 800 people who have agreed to regularly complete questionnaires from Wrexham County Borough Council and Wrexham Local Health Board. These questionnaires are the source of much of the information in this report. The panel are recruited to provide a representative cross section of Wrexham's population, but where this is not achieved results are weighted to better reflect local opinion.

It must be borne in mind that the size of a sample survey affects the accuracy of results and that this is statistically measurable. For the People's Voice we are confident that results are accurate to within 4/5%. This means that we can be confident that if we surveyed all local people the final result would be no further than 4 or 5% different from the sample survey result.

⁶ Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2001

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⁷ Annual Population Survey, April 2006 – March 2007, ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copywrite

Strengthen Community Cohesion

Background to the priority:

Like many areas, Wrexham faces key challenges because of the changing nature of its population. It has been a dispersal area for the Home Office asylum seeker programme since 2001 and the past 15 years have seen significant growth in the minority ethnic population. In the past two years, substantial numbers of workers have migrated to Wrexham to take advantage of employment opportunities within the local economy.

Responses:

Panel members were asked to rate how strongly they feel they belong to their neighbourhood, local area, Wrexham County Borough, Wales and finally, Great Britain. The areas with the highest ratings regarding feelings of belonging are panel members' neighbourhoods (73%) and Wales overall (72%). Panellists are less likely to feel they belong to Wrexham County Borough (51%).

Nationally, people are most likely to feel they belong to Britain (85%) or to their neighbourhood (77%). (Citizenship survey 2007)

Overall, over half (56%) of panel members feel that people from different backgrounds get along well in the local area with one fifth (22%) disagreeing. The remaining 17% felt that either there were too few residents of different backgrounds in the area (5%) to comment or that everyone in their local area is from the same background (12%). These figures have not varied significantly since the last local survey on this issue in Summer 2005.

Nationally, 81% of people agreed that their local area is one where people from different backgrounds get along well (Citizenship Survey 2007).

Panel members were asked the extent to which they agree that their local area is a place where people respect ethnic difference between people. Response was less positive here with 52% agreeing, however it is important to note that the panel members not showing levels of agreement were not necessarily disagreeing with the statement. In fact, just a fifth (21%) disagreed, with the remaining quarter stating that they did not know (25%). Once again there is no significant statistical change from the survey in Summer 2005.

Thinking about ethnic differences further, panel members were presented with a list of situations and asked whether they regularly meet and talk with people from different ethnic origins to themselves in these situations. This is the area where the greatest change can be seen from the previous survey in Summer 2005. The most prominent situations that regularly ensure mixing with people from different ethnic backgrounds are at work (47%, showing a marked increase on 31% in 2005), at restaurants/ pubs/ cinemas and community centres (40%, increased from 29% in 2005) and at local shops (36%, which has not changed significantly since 2005).

Improve the Housing Stock

Background to the priority:

We are committed to raising the quality of our housing stock for our tenants and meeting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. We need to identify and access funds that can be used to achieve the standard.

Responses

Thinking about housing strategies, all panel members were asked to rank their priorities, highest priority was affordable homes (31%), followed by improving quality (24%), reducing homelessness (23%) and helping people with special housing requirements (9%). The lowest priority was providing housing advice.

Thinking about housing advice further, all panel members were asked to rate which channel they would like to receive housing advice through. Over half feel this should be given face to face (54%). This is followed by over the telephone (13%), by letter (13%), via the internet (9%) and by email (2%).

In all 19% of panellists (this equates to 87 panel members) have received advice on housing in the past 5 years, this figure rises to 46% amongst social renters. All those panel members who have received housing advice were asked to rate their satisfaction with the advice they received and on a positive note, of those who received housing advice from the Council, 71% were satisfied with the advice they received.

Main reasons that people would go to the Council for housing advice would be if their housing issues were around being made homeless (45%) and adaptations they made need due to medical reasons (59%).

Improve Customer Contact

Background to the priority:

Following extensive consultation we recognise the necessity to make it easier for customers to contact us and to get their enquiries resolved. We need to have a clearer understanding of our customers so we can improve how we respond to their needs. We need to ensure people understand the nature of our priorities, and the services we offer.

Responses

Over half (53%) of panel members had made contact with the Council in the last 12 months, for the majority of cases this contact was made via the telephone (63%). Other ways of contacting were by visiting the offices in person (17%), contacting via the Council website (5%), emailing people at the Council (5%) and finally, contacting by letter (2%). In all, just one fifth (19%) had had difficulties when contacting the Council. Main reasons for contacting the Council relate to requesting information (24%) and reporting a problem such as missed refuse collection or issues around street lighting (22%).

When asked to choose how they would prefer to contact the Council over half (54%) stated that this would be by telephone; this was followed by making visits in person (24%).

When telephoning the Council the majority (71%) of the panel agree that an acceptable time to wait for a call to be answered is one minute or under, broken down further, 33% think this should be under 30 seconds. The proposed corporate standard is for 80% of calls to be answered within 15 seconds.

In all, three quarters (76%) of panellists have access to the internet. Unsurprisingly, this percentage is significantly higher amongst those of working age when compared to non-working age (82% and 45% respectively). Most users have accessed the internet at home during the last three months (67%). Further to this, other key places of use include the work place (35%), a library (10%) and at schools or college (8%).

All panel members were asked if they have used the Wrexham County Borough Council's website in the last 12 months. Overall, 38% had. Interestingly, of those with internet access, half had used the Wrexham Council website. All users of the website were asked to rate the website against a number of features. In all, responses were positive with the main area of weakness regarding being able to do things on the website, such as reporting issues and requesting services.

Customer Contact

The Council has started to use Customer Relationship Management software. This software collates a range of information every time a customer contacts the Council, and is initially being used on all 'Pride in your Streets' issues and will allow us to have a far better understanding of who is contacting the Council, how and why. The information is only currently available for October 2007, but already gives an interesting picture.

During October 2007 the contact centre received 6113 calls. The centre surpassed all the customer care standards put in place to ensure high quality service to customers.

October 2007	Target	Actual
Number of abandoned calls	5%	0.07%
Calls answered within 15 seconds	80%	91%
Calls resolved at point of contact	80%	87%

Abandoned calls are those where the caller hangs up before the call is answered. Calls resolved at the point of contact are those where the person answering the phone was able to deal with the enquiry, rather than passing the caller on to another member of staff.

