

**HEREFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP  
PANEL SURVEY 2**

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL,  
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE &  
PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

**SUMMARY REPORT**

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 RESPONDENT PROFILE

- The profile of the panel is broadly representative of the population of the Herefordshire area. The only group to be under represented is 16 to 24 year olds. Hence the data has been weighted by age to redress this imbalance. The following is the profile of respondents to the second survey, which varies only slightly from the profile of the panel as a whole.
- The majority of respondents (86%) live in a household where there is a car or van normally available for use by them or a member of their household.
- Six in ten respondents (60%) live in an urban ward (in a town or city), with the remaining 40% of respondents residing in a rural ward.
- Almost three-quarters of respondents (73%) have lived in Herefordshire for over ten years. One in ten respondents (11%) have lived in the area between five and ten years, whilst 16% have lived in Herefordshire for less than five years.
- Just under one in ten respondents (9%) state that they have a disability or long-term illness that affects the everyday tasks they can undertake.

### 1.2 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL - PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

- Respondents were asked whether the quality of the physical environment in Herefordshire had improved, stayed the same or got worse in the time they have been living in the county.
- The majority of respondents perceive the quality of the physical environment to have got worse (58%); with just under a third stating that they feel it has stayed the same (29%).
- The majority of respondents have not submitted a planning application in the last three years (91%). Of those who have, almost three-quarters state that they were provided with information that clearly explained the application process (74%). It is important to note that of the other quarter of respondents, four out of five could not give an answer to this question. This may be explained by the fact that many applications are submitted for individuals by agents, therefore for these individuals, knowledge of the application process may be limited.
- Just under one in nine respondents have objected to a planning application in the last three years (11%). Of these respondents 55% feel that the information provided to them did explain the objection process clearly enough. However a substantial proportion state that either the information did not explain the process clearly enough (23%) or that did not have any information to explain the process (13%).

- Overall, respondents are divided as to whether they feel the current level of consultation that takes place between the general public and the Council concerning planning applications is about right (47%) or too little (41%).

### **1.3 HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE**

- When respondents were asked to rate the condition of both of these types of roads on a five-point scale, other roads were perceived to be in poor or very poor condition by four in five respondents (80%) and main (A) roads were perceived to be poor or very poor by just under half of respondents (46%).
- Compared to the roads in five neighbouring counties, respondents are generally more likely to perceive that the roads in Herefordshire are in a worse condition.
- The majority of respondents regard the quality of the road repairs in Herefordshire as poor or very poor (71%), compared to just 19% of respondents who rated the salting, gritting and snow clearance of major roads in the county similarly.
- The types of roads respondents regard as being priorities for future maintenance and improvement are main rural and main urban roads. This view is consistent across subgroups with the exception of respondents living in Golden Valley and Ledbury who view main rural roads and minor rural roads as priorities.
- The most important physical aspects of the roads in Herefordshire respondents feel the Council should try to improve the maintenance of are road surfaces, drainage and pavements.

## 1.4 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

- The majority of respondents use public conveniences in urban areas less than once a month (51%), with just over one in five using them at least once a week (21%).
- In rural areas, frequency of use is considerably lower as just 5% of respondents use public conveniences at least once a week. Just over two in five respondents use them less than once a month and the same proportion do not use them at all (43%).
- Main reasons given by respondents for using public conveniences less than once a week or rarely are using toilets in restaurants, cafes and bars instead (66%), not feeling that the facilities are clean enough to use (59%) and the amount of vandalism and graffiti in them (41%).
- When frequent users (respondents who use public conveniences at least once a month) were asked to rate aspects of the public convenience they use most often on a scale of one to five, the location of the public convenience received the highest mean rating overall (3.40). The general condition of the building (2.94) and the overall cleanliness (3.01) received the lowest mean ratings.
- In rural areas, the proportions of all respondents who have tried to use public conveniences fall to 12% between 5pm and midnight and 6% between midnight and 7am.
- A high level of cleanliness is the aspect of public conveniences that most respondents would like to see improved in the future (88%). Good lighting, mentioned by 63% of respondents is also regarded a top three priority, along with having attendants at facilities (44%).
- Respondents appear to be more willing to pay for the use of public conveniences if they are well maintained at consistently high standards (67%), than if there is an attendant on duty (56%). Just over a quarter of all respondents however, are not prepared to pay to use public conveniences in either proposed situation.
- In terms of the future service to be provided by Herefordshire County Council, the majority of respondents feel that it important or very important for the Council to continue to provide public conveniences (89%) and three in five respondents (61%) feel that the current number of conveniences currently in use should be maintained

