

**Quarterly Economic Report & Bulletin
Readers’ Survey 2010 Results**

Thank you to all readers who returned their readers’ survey!

, A survey was sent out in November 2010, to seek readers’ views on the Quarterly Economic Bulletin (QEB). It was sent to 360 readers that include Herefordshire Council employees, Councillors, parish clerks, local businesses, community/voluntary organisations, schools, colleges and libraries. 37 questionnaires were returned (a response rate of 10%) and the results are outlined below.

Responses to the survey came from a mix of organisations and individuals (see table below). The greatest number came from businesses (30% of all responses) followed by voluntary/community organisations (22%). Businesses made up 22% of the total readership, whereas voluntary/community organisations only made up 7%. Both were over-represented in the response to the survey.

Q3 Please indicate below which category applies to you.

	Count	%
Councillor	4	11%
Employee of Herefordshire Council/NHS Herefordshire	5	14%
Employee of other Herefordshire Partnership Organisation	2	5%
Local Business/commercial organisation	11	30%
Parish Clerk	6	16%
Private individual	6	16%
School/College	1	3%
Voluntary/Community Organisation	8	22%

Note: Two respondents reported being in the other category. Both of these were re-classified in the table above

Accessing the bulletin

Q2 If you receive the Bulletin electronically, how easy do you find...?

	Very easy, works well	Easy, works most of the time	Not easy, doesn't always work	Don't know/ No opinion
Accessing the bulletin via email link	63%	11%	0%	26%
Accessing the full articles using the embedded links	53%	6%	6%	35%

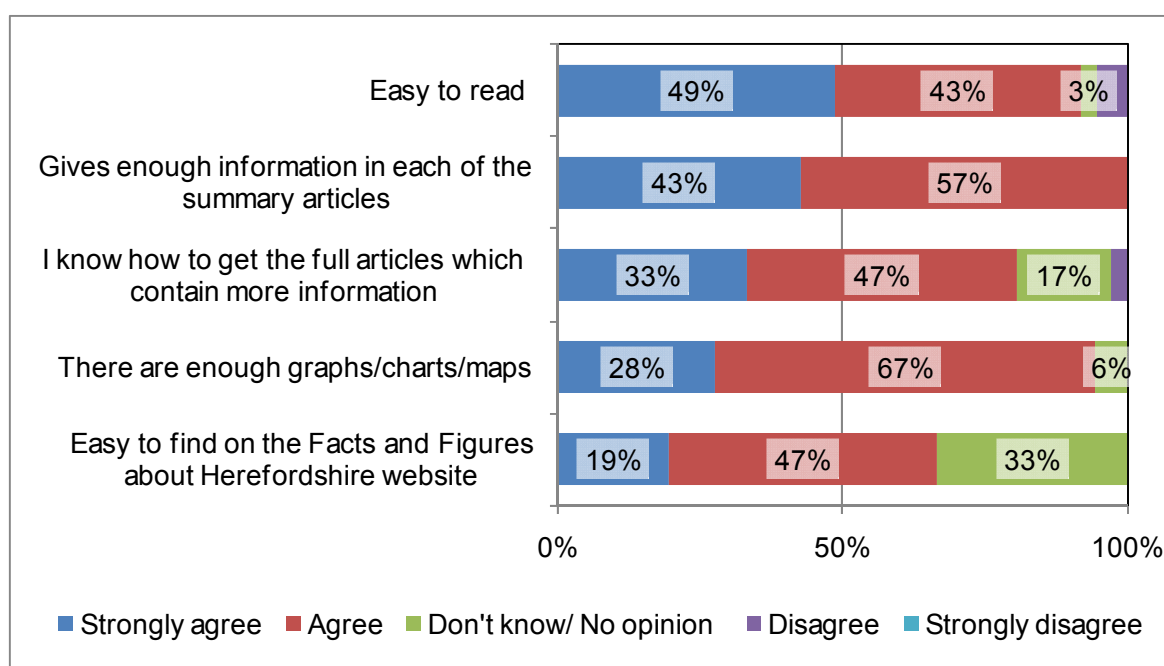
- The majority (74%) of people who accessed the bulletin via e-mail reported that it was ‘very easy, works well’ or ‘easy, works most of the time’. The remaining 26% said ‘don't know/ no opinion’.
- When asked the same question about accessing full articles, slightly fewer people reported that it was very easy or easy (59%). Some people (6%) also reported that it wasn't easy and that it doesn't always work; a greater proportion responded ‘don't know/ no opinion’ (35%).