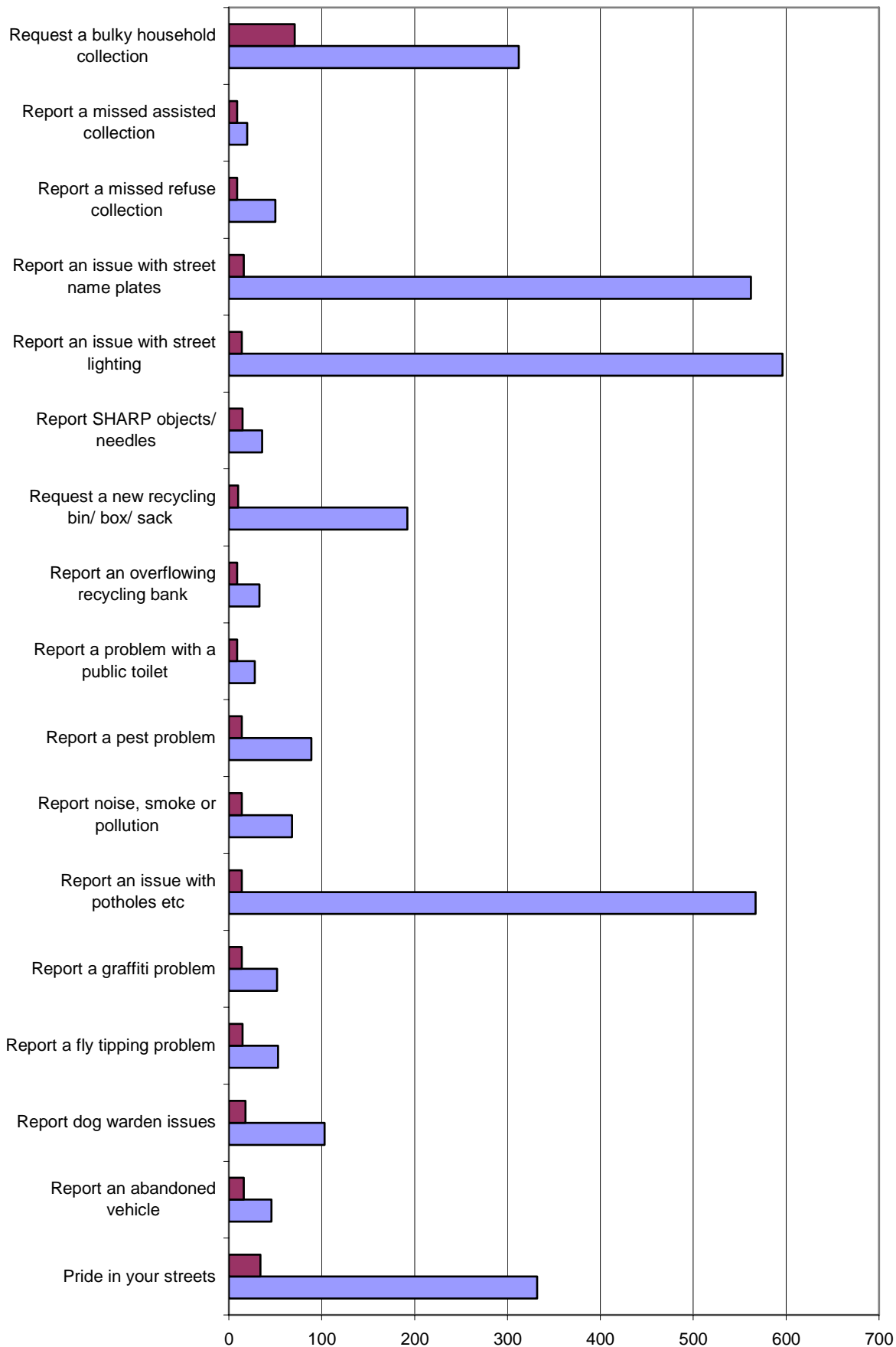
Purpose of calls to the contact centre during October 2007:

Service Type	No. of Enquiries	% of total Enquiries
Waste - New Replacement Bin or Box	544	26%
Street Lighting	240	12%
Waste - Missed bin - domestic & recycling	147	7%
Street Cleansing, Litter and Leaf Clearance	126	6%
Waste - Bulky Collection	112	5%
Surface Defects	108	5%
Fly Tipping - Waste Removal	65	3%
Waste - Missed assisted	56	3%
All other services < 50 enquiries	650	32%
Out of scope calls	11	1%
Total CRM entries	2059	

With only one months data available, trends cannot yet be monitored, but it appears that calls about street lighting increased from September to October – possibly due to the darker evenings. Calls requesting pest control have also reduced, but informal feedback suggests this is a seasonal trend, with colder weather bringing a reduction in insect problems

The table above lists services where the contact centre received more than 50 enquiries during the month. Web based requests are over the page.

Pride in Your Streets Issues reported via the internet:

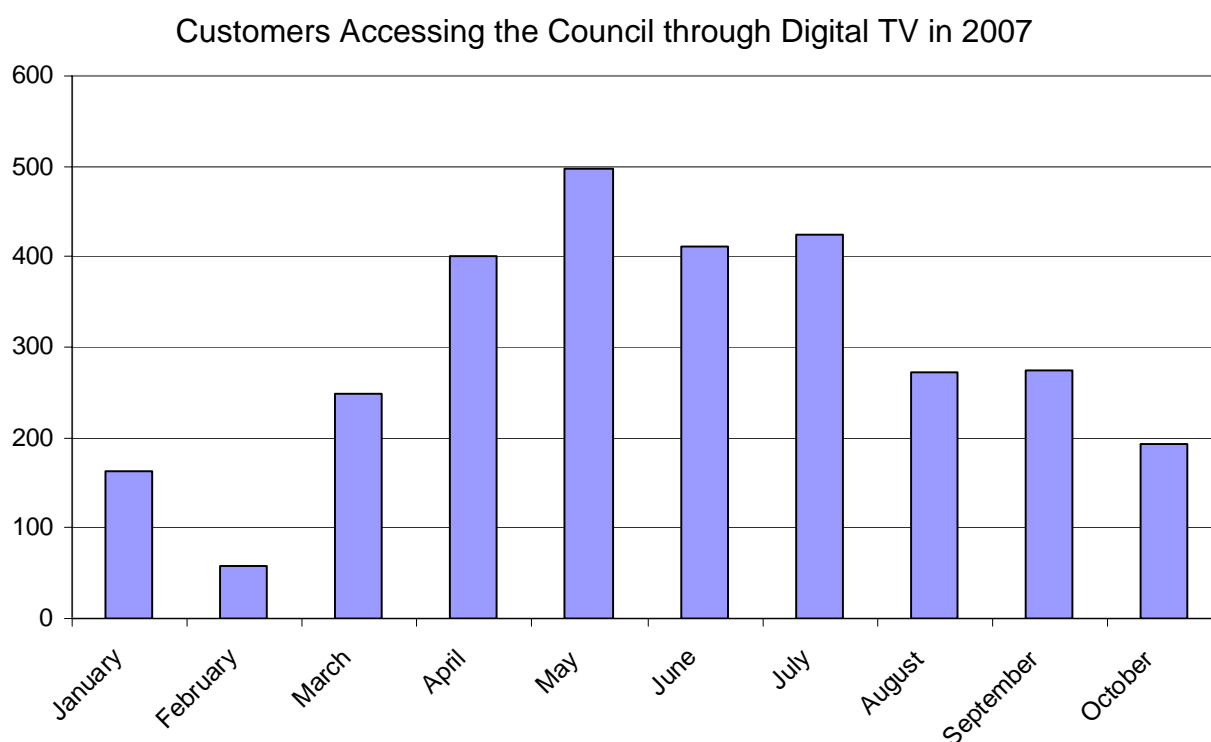


Initial information already suggests that specific 'Pride in Your Streets' issues are more likely to be reported through one access route rather than another. Customers are most likely to use the website to report issues with potholes, and nameplates. This contrasts with phonecalls, which are most likely to focus on Waste (new replacement bin or box) or Waste (missed collection). Calls regarding streetlights were frequent across both access routes.