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 BACKGROUND

- The modernisation agenda presents local authorities with a broad range of challenges and opportunities. Central to this agenda is the need to consult with the public. As part of their consultation strategy, Herefordshire Partnership, which includes Herefordshire Council, the Chamber of Commerce for Herefordshire and Worcestershire, the Herefordshire Health Authority, West Mercia Police, voluntary organisations and Advantage West Midlands, commissioned BMG in September 2001 to recruit a panel of 1000 residents with whom they could consult on a range of local issues.
- In March 2001, after completing the recruitment of the panel and combining this exercise with an initial survey, the Herefordshire Partnership commissioned BMG to conduct a second survey.
- The principle objectives of the second survey were to:
  - ◆ Gauge the extent to which respondents feel the quality of the physical environment has changed since they have been living in the county.
  - ◆ Ascertain respondents' use of planning services and their priorities in relation to the way the council processes planning applications.
  - ◆ Gauge respondents' perceptions of the quality of the road systems in the county and ascertain their priorities for future spending.
  - ◆ Ascertain the frequency with which respondents use public conveniences in both urban and rural areas, and gauge perceptions of the quality and level of spending expected for these facilities.

### 2.2 METHODOLOGY

- The target population for the survey was all panel members who had agreed to receive postal questionnaires in any further panel consultation, a total of 1,014 panel members.
- An initial mailing took place in the week commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2001, with a cut off date of 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2001. Questionnaires were printed with a unique reference number to monitor the response rate and to track which respondents had returned a completed questionnaire.
- Respondents who had not returned a completed questionnaire were re-mailed during the week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2001, with a final cut off date of 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2001.
- In total, 707 completed questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 70%.

- A sample size of 707 is subject to a maximum standard error of  $\pm 3.7\%$  at the 95% confidence level on an observed statistic of 50%. Thus, we can be 95% confident that responses are representative of those that would be given by the total population, if a census had been conducted, to within  $\pm 3.7\%$  of the percentages reported.
- In addition to this written report, data tabulations have been produced which present the data as a whole, and broken down by the following groups:
  - ◆ Gender of the respondent;
  - ◆ Age of the respondent;
  - ◆ Type of ward in which respondent lives – urban or rural;
  - ◆ Whether respondent has a limiting condition / disability;
  - ◆ Whether respondent normally has access to or owns a car or van;
  - ◆ The length of time the respondent has been resident in Herefordshire;
  - ◆ The local area forum in which respondent lives.

### 3.0 RESPONDENT PROFILE

- The profile of the panel as a whole and of the panel members who responded to this survey is broadly representative of the Herefordshire area. The only group to be under represented is 16 to 24 year olds. Hence the data has been weighted to redress this imbalance.

#### *Gender*

- The sample is 47% male and 53% female.

#### *Age*

- Table 1 illustrates the age profile of the sample before and after the weights had been applied.

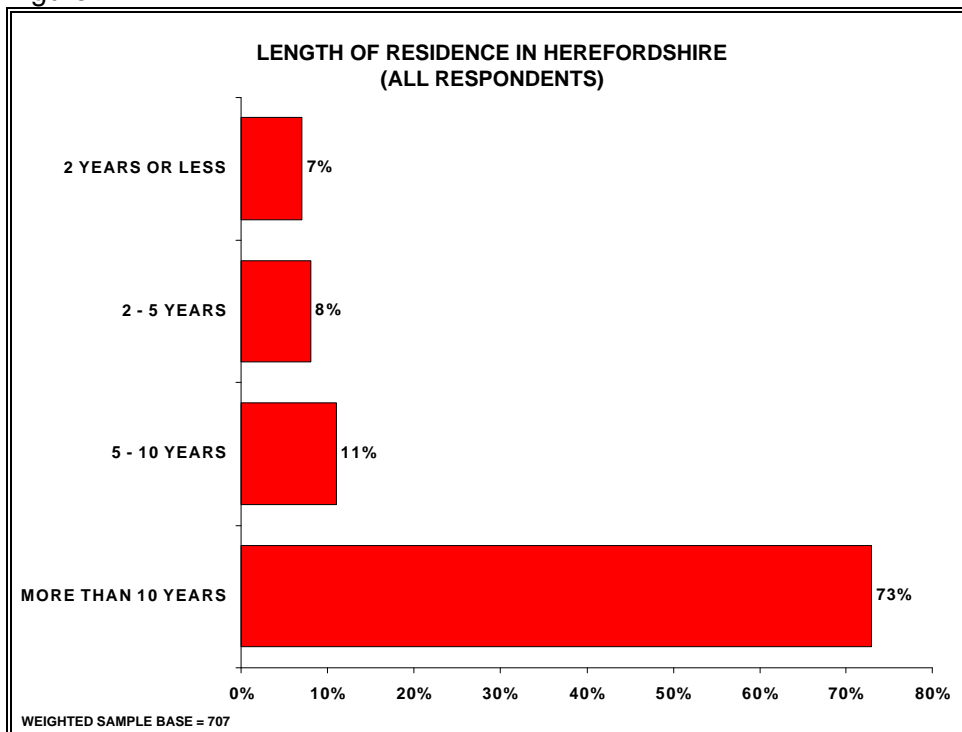
Table 1

<b>AGE RANGE OF RESPONDENTS (ALL RESPONDENTS)</b>		
	<i>TOTAL</i>	
	Unweighted	Weighted
16 – 24 years	15	113
25 – 34 years	90	113
35 – 44 years	143	120
45 – 54 years	139	106
55 – 64 years	128	99
65+ years	192	156
<b>Sample bases</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>707</b>