Content of the bulletin

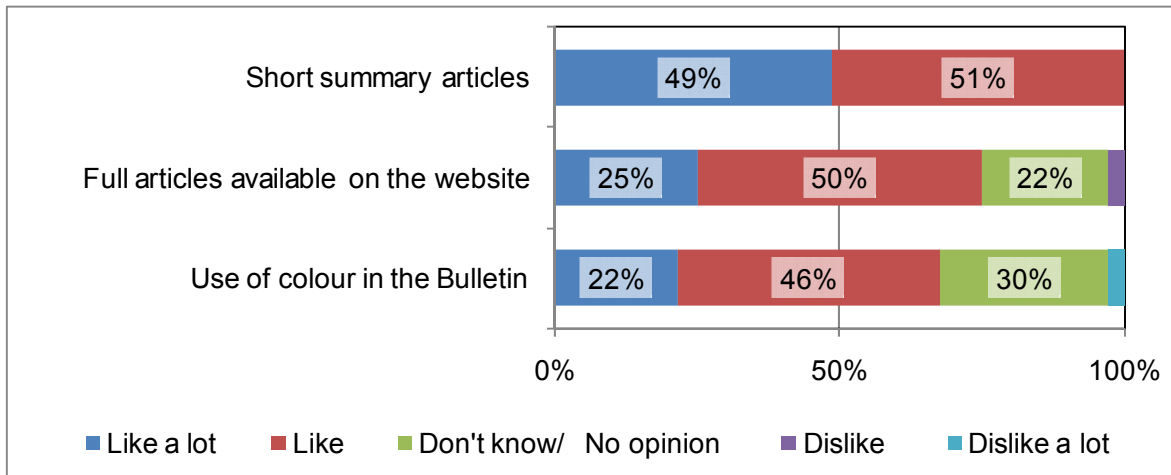
Q4. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Quarterly Economic Bulletin?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know/ No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Easy to read	49%	43%	3%	5%	0%
Gives enough information in each of the summary articles	43%	57%	0%	0%	0%
I know how to get the full articles which contain more information	33%	47%	17%	3%	0%
There are enough graphs/charts/maps	28%	67%	6%	0%	0%
Easy to find on the Facts and Figures about Herefordshire website	19%	47%	33%	0%	0%

- 92% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the Bulletin was easy to read, whereas 5% disagreed.
- 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Bulletin gives enough information in each of the summary articles. No respondents disagreed.
- 81% agreed or strongly agreed that they knew how to get the full articles, which contain more information, 3% of respondents disagreed and 17% responded ‘don’t know/no opinion’. This is an improvement from the previous year when 22% responded don’t know/ No opinion and only 66% agreed that they knew how to get the full articles.
- 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there are enough graphs/charts or maps and none disagreed.
- A lower proportion (67%) agreed or strongly agreed that the QEB was easy to find on the Facts and Figures about Herefordshire website, none disagreed and 33% responded don’t know/no opinion. This was an improvement on the previous year when 43% agreed they knew how to find it, but the proportion is still fairly low.