Interestingly, the choice of language also changes with access route. Web users are far more likely to use Welsh than telephone callers or direct visitors. The reason for this is not clear it has been suggested that it could be due to people enjoying using Welsh, but lacking the confidence to do so in front of others.

Customers using Digital TV to access the Council

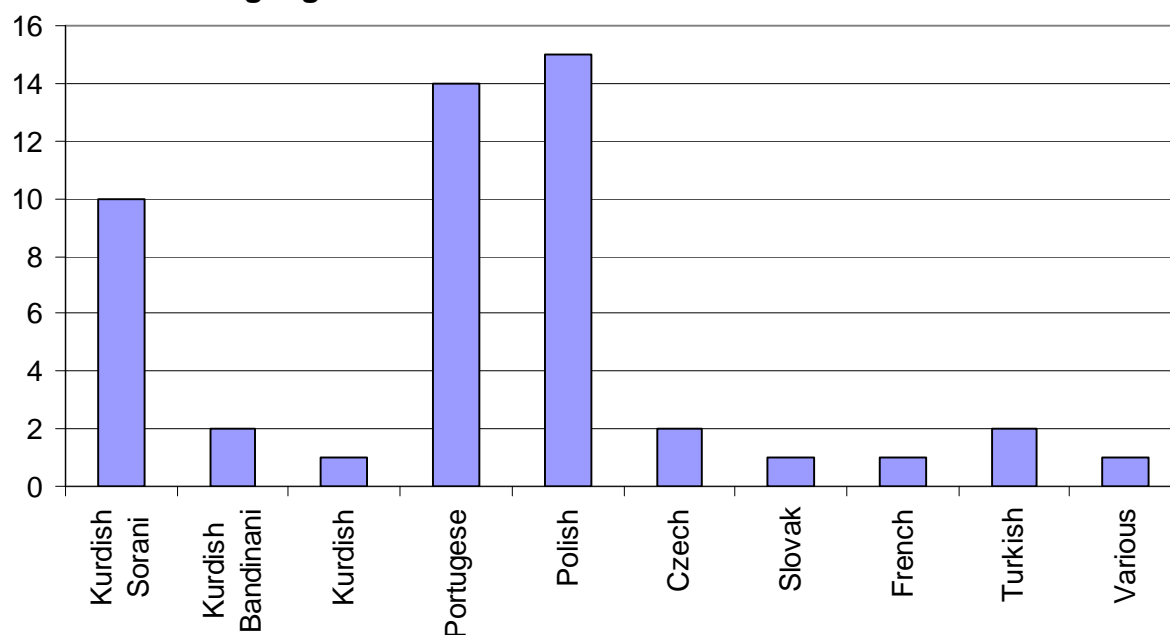
A significant number of customers are also accessing information about the Council and its services through digital TV. This usage peaked over the summer and has declined in recent months, which is believed to be the result of reduced publicity about the channel.



Translation requests

In the five months from June to October 2007, the Council received 49 requests for translation. These are broken down on the chart on the next page. By far and away the most common languages called for were Polish, Portugese and Kurdish Sorani.

Language Translations from June –October 2007



Website Monitoring

Users of the Council website are randomly invited to complete an on-line survey about the site. Again, this gives us valuable information about who is using our services and why.

Between February and October 2007, www.wrexham.gov.uk received 445,443 visits. During the same period, just less than 3,000 people (0.6%) completed the on-line survey. Of these 50.85% said their visit was completely successful and a further 31.14% partly successful. Almost 80% were either likely or very likely to visit the site again.

Purpose for visiting

To find out information	68.25%
To use a service	9.16%
Just browsing	7.81%
To complain	0.99%
To contact a Council representative or Councillor	0.57%
Other	13.21%

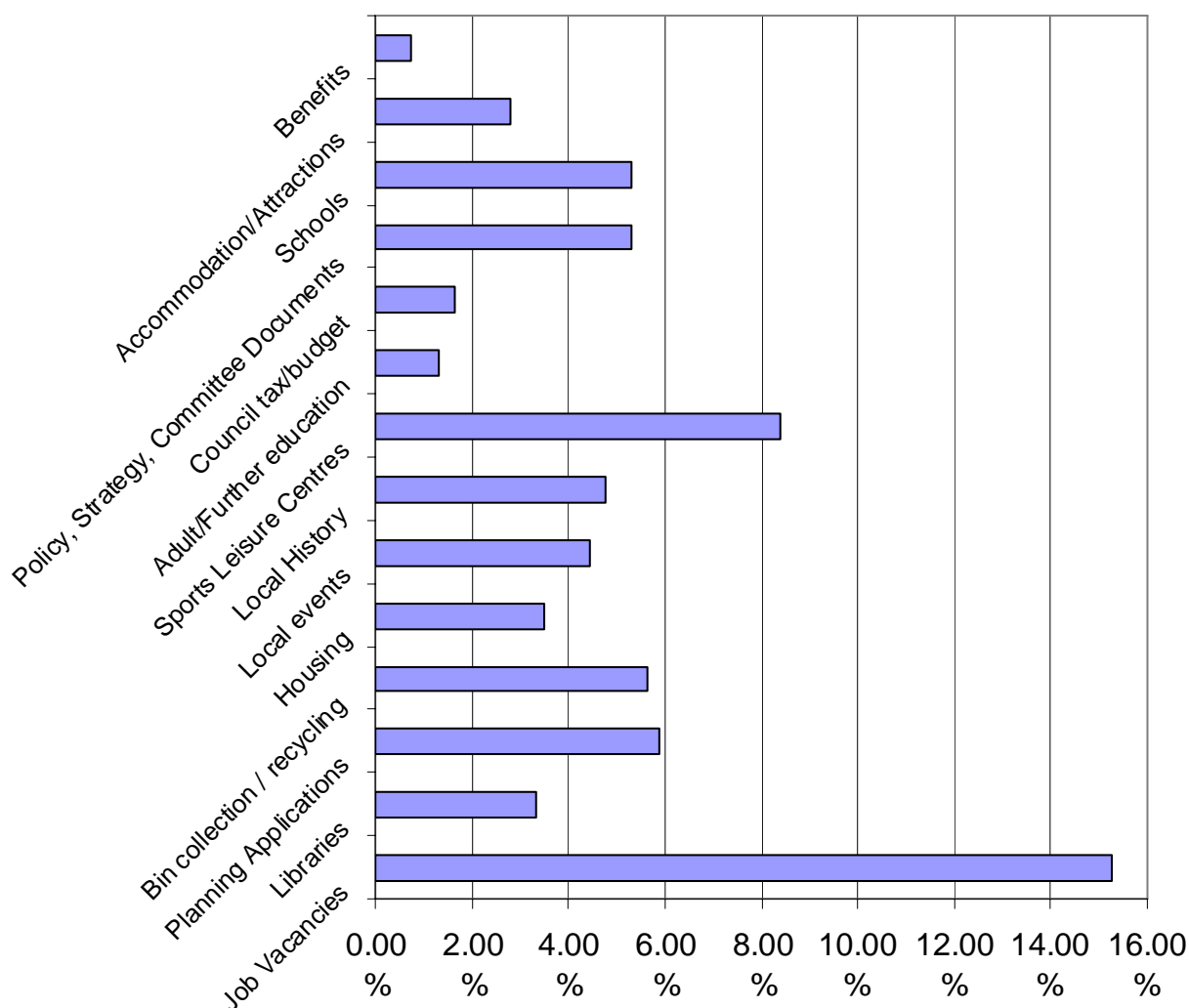
The overwhelming majority of visitors use the website to find out information. The bar chart on the next page sets out which areas are most commonly looked at.