#### *Residency in the county*

- Almost three-quarters of respondents (73%) have lived in Herefordshire for over 10 years. One in nine respondents (11%) have lived in the area between five and ten years, whilst 16% have lived in Herefordshire for less than five years.

Figure 1



*Local area forum*

- For the purpose of analysis, respondents have been grouped according to which local area forum they live in. Table 2 below shows the proportion of respondents in each local area forum.

Table 2

LOCAL AREA FORUM IN WHICH RESPONDENT LIVES (ALL RESPONDENTS)		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	
	%	Weighted Base
Bromyard	6	38
Dinmore	12	87
Golden Valley	7	47
Hereford North	26	180
Ledbury	8	59
Leominster	8	61
North West Herefordshire	7	52
Southern Herefordshire	15	105
South Wye	10	78
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>707</b>

*Type of ward*

- Six in ten respondents (60%) live in an urban ward (in a town or city) with the remaining two in five respondents (40%) living in rural wards.

*Mobility*

- Less than one in ten respondents (9%) state that they have a disability or long-term illness which affects the everyday tasks they can undertake.
- The majority of respondents (86%) live in a household where there is a car or van normally for use by them or another member of their household.

## 4.0 DEVELOPMENTAL CONTROL – PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

### 4.1 QUALITY OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT IN HEREFORDSHIRE

- Respondents were given a description of Development Control, summarising the services the Council provides, and informing the respondent that they are all users of these services as they all live in an environment which is affected by planning decisions.
- To ascertain respondents general view of the physical environment (including the road network) in Herefordshire, they were asked to state whether they felt it had improved, stayed the same or got worse in the time that they had lived in Herefordshire. Almost three in five respondents perceive the physical environment to have got worse (58%) since they have been living in Herefordshire, with just under three in ten stating that it has stayed the same (29%). A small proportion of respondents state that the physical environment has improved since they have been living in the county (10%).
- Further analysis reveals that respondents who have lived in Herefordshire for more than ten years are most likely to state that the physical environment has improved since they have been resident in the county (12%). Whereas those respondents who have lived in the county for up to two years are least likely to have perceived a change for the better (4%).
- The proportion of respondents who feel the physical environment has stayed the same, decreases with the length of residence in Herefordshire (52% of respondents resident for two years or less, 45% of respondents resident for two to five years, 38% of respondents resident for five to ten years and 24% of respondents resident for more than ten years).
- This trend is reversed when examining the proportion of respondents who perceive the physical environment to have got worse, with 37% of respondents resident for two years or less, 46% of respondents resident for two to five years, 55% of respondents resident for five to ten years and 62% of respondents resident for more than ten years.
- The table below shows that there are differences in respondent perceptions according to the local area forum in which they live.

Table 3

<b>RESPONDENT RATING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT INCLUDING THE ROAD NETWORK IN HEREFORDSHIRE (ALL RESPONDENTS)</b>					
	<b>IMPROVED</b>	<b>STAYED THE SAME</b>	<b>GOT WORSE</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>NOT PROVIDED</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
TOTAL (707)	10	29	58	2	1
BROMYARD (38)	15	40	43	2	0
DINMORE (87)	9	23	64	3	1
GOLDEN VALLEY (47)	5	13	81	2	0
HEREFORD NORTH (180)	9	24	66	1	1
LEDBURY (59)	9	47	43	1	0
LEOMINSTER (61)	24	28	43	3	1
NORTH WEST HEREFORDSHIRE (52)	5	31	58	5	2
SOUTHERN HEREFORDSHIRE (105)	10	40	46	2	1
SOUTH WYE (78)	6	25	67	2	0
FIGURES IN PARENTHESES DENOTES WEIGHTED SAMPLE BASES					

- The local area forums in which respondents are most likely to perceive a decrease in the quality of the physical environment are Golden Valley, South Wye and Dinmore. In contrast, Bromyard, Ledbury and Leominster are the local area forums in which respondents are least likely to perceive a fall in the quality of the physical environment and hence more likely to perceive an improvement.
- Respondents who do not normally have access to a car or a van (20%) are more likely to state that the physical environment has improved than those respondents who do own a car or van (8%).