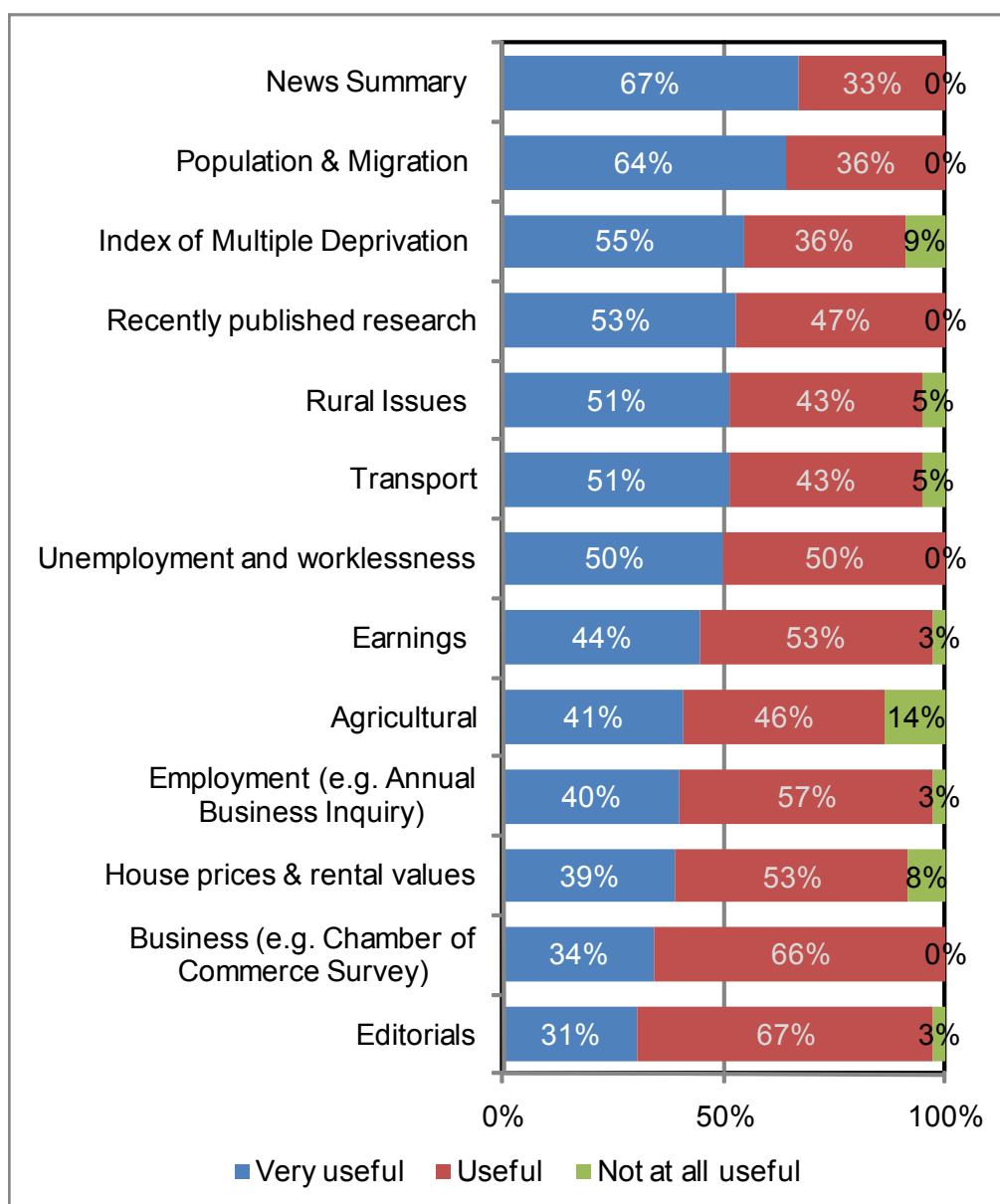


Q5 What do you think about the current 'Bulletin' format of the Quarterly Economic Report?



- 100% of respondents either liked or liked a lot the short summary articles in the Bulletin.
- 75% of respondents either liked or liked a lot having the full articles available on the website. 22% responded don't know/no opinion and the remaining 3% (1 respondent) of respondents disliked the full articles being available on the website.
- 68% of respondents either liked or liked a lot the use of colour in the Bulletin. 30% responded don't know/no opinion and 3% of respondents (1 respondent) 'disliked a lot' the use of colour in the Bulletin.

Q6 How useful do you find each of the following themes/sections in the bulletins and full reports?



100% of readers found the ‘news summary’, ‘population & migration’, ‘recently published research’, ‘unemployment and worklessness’ and ‘business’ themed articles either useful or very useful. The themes that the most survey respondents found very useful were ‘news summary’ (67%) and ‘population & migration’ (64%). The themes that the most respondents indicated were not at all useful to them were ‘agriculture’ (14%) and ‘index of multiple deprivation’ (9%).

Q7 Overall how satisfied are you with Quarterly Economic Bulletin?

When asked overall how satisfied they were with the bulletin, 95% of respondents said they were satisfied and 5% said ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’. None said ‘dissatisfied’.

Readers’ use of the bulletin

Q8 Please describe how you use the Quarterly Economic Bulletin giving examples where possible e.g. supporting a funding bid, evidence for a strategy, service planning etc..!

33 people responded to this question. A full list of responses are included in appendix A, but have been summarised below. Open text questions were categorised so that they could be summarised.