Information areas viewed on-line:

The most popular on-line information is job vacancies, although the proportion of respondents viewing vacancy information has fallen from around 18% earlier in the year to around 10% over the past few months.

Almost a third (31.58%) of information areas viewed were classed as 'other', which breaks down into information as varied as the history of local public houses or manual handling legislation. This group has been omitted from the above graph to avoid distortion.

Information sought on-line in 2007

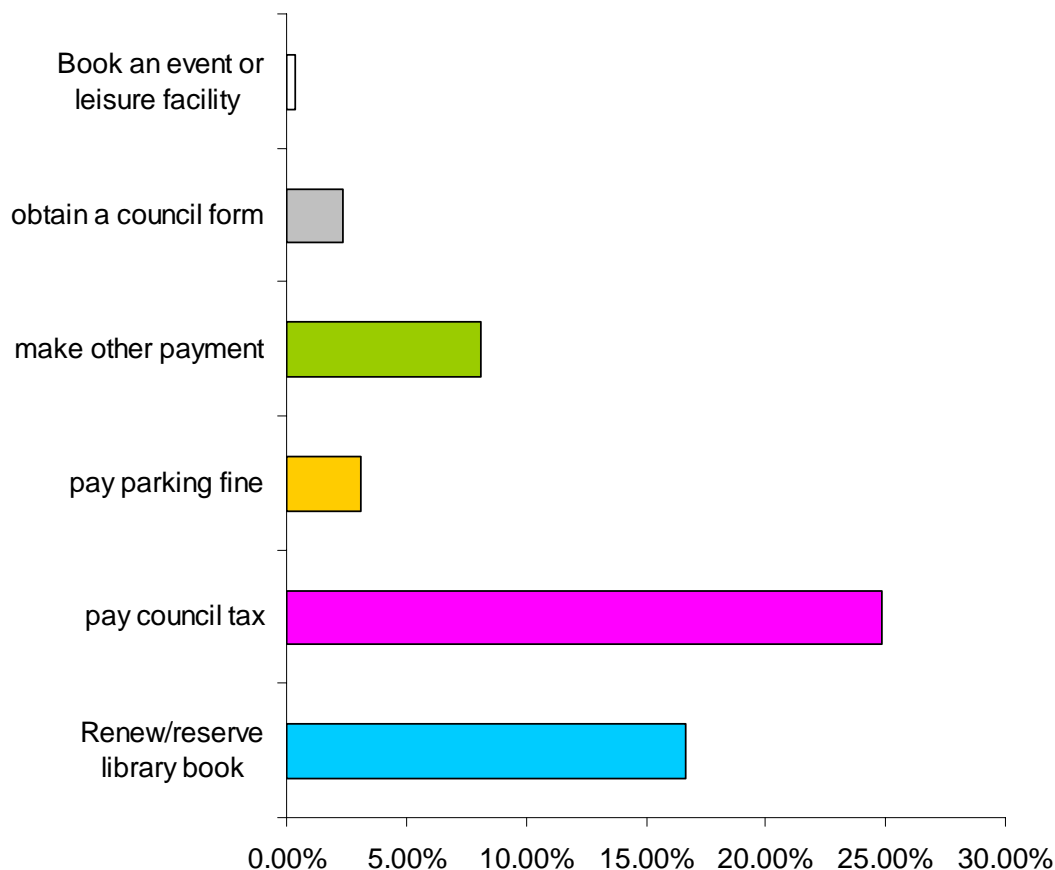


Services accessed on-line:

The graph on the following page sets out the six most common services accessed through the council website. Once again, the single biggest category was 'other' and again has been omitted from the graph. However, when looking through the areas that users specified under 'other' these were predominantly existing information categories (view job vacancies, view

planning applications, find telephone number). As such the figure for people accessing services rather than information via the website could be exaggerated by a misunderstanding of these terms.

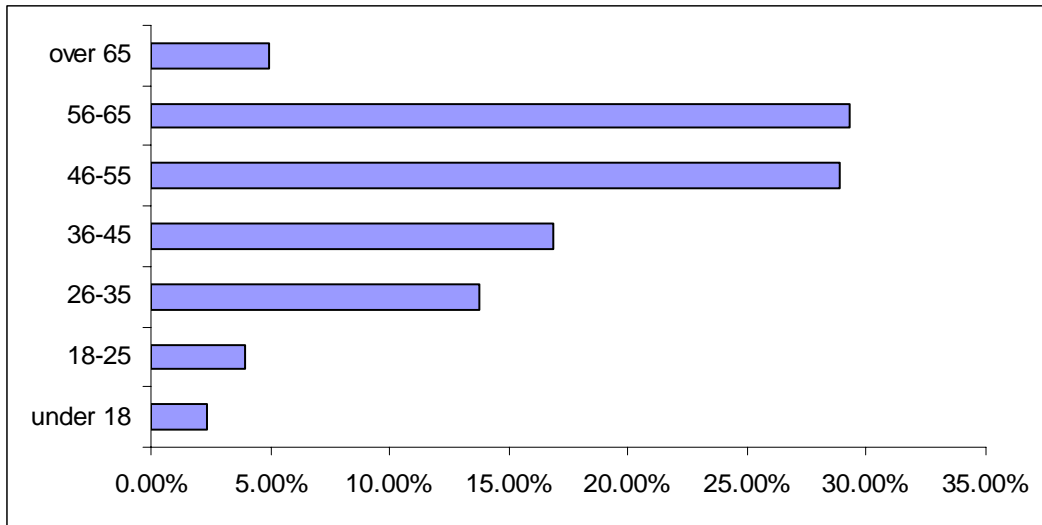
Services accessed through www.wrexham.gov.uk in 2007



Who uses www.wrexham.gov.uk?

