

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 22 OCTOBER 2014
EXECUTIVE – 4 NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING
AND TRANSPORT

EAST HERTS RESIDENT SURVEY ON THE DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN,
JULY 2014

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report presents the findings of the East Herts Resident Survey on the Draft District Plan Preferred Options undertaken between 22nd May and 8th June 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE
PANEL AND EXECUTIVE: That:

(A)	the East Herts Resident Survey July 2014, on the Draft District Plan Preferred Options, be supported as part of the evidence base to inform the East Herts District Plan.
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: That:

(A)	The East Herts Resident Survey July 2014, on the Draft District Plan Preferred Options, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the East Herts District Plan.
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1.0 Background

1.1 In April this year the Council commissioned Opinion Research Service (ORS) to undertake a telephone survey of a sample of residents across the District. The survey had two purposes: to seek resident's opinions on the approach to development in their local area and the wider district, using a representative sample of residents in terms of their age, gender and whether they live in urban or rural areas for example; and to act as a sense check on the responses received to the Draft District Plan Consultation.

1.2 The Survey captured a sample of 502 residents through a telephone survey of 22 questions plus 9 control questions, with each interview lasting between 10 and fifteen minutes. The Survey Interview is attached at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**. Telephone numbers were attained using a random number generator computer programme, which uses postcode sectors as a basis. Responses were analysed and the Survey Report attached at **Essential Reference Paper 'C'** was produced.

2.0 Report

2.1 The Survey Report consists of 3 sections, together with a fourth which simply provides a list of tables and figures. Section 1 contains the project overview and explains the issue of statistical significance. Tables 1 to 4 summarise the demographic data of the resident sample; by age, gender, employment status and urban/rural split.

2.2 Section 2 contains an Executive Summary of the main findings of the Survey, selectively highlighting some key issues.

2.3 Section 3 presents the results of the Survey, using graphics and tables to illustrate responses.

2.4 The Report highlights key trends and anomalies and makes factual statements with regards to the statistics gathered. The Report is complimented by a web-based database which is available to Officers. This database is structured in such a way that every question can be analysed in minute detail. For example, the responses can be broken down by the age of the respondent, their gender, their working status, whether they live in a town or rural area and even by their ethnicity (if provided).

2.5 It should be noted that the Survey captured only a sample of residents and as such, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are necessarily statistically significant. Where differences between demographic groups have been highlighted as significant (i.e. where the differences between demographic groups are shaded red or green), there is a 95% probability (unless otherwise stated) that the difference is significant and not due to chance. Where the percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories, or multiple answers.

- 2.6 One of the purposes of the Survey was to act as a sense check of the responses received through the public consultation on the Draft District Plan. The results show that there are differing opinions on whether there is a housing need in the district and the preferred approach to deal with this need, particularly depending upon age and where people live.
- 2.7 When asked about which kind of housing they think is important, 94% considered housing for first time buyers, 93% thought housing for people with disabilities and 92% housing for young families with children. 66% of residents thought that the provision of larger homes (5 bedrooms plus) was unimportant.
- 2.8 When asked about housing for first time buyers, residents in full time education at school, college or university, and female respondents were more likely than average to say that this type of housing is important. Residents aged 65 and over and those wholly retired from work also considered this type of housing as important. Interestingly, those aged between 25 and 34 were more likely than average to say that housing for older people was important, while those aged between 55 and 64 were less likely than average to say that this type of housing was important.
- 2.9 When asked about their opinion on the redevelopment or retention of employment land, 91% agreed that they would support the redevelopment of existing employment land provided that this was to alternative uses that would provide employment opportunities, but less (55%) agreed that they would support such redevelopment to non-employment uses such as housing. 84% agreed that they would support the retention of employment land if improvements were made to their quality and if new employment land was created in appropriate locations (80%).
- 2.10 It appears that on the face of it the results confirm the types of opinions expressed through the Draft District Plan consultation. However, one key message that can be derived is that there is no consensus of opinion and the survey could be used to form an argument both for and against development. However, there are positive messages about the preferred approach to development in terms of location, the type of development in terms of housing type and the approach to employment land.
- 2.11 Members are therefore requested to support the recommendations at the head of this report that the East Herts

Resident Survey is used to inform the preparation of the District Plan.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

None

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