The most frequently stated use of the bulletin was for general information and advice (64%). 27% specifically stated that they used the bulletin for service or business planning and a further 21% for evidencing funding bids. 9% reported using it for evidence in strategies. Note: some people indicated more than one use so proportions will total more than 100%.

Q9 Do you receive any information contained in the Bulletin from another source?

Of the 34 readers who responded to this question 88% said they didn’t receive information in the bulletin from another source, whilst 12% said they did.

Q10 If you didn’t receive this information via the Bulletin what impact would this have on your work?

29 people responded to this question. The full responses are included in appendix B, but have been summarised below.

When the open text responses were categorised the greatest number of responses indicated that the impact of not having the bulletin would be that they would be ‘generally less informed’ (34%), whilst 24% said that it would require themselves or others to spend time to carry out research. 17% said there would be no real impact and a further 14% said they didn’t know/ not appropriate. A further 14% reported that they would be less informed and that it would impact the quality of their work or decision making. Note some people indicated more than one use so proportions will total more than 100%.

Less informed generally	34%
Time to carry out own research	24%
No real impact	17%
Don't know/NA	14%
Less informed/poorer quality work decision making	14%
Large impact/ heavily used	3%
Moderate	3%

Q11 Any other comments or suggestions

14 people responded to this question. The pertinent responses are below along with the Research Teams response/comments on the issue(s) raised.

‘1 .No information on education - numbers of people with qualifications/performance of schools/colleges. Measure of quality of our community. 2. Percentage of empty premises in county/towns - numbers and floor area?’

- In past editions we have included qualification rates of adults in the county. We do have information on attainment at different school ages for the county. These are included in the Children and Young Peoples chapter of the State of Herefordshire. This includes geographical analysis of attainment rates (ward level). See www.herefordshire.gov.uk/soh
- School performance tables are available from the Department of Education (<http://www.education.gov.uk/performance/tables/>), but aren’t appropriate material for the quarterly economic report.
- We do have access to the number of empty business premises from Herefordshire Council administrative data so could potentially include this in the bulletin. We’ll consider this for future editions.

‘A little ‘congested’ in narrative. Prefer more bullet point approach.’

- We have bulleted some of the summary articles to make it easier to read, but can consider doing this for other areas or use other means to break up the text.

‘Circulate wider, more publicity around items Chamber of commerce members, Hereford Futures Board etc’

- We are happy to circulate to whoever will find it useful. We can suggest that we circulate to the groups mentioned above and see if there is any interest.

‘Figures for water consumption.’

- Not a topic we have data for currently, but we can look into potential sources for this.

‘It would be good if the Partnership could look at the issue of measuring rural deprivation and valuing the environment.’

- We are aware of the issues of ‘hidden’ rural deprivation within the team. We try and capture this wherever possible in the data we have available. The geographical breakdown of many national data sources e.g. the Indices of Deprivation limits its usefulness in this respect i.e. data does not generally go to small enough geographies to capture rural deprivation effectively.
- Again valuing the environment is difficult as it depends on the individual or organisation as to what value they place on it. Having said this we do capture some information in surveys that we carry out. In the Herefordshire Employers’ Survey and the Herefordshire quality of life survey respondents (businesses and residents) were asked to rate different aspects in terms of importance to the business or individual. Respondents were given a list of things to rate. In both of these surveys the environment (or aspects of it) was one of the aspects they were asked to rate. See the following pages for more detail.

Herefordshire quality of life survey:

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/residentsviews.aspx>

Herefordshire Employers' Survey:

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/1422.aspx>

Suggest joining up with Shropshire / Telford Data Observatory or with JUIS at Worcestershire to maximise cost benefits.

- We will raise this with our colleagues in other authorities as we are in regular contact with them. However first impressions are that the bulletin would become a bit unwieldy having to include detailed analysis for several areas in addition to Herefordshire

For further information on this article, please contact the Research Team on 01432 260 893, or e-mail researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk

Appendix A

Q8 Please describe how you use the Quarterly Economic Bulletin giving examples where possible e.g. supporting a funding bid, evidence for a strategy, service planning etc..!