It should be remembered that the on-line survey is not a survey of all users, but a random sample who then 'volunteer' to complete the questionnaire. As such there may be a significant difference between those groups using the website and those who have agreed to complete the survey. It should also be noted that not all respondents were willing to give personal information about themselves, so there are some gaps.

Age of website survey respondents



Most website survey respondents were between 46 and 65 years old, although significant numbers of all age groups responded to the survey.

Gender of respondents

Respondents were almost twice as likely to be female as male, although the high number of respondents who did not specify their gender makes any conclusion difficult.

Male	28.29%
Female	52.50%
Not answered	19.21%

Connection with Wrexham

The majority of survey respondents live within the Wrexham area (64.88%). A minority are either planning to move to the area (2.27%) or are planning to visit (5.61%).

A third of respondents (33.03%) work within the Wrexham area, and 12.07% actually work for Wrexham County Borough Council. A little under 1% of respondents are Councillors.

Who is information for

Respondents were also asked on whose behalf they were visiting the site

I am looking for information:

For myself	47.59%
Related to my work	22.44%
On behalf of someone else	9.16%

Improve Health, Social Care and Well-Being

Background to the priority:

The 'Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy for Wrexham' aims to create a healthier community by promoting and supporting healthier lifestyles and to provide services that support those people who have health or care needs. A key requirement of everything we do is to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Through working in partnership with our Community Strategy partners to combine social, economic and environmental factors we can ensure that Wrexham County Borough is a quality place to live, work and enjoy.

Responses

Panel members were asked to describe their general health and over three quarters (76%) described this positively; breaking this down further 26% described their health as excellent and a further 50% as good. Panel members are less positive about their own personal levels of fitness, with just 28% agreeing that they are fit. Of this, only 3% described themselves as very fit (which equates to 13 panel members). However, it is not that panel members are describing themselves as unfit (17%) but more the case they feel they are reasonably fit (54%).

Thinking about levels of fitness further, panellists were asked how important they rate the opportunity for physical activity. The panel are in unanimous agreement that this is important with 86% agreeing so and just 1% disagreeing. The remaining 12% felt indifferent.

With this in mind, it is no surprise to see that the vast majority agree that they should participate in more physical activity with three quarters (74%) of panel members stating so.

Thinking about this more broadly, over half (54%) agreed that everyone should participate in physical activity at least 5 times a week.

Panel members were asked to consider a typical week and state on average how often they take part in certain types of physical activity. Looking at mean scores here, the average panellist takes part in 30 minutes of light activity 3.98 times a week. Overall, the mean score for moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes continuously is 2.38. Finally, the average amount of participation per week in 30 minutes of strenuous exercise is 2.07.

All panel members were asked what would encourage them to increase the amount of physical activity that they embark upon. For a large proportion of panel members, reduced costs would be a good start (42%), other key improvements could be regarding better local facilities (38%), friends getting involved too (33%) and more classes explicitly aimed at beginners (25%). Suggestions, which appear to have less impact, were opportunities for the whole family (21%), better transport facilities (11%) and improved childcare

facilities (7%). All panel members were asked if they are currently members of a sports club, one fifth (23%) are and for these panel members the main benefit, as agreed by half (50%) of members, is the improved health and fitness benefits. Other suggestions include the social aspect (14%), the commitment to exercise (6%), the fact that it's fun (5%).

Satisfaction with Adult Social Care

Each year, the Adult Social Care department sends out questionnaires to service users and carers to determine the level of user and carer satisfaction with the services that are provided. In November 2007 questionnaires were sent out to a random sample of 725 service users.

The response rate was 23% to the 2007/2008 questionnaire, which is 1% above 2006/2007 and 4% above the response to the Social Services Inspectorate Wales (SSIW) questionnaires that were sent out in 2005.

A total of 91% of respondents confirmed that they had been able to get all or some information about the services they might need:

- 66% of respondents found all the information that they needed
- 25% confirming that they had found some information.

90% of respondents confirmed that they were involved in deciding what services they were provided with compared to 88% the previous year.

45% of respondents confirmed that their assessment had been undertaken jointly with Health and that this had led to more “joined up” services.

Of those people who responded to this question, 92% stated that there was a good range of services available from adult social care.

Service users who responded to the questionnaire survey were satisfied with the services, with 96% stating that the services they receive are of a good or OK quality:

- 82% - good quality
- 14% - OK, but could be better

This compares to 91% last year and 85% response to the SSIW questionnaire in 2005.

Reduce Crime and the Fear of Crime

Background to the priority:

Our vision is for Wrexham to be a safe place to live, work and visit. We want to reduce actual crime and the fear of crime. We want to strengthen the support to victims of crime and strengthen people's confidence to report incidents. We want to improve the effectiveness of preventative and responsive services. We also want to improve joint working with partner agencies to reduce re-offending, through effective integrated interventions. This will include access to treatment and support services for substance misusers, to break the cycle of offending. The Wrexham Substance Misuse Action Team (SMAT) will lead this work. We also want to encourage individual responsibility in the field of community safety and provide increased opportunities and support for community involvement in crime reduction activity.

Responses

Wrexham County Borough Generally

The percentage of respondents who feel safe during the day in Wrexham County Borough (WCB) has remained unchanged since 2005 (92%); however, a greater proportion are likely to say they feel very safe this year (40% in 2007 compared to 35% in 2005). While the percentage of respondents who feel unsafe in WCB at night is still significantly high (56%), there has been a +7% increase in the percentage of respondents who state they feel safe during the night in WCB (41% in 2007 compared to 34% in 2005).

In relation to feeling safe in WCB generally, respondents feel safe when home alone in the day (96% - the same as 2005) and walking alone in the day (91% - a +5% increase on 2005's 86%). Respondents also feel safe when home alone at night (81%). This is a +10% increase on 2005 (71%) and the increase occurs in the proportion of respondents who feel very safe (33% in 2007 compared to 23% in 2005). The majority of respondents still feel unsafe when walking alone at night in WCB (64%). However there has been +10% increase in the proportion of respondents who feel safe (33% in 2007 compared to 23% in 2005).

The respondents' improvements for safety in the local area remain unchanged since 2004. They want more police presences, better lighting, the dispersal of groups of youths and more CCTV.

The majority of respondents (61%) feel that crime in WCB has remained the same.

Wrexham Town Centre

When it comes to feeling safe in Wrexham Town Centre, nearly all the respondents (95%) feel safe during the day in the week, and 85% feel safe during the day on the weekend. Over half the respondents (52%) feel unsafe in the town centre at night on a weekday. None of these results significantly differ to previous years. However, there has been a positive decrease in the percentage of respondents who feel unsafe in Wrexham town centre at night on the weekend (-8% from 77% in 2005 compared to 69% in 2007).

In order to improve the safety in the town centre, respondents' suggestions are unchanged since 2004 – they feel that more police presence is needed (41%).

Although the largest proportion of respondents (56%) believe the crime in Wrexham town centre has stayed the same in the last 12 months, there has been a significant reduction in the proportion who feel that the crime in the town centre has got worse (-13% from 37% in 2005 to 24% in 2007).

Recent data⁸ suggest that the County Borough's crime levels have fallen significantly over the past few years. In 2003/4, the number of BSC Comparator crimes⁹ was 9,495; this fell to 7,861 in 2004/5 and to 7,078 in 2005/6 (down 25% on 2003/4).

Change in licensing laws

There has been a significant reduction in the proportion of respondents who feel that extending the hours of drinking will **increase** alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour (ASB) (71% in 2005 to 53% in 2007). Over the same period, the proportion of respondents who feel that the new licensing laws will actually **reduce** alcohol-related violence and ASB has doubled.

Similar to the impact on alcohol-related violence and ASB, the proportion of respondents who felt that the change in licensing laws would increase domestic violence has decreased from 68% in 2005 to 52% in 2007.

Certain groups are more likely than others to feel that there has been a reduction in alcohol related violence following the new licensing laws, notably males, those of working age and those who feel safe in the borough.

⁸ The data in this section come from Iquanta and "Crime Statistics for England and Wales". Iquanta is a Home Office website which records crime data supplied by each regional police force. "Crime Statistics for England and Wales" (at www.crimestatistics.org.uk) is a separate Home Office website.

⁹ A basket of ten crimes used for performance measurement.

Prosperous businesses, a skilled workforce & regenerated communities

Background to the priority:

We recognise that regenerated communities and a healthy, competitive local economy bring benefits for both businesses and local people. Our focus will be on business learning and skill to strengthen entrepreneurship, employment opportunities and community regeneration. We will work in partnership with local businesses, external agencies and the Welsh Assembly Government to achieve improvement across these areas. Our key challenges are to decrease the number of wards in the list of the 30% most deprived in Wales and to reduce the levels of people of working age without any qualifications.

Business Statistics

- There are 57,100 employees working in Wrexham
- Wrexham has an economic activity rate of 79.5%, which is significantly above the Wales rate (75.9%) and slightly higher than the rate in great Britain (78.4%)
- The Manufacturing sector employs over a quarter (25.3%) of employees – much higher than the sector's share of employment across Wales (15.4%) and Great Britain (12.0%)
- Service sector employment accounts for 68.7% of employment, much of this is within public services (which make up nearly 30% of all employment).
- Self-employed people make up only 8.6% of total employment in Wrexham – a lower proportion than in Wales (12.8%) or the UK (12.9%)
- By the end of 2005, the County Borough had 3,145 VAT registered businesses, up 4.5% on 2000. This rate of growth is above the Wales average (3.7%) although it compares less favourably to the UK rate (5.7%)
- Wrexham has a relatively high proportion of its workforce employed in skilled trades and in plan/machine operative posts. Skilled trades make up 15.4% of all occupations in Wrexham compared to 12.6% in Wales and 11.3% in the UK. The percentage (12.4%) employed in elementary level jobs (eg labourers, packers, cleaners) is also above the UK proportion. In contrast only 10.1% of the workforce are employed as managers or senior officials, compared to 14.8% of the UK workforce.
- Forecasts also suggest that Wrexham's economy will continue its transition from manufacturing to service-based activities. Manufacturing sector employment could see a net loss of 2,200 jobs by 2018. Employment growth of 10% or more is projected for most broad service sector categories, with employment in Government and other services predicted to rise by 31.5% (5,800 jobs).
- A growing number of jobs will be in high-skill occupations and service occupations, whilst fewer people will be employed in trades and low-skill jobs.

- The value of tourism continues to grow and is now worth an estimated £69 million to the local economy

Learning Statistics

- Wrexham generally has a lower-skilled workforce than other areas of Wales. 24% of residents have NVQ 4/5 level qualifications (degree level or above) compared to 28% in Wales and 30.2% in Great Britain.
- 14.6% of economically active residents have no qualifications – a significantly greater percentage than in Wales (11.4%) and the UK (9.9%).
- 2004 Basic Skills Agency survey results show that 29% of adults in Wrexham suffer from poor literacy – compared to 25% for Wales and 16% for England.
- 53% of adults in Wrexham have poor numeracy skills, exactly the same as the proportion across Wales but higher than in England (47%).
- The last (2005) Future Skills Wales survey found that 10% of employers in Wales has difficulty filling vacancies – down from 15% in 2003.
- Employers report that they are keen to see an improvement in generic skills – technical/practical skills, customer handling, communication, problem solving and team working.
- Service sectors account for the vast majority of vacancies in Wrexham and is expected to employ an increasing number of people in future years, so it is particularly important to meet the skills requirements of employers in these sectors.

Physical regeneration

- Wrexham's retail ranking will rise from 178 to 78 making it a regional centre by 2009.
- 15% of all retail floorspace development in Wales between 2006-2012 is in Wrexham.
- Industrial property values are relatively high – only exceeded in Wales by Cardiff.
- Whilst the urban population has remained static over the period 2001 – 2004, the rural population has grown by 2.8% putting pressure on services and the need for community driven regeneration
- Rural services are scarce and expensive to provide due to economies of scale
- General lack of workspace for new start-up businesses
- During the period to September 2006 average house prices rose from £55,000 to £140,000 – average annual growth of 16.3% compared to 16.1% in Wales and 12.3% in England and Wales – creating problems of affordability

Social Inclusion

- Over the ten years 1995-2005 , Wrexham's population increased by 4.1% (5,100 people) – considerably faster than the growth within Wales (3.4%) and is forecast to grow by a further 9.1% by 2018.
- The greatest increase was in the 50-64 age group, indicating an ageing population and this is forecast to continue.
- Since 2004 there has been a significant increase in the inflow of migrants. These people tend to be relatively young and can help to offset the decline in numbers of young, non-migrant working age people.
- In February 2007, 2.1% (1,701) of Wrexham's working age residents were claiming Job Seekers Allowance – however, the rate remains constantly lower than for Wales (2.6%) and the UK (2.6%)
- The 2001 Census shows that 20.8% of residents had a limiting or long-term illness compared to 22.7% in Wales and 17.3% in England.
- The 2005 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation show that 25.9% of Wrexham's Lower Layer Super Output Areas rank amongst the 30% most deprived areas in Wales.
- During the period 2004-2006 house prices have continued to outpace income growth.
- In 2003-2004 the number of BSC comparator crimes (a basket of ten crimes used or performance measurement) was 9,495. This fell to 7,078 in 2005-2006. There was a 48% fall in crime linked to substance misuse.
- There were 11,298 offences in Wrexham in 2005-2006. This equates to 86.6% offences for 1,000 population, which is below the rate for England and Wales (102.5).