Advise the organisations with whom I work as a volunteer.
All of your eg.s !
As a Parish Clerk I note what needs to be noted and circulate the Bulletin to the Parish Councillors.
As a parish councillor of wide interest containing as it does general statistics about the county.
As we have just undertaken a parish plan and will be working from that to access funding we may then utilize it more.
assistance in service planning
circulated to all parish councillors
Figures are used to inform Adult Learning plan, work around worklessness and have been used in external funding bids
For use in customer meetings as background information. In business planning both for our business and those of customers.
General background knowledge.
General information
Good to have information on matters at county level when making local decisions.
Helps inform the update of partnership priorities. Will also be useful when producing locality profiles and extending our work through community led planning
I do use extracts to pass on to staff and clients that I think they might find useful
I use it to support funding bids and for using it as evidence in our strategic plan.
Informing others, both locally, regionally and nationally in discussion, particularly in correcting erroneous impressions/misinformation about Herefordshire. Low-level stuff but I hope it helps !
Keeping in touch on local matters as an interested resident.
Library (school) grant bid.
Opinion former/writer
Overall research/knowledge building and awareness.
Planning of meetings (parish council).
Principally used in supporting funding bids.
Reference & discussion on FSB Committee
Reviewing market trends.
Supporting funding bids, planning services in the community informing clergy within the diocese of above information which may affect their work.
Supports future development planning in Department.
The economic bulletin is a very useful aid to thinking about project development from a sustainable economic development perspective, and obviously in supporting funding bids.
The QEB is the key means of updating interested parties in the state of the Herefordshire economy and helps keep the issues in mind. It does provide evidence for how strategies are performing and highlights emerging issues.
To support case for various aspects of economic development in Ledbury.
Understanding trends.
We are estate agents and sometimes use the figures to demonstrate the state of the market to vendors.

Writing Parish Plan. Supporting evidence in 'Big Lottery' bid (unsuccessful) for Community Centre.

Appendix B

Q10 If you didn't receive this information via the Bulletin what impact would this have on your work?

Hard to say.
Honestly no great impact, but it would be missed.
I don't think it would make much of a difference to our small council, however, it is very useful to have a simple to read snapshot of the Economy of Herefordshire
I find hard copy bulletin extremely useful. It would take a long time to research the information I wish for without it.
I would find it difficult to find information related to areas of rural deprivation given the situation (locality) of the school.
I would no longer be "an informed citizen" ie at the mercy of the Hereford Times.
I would not be nearly so well informed.
It is difficult to imagine how we would keep in touch with the local economy without the Bulletin. Much of the work done for the bulletin is just lifted for use in papers and strategies, and this work would need to be done for those specific uses as required.
It would be more time consuming to access the nformation from other sources. The regularity of the report and the overview that it gives means that it is easy to keep up to date owith the current position within Herefordshire.
It would be tremendously expensive in terms of time to find all the information and keep up to date in such a succinct manner.
It would leave a gap which would take time and effort to fill.
Less focus for charity funding provision.
Less informed
Little effect
Make it more difficult and less successful.
Moderate.
N/A
N/A
N/A
None
Not a lot of change.
Not being able to refute the often misinformation in the local press !
Reduce quality and impact on decision-making.
Reduction in knowledge to provide strategic direction.
The bulletin keeps we awake to change in the important strands of the Herefordshire economy through its very regularity. Without this stimulus to multi-stranded thinking my local world view could easily become narrow and less useful to all involved.
would be slightly les knowledgable about the county
Would have to look elsewhere - extra time
would ned to ask other contacts in Council
Wouldn't be so well informed.

Appendix C

Q11 Any other comments or suggestions

1. No information on education - numbers of people with qualifications/performance of schools/colleges. Measure of quality of our community. 2. Percentage of empty premises in county/towns - numbers and floor area ?
A little 'congested' in narrative. Prefer more bullet point approach.
Basically I see no reason to change or discontinue it. Its one of the more worthwhile pieces from the Council- well put together, concise and informative. Leave alone.
Circulate wider, more publicity around items Chamber of commerce members, Hereford Futures Board etc
Figures for water consumption.
I would like to continue to receive the Quarterly Economic Bulletin in paper format. It was addressed to my husband [REDACTED] but can be sent to me at the same address. [REDACTED].
It would be good if the Partnership could look at the issue of measuring rural deprivation and valuing the environment.
Keep up the good work !
No but thank you for keeping me informed.
No. Thank you.
None but thanks for all your efforts.
Please don't stop hard copy as it is easier to access than e-mail amongst the several hundred I receive.
Q9 "not sure"
Suggest joining up with Shropshire / Telford Data Observatory or with JUIS at Worcestershire to maximise cost benefits.