Promote Welsh Language and Culture

Background to the priority:

To inform the development of proposals for the improvement of Wrexham County Borough Museum, the Heritage Service undertook a public consultation exercise to gain an insight into how the community currently does or does not engage with heritage generally, and the Museum and its services more specifically.

Consultation was initially undertaken through the People's Voice, followed up by a series of focus groups, including with people who do not use the Museum.

Responses:

Visiting the Wrexham County Borough Museum (WCBM)

The majority of respondents (84%) to the People's Voice survey were aware that there is a museum in Wrexham called the Wrexham County Borough Museum. Of those that are aware of the museum over half have visited it but only 33% visit more than twice a year. The main reason respondents visit the museum is to learn about the history of the area or their community (29%).

40% of non-users never visited museums, considering them irrelevant. Other barriers raised by the focus group work were a lack of awareness of the Museum and what it has to offer, that the building looks unwelcoming, and that there is perceived to be little for families to do or see.

Improving the Museum

Possible improvements that scored well with respondents were particularly extending galleries, with more about local communities and displaying items from the national collections, which significantly were rated as the most important improvement by both users and non-users. Also significant was the need to make the building more welcoming and to improve signage (69%), to provide family orientated activities (72%), to improve facilities for personal research (81%) and to provide a coffee shop (57%).

Interest in History & Heritage

In terms of statements regarding interest in history and heritage, the largest proportion of respondents (46%) likes to listen to or watch history/archaeology programmes on the television and radio.

The majority (94%) of respondents agree that it is important for the heritage of the community to be conserved and made available for future generations to enjoy and learn about.

Other Consultation Exercises

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Nomination

Wrexham County Borough, Denbighshire and Oswestry Borough Councils joined together in a 12-week cross-border public consultation exercise on the proposal to nominate Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal for World Heritage Site status. Over 5,000 households within the Site and Buffer Zone were sent a mailshot informing them of the consultation exercise and how to find out more/engage.

There were 10 public displays set up for the 12-week period and 7 drop-in sessions for the public to speak to officers. The WCBC and partners websites also promoted the consultation, with a bilingual consultation document being made available. 200 completed questionnaires were received with a vote of 94% for the nomination. This approach is now being promoted as best practice for World heritage Nomination sites.

The Local Development Plan

Aims for the future development of the Borough

The majority of respondents agree with almost all of Wrexham County Borough Council's (WCBC) aims. The aim that the largest proportion of respondent agrees with is that WCBC should maintain business growth and generate high quality employment (83%).

The local development plan aim with the highest priority is the aim to improve the transport system in a sustainable and integrated way. The aim with the lowest priority is the aim to ensure an adequate supply of land for future development.

Housing and Accommodation development options

In regards to future housing needs, the option most favoured by respondents is that the population will grow and therefore the Council needs to increase housing in the area. The location for the development that was selected by the largest proportion of respondents is that it should be shared equally across the large and small villages (49%).

The development of future housing in the Borough should be on the basis of smaller sites spread across the Borough (the favoured option by 79% of respondents).

Provision of affordable housing options

Over half (53%) the respondents felt that in terms of providing affordable housing options in the future, the Council should take the option to ensure that all new housing developments include some affordable housing.

Employment Land

In terms of deciding how to address the options for employment land, the largest proportion of respondents agrees with the option to continue with the Council's current policy of ensuring that 20 hectares of land per year are available for employment purposes. This land should be shared equally across the large and small villages in terms of location (47% of respondents selected this option).

Supporting the local economy

In order to support the local economy, the largest proportion of respondents felt the Council should prioritise the refurbishment of existing buildings so they can be used for employment uses (69%).

Future strategy for new development

The preferred option for future strategy development is that it should be regeneration focussed – directing growth to areas most in need of social, economic and environmental regeneration.

Complaints, Compliments and Comments Monitoring

Complaints, compliments and comments are an important source of information on our customers, their experience and their perceptions of services. Collating and analysing complaints helps to identify potential service improvements or to address users misconceptions about services.

There is a corporate procedure for complaints monitoring, but both Adult Social Care and Safeguarding and Support within Children and Young People's Services have additional statutory requirements to produce an annual report of complaints. Housing (Landlord Services) also undertake regular monitoring and reporting of complaints, although these are reported in a different format. Summaries of reports from all three directorates are below:

Adult Social Care

The number of complaints received during the year 2006/2007 increased to 143, an increase of 79% over the previous year. It is important to note that although the number of complaints has increased, further action or discussion in order to reach satisfactory resolution was required in only 32% of cases. This emphasises the Department's willingness to listen to and engage with service users who raise concerns by advising them to access the complaints procedures in order to demonstrate that their concerns will be taken seriously. Compliments received over the same period also increased by 12%. Both these increases may reflect the intensive training programme for all staff within the Department from May 2006 that has substantially increased staff awareness around the importance of logging and monitoring representations, complaints and compliments as the Department uses the information from complaints to "learn lessons" and improve service provision.

Compared with 2005/2006 – 2006/2007 saw the following changes:

- 79% increase at the first (Local Resolution) stage
- 66% decrease in the number of complaints escalated to the second (Formal Consideration) stage of the procedures
- No complaints were escalated to the third (Independent Review Panel) stage of the procedures (compared to one the previous year).

The types of complaints that have seen the greatest increase on the previous years figures are:

- Quality & Performance (51% increase) – The majority are from family members who were not happy about the quality of some aspects of services being provided to their relative.
- Service Provision (41% increase) – Almost two thirds of the complaints received were from people requesting services or because resources were not available.
- Staff Issues (63% increase) – Over half of the complaints received were regarding the performance of staff in relation to service delivery.

However, as outlined above, less than a third of complaints required further action to reach a resolution.

Safeguarding and Support

The number of complaints received during the year 2006/2007 remains very low (27 in total) and static compared to previous years. There is no simple conclusion that can be drawn from this level of complaints.

Response times for complaints have improved with 92% of first stage complaints dealt with within timescales compared to 57% the previous year.

There continues to be a high percentage (20%) of complaints escalated to the second (Formal Consideration) stage of the procedures when complainants are dissatisfied with the response at the first stage. However with so few complaints received across such a wide service, it is difficult to identify any trends.

Housing (Landlord Services)

Landlord Services manage over 11,500 homes across Wrexham County Borough. The number of complaints received during the year 2006/2007 was 192. Over a third of the complaints received related to Responsive Repairs (38%) and tended to concern the reclassifying of some non-urgent repair items onto the planned maintenance programme (such as works to fencing and concrete paths) or response times to other non-urgent repairs and cases where tenants felt that items should be replaced rather than reviewed. 15 percent of the complaints received related to Staff and tended to concern conduct or a delay in response when dealing with tenants' problems. 10 percent of the complaints received related to Estate Management and concerned issues ranging from the frequency of hedge cuts to environmental issues and improvements.

The number of compliments received by Landlord Services during this period was 18. The largest proportion of compliments received were about Staff (61%), followed by Responsive Repairs (22%), Contractors Performance (11%), and Central Heating (6%).

The number of MP enquiries received in relation to Landlord services during the year 2006/2007 was 156. Over half of the enquiries that were received related to Housing Applications (60%), followed by Responsive Repairs (8%), and Estate Management (10%).

Thirty-six compensation claims were received by Landlord Services during the same period. Requests for compensation mainly followed damage to items after repairs, leaks and bursts.

Wrexham's Consultation Fora

Accessible Wrexham Group

The group considers all access issues – not just physical access – across the Wrexham borough. Although it is supported by the Council it also looks wider than just Council services.

Community Councils

Community Councillors are elected by local people to represent them on their Community Council. Community Councils can raise money through Council Tax and have a number of responsibilities that can include promoting tourism, licensing, community halls, representation, management of town and village centres and providing community halls. They are also statutory consultees for issues such as local planning decisions.

There are 34 Community Councils within Wrexham County Borough.

The Deaf Forum

The forum provides the opportunity for deaf people to meet together and influence their quality of life by contributing to planning and developing improved services

The Disability Equality Scheme Monitoring Group

The group was set up as a consultation panel of around 70 public bodies, service users and service user groups during the formulation of the Council's Disability Equality Scheme. Now the scheme has been published the group's role has moved to one of monitoring progress against agreed action plans.

The Disability Forum

A local group which draws together disabled people with disability led organisations and produces a quarterly newsletter. It is co-ordinated by AVOW (Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham).

Local Access Forum

Wrexham County Borough Council set up the Local Access Forum in November 2002 in accordance with the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Forum advises the local authority, the Countryside Council for Wales and others on the improvement of public access to land for open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. This

includes both the improvement of public rights of way and the new right of access to open country and registered common land.

Mental Health Forum

The forum provides the opportunity for people with mental health issues to meet together and influence their quality of life by contributing to planning and developing improved services

The Wrexham Forum for Learning Difficulties

The Forum is an independent organisation financed by the Wrexham Borough Council. It is made up of people with a learning disability and their interest groups, parents/carers and their interest groups and voluntary organisations who offer a service or support to people with a learning disability. The forum is an arena for bringing together people's views and promoting its members voices effectively.

Wrexham Over 50s Forum

The Over 50s Forum is made up of over 200 local people aged 50 or over and was specifically developed to give a voice to older people and allow them to influence local services and local issues. It is supported by a co-ordinator who is funded by Wrexham County Borough Council, but who is employed by AVOW (the Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham). The Forum holds open meetings quarterly, but also has a number of working groups who meet more frequently to consider specific issues, such as social care, mobility and toilets.

Wrexham Youth Forum

The youth forum allows young people from across the County to make and influence decisions that affect them. It is currently made up of about 16 young people aged between 11 and 18 years of age and meets once a week.

The youth forum is currently working to establish the County Youth Parliament. This is a massive development in terms of young peoples participation. The parliament will hopefully be made up of young people from right across the County, representing projects both from the statutory and voluntary sectors, including co-option members - young people that don't attend any other group but are keen to get their voices heard. In fact all young people will have the opportunity to stand for a place within the Parliament.

The Parliament will meet four times a year and will be co-ordinated by a management committee, which will also be made up of young people. This Parliament will play a key role in influencing any plans that may affect

Children and Young People within the County Borough. The County Forum are developing the Parliament's constitution.

The Visually Impaired Forum

The forum provides the opportunity for people with visual impairments to meet together and influence their quality of life by contributing to planning and developing improved services.

Significant Consultation and Survey Information By Department

Department	Surveys and Consultation Exercises	Contact Officer
Adult Social Care	Advocacy Works	Paul Swann
	UN International Day of Disabled People (Centres for Independent Living)	Paul Swann
	Listening & Responding	Chris Girvan
	Service User & Carer Satisfaction Questionnaires	Jane Roberts
	Carers – Short Term Breaks	Kate Meredith
	Day Services Development	Rachel Hughes
Children and Young People	The shape of a contemporary youth service	Donna Dickenson
	Young Wrexham website	Juliet Jones
	Schools nutrition survey	Alison Watkin
	Pupil level annual schools census	Gareth Moore
	Children and Young People's Plan	Louise Hulme
Economic Development	Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site Nomination	Dawn Roberts
	Community Hubs within Caia Park	Gary Brown
	Community priorities for the Hightown Community First project	Gary Brown
	Transport needs in West Wrexham	Gary Brown

	Strategic priorities for the Broughton Partnership Board	Gary Brown
	People's Voice survey on community cohesion	Morgan Jones
	People's Voice survey on crime and the fear of crime	Morgan Jones
	Economic Baseline Report 2007	Website
	Evening Economy Database	Isobel Watson
	STEAM	Colin Hyde
	Visitor Satisfaction Survey	Colin Hyde
	Wrexham Tourist Information Centre Customer Survey	Colin Hyde
	Mapping Economic Activity	Rebecca Lowry
	Manufacturing Business Survey	Peter Scott
	Training Needs Survey	Peter Scott
		Peter Scott
Environment	Annual Cemeteries and Crematorium Satisfaction Survey	Sarah Barton
	The Public Rights of Way Strategy	Sarah Barton
	The Tree Strategy	Martin Howarth
	Streetscene Operation	Sarah Barton
Finance & Performance	Budget priorities and Council Tax	Morgan Jones
Housing and Public Protection	Housing Renewal Strategy	

	People's Voice Survey on Housing	Morgan Jones
	Strategy for Older People Future Direction	Sarah Shannon
Human Resources	The Disability Equality Scheme	Celia Gibson
	The Gender Equality Scheme	Celia Gibson
Information Systems	People's Voice survey on Customer Access	Morgan Jones
	Customer relationship management information	Helen Gerrard
	Website users feedback survey	Rob Griffiths
Legal & Democratic Services	Polling Districts and Places Review	Gaynor Coventry
Leisure, Libraries and Culture	Wrexham Museum Refurbishment Plans	Website
	People's Voice survey on Wrexham Museum	Morgan Jones
	Review of Leisure Services	Emma Wynn
	People's Voice Lifestyles survey	Morgan Jones
Planning	The Local Development Plan	Denise Oliver
Transportation and Asset management	Bus User Satisfaction Survey	Anne Hansen
	Commercial Estates Tenants Survey	Anne Hansen