#### **4.2 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- The majority of respondents have not submitted a planning application in the last three years (91%). Respondents who are most likely to have submitted an application are those who have been resident in the county for two years or less (25%). Respondents in the local area forum of Southern Herefordshire are also among those most likely to have submitted an application (15%).

- Almost three-quarters of respondents who have submitted an application in the last three years state that the information provided clearly explained the application process (74%). It should be noted that although only 2% of respondents state that the information did not clearly explain the process, one in five respondents (20%) did not know whether the information had done so or not. This substantial figure is perhaps explained by the fact that many applications are submitted for individuals by agents such as builders or architects, therefore for these respondents, knowledge of the application process may be limited.
- About one in ten respondents have objected to a planning application in the last three years (11%). Respondents in the local area forums of Ledbury, and North West Herefordshire are most likely to have made an objection to a planning application (17% and 16% respectively).
- All respondents who have objected to an application in the last three years were asked whether the information available to them clearly explained the objection process. The data shows that just over one half of respondents who have made an objection to an application felt that the information provided did explain the process clearly (55%). Of the remaining respondents, just under one quarter felt that the information did not explain the process clearly enough (23%), one in eight stated that there was no information available to them (13%) and a further 8% did not know.

#### **4.3 CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

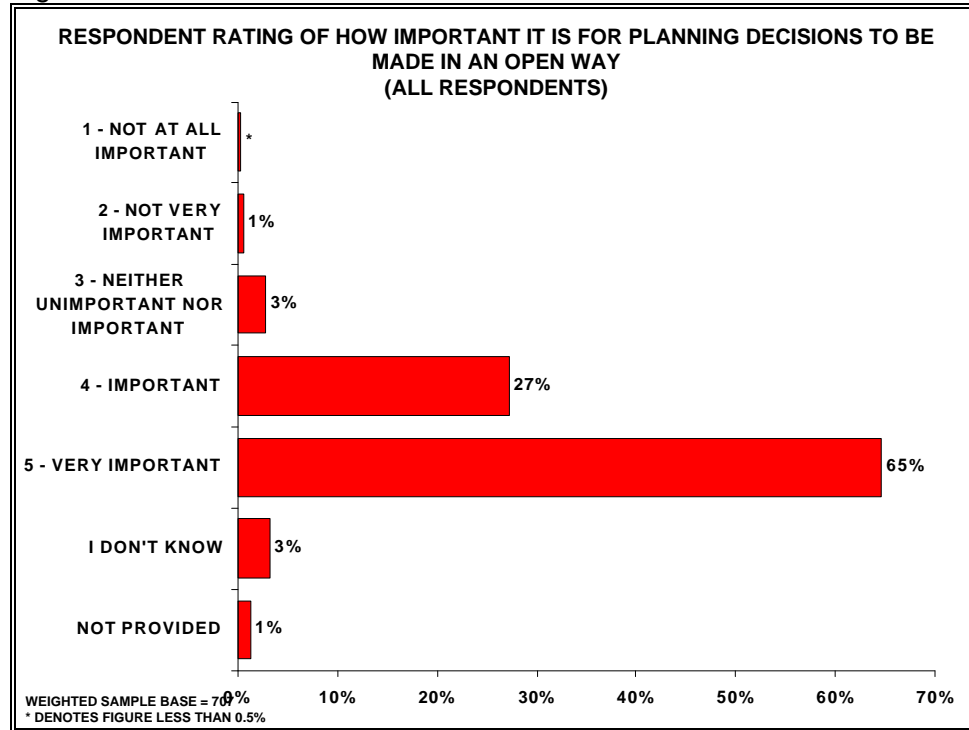
- Respondents were then asked whether the current level of consultation that takes place between the general public and the Council concerning planning applications (via letters to neighbours, site notices and where necessary public notices in newspapers) is too much, too little or about right.
- The largest proportion of respondents feel that the current level of consultation is about right (47%), however a substantial proportion also feel that the level is currently too little (41%).
- The table below shows that there are variations in perceptions of the current level of consultation over planning applications dependant on where respondents live.

Table 4

<b>RESPONDENT RATING OF THE AMOUNT OF CONSULTATION OVER PLANNING DECISIONS (ALL RESPONDENTS)</b>					
	<b>TOO LITTLE</b>	<b>ABOUT RIGHT</b>	<b>TOO MUCH</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>NOT PROVIDED</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
TOTAL (707)	41	47	3	9	1
BROMYARD (38)	51	41	2	6	0
DINMORE (87)	34	60	1	6	0
GOLDEN VALLEY (47)	34	51	2	10	3
HEREFORD NORTH (180)	43	49	3	6	0
LEDBURY (59)	55	36	4	4	0
LEOMINSTER (61)	47	41	5	8	0
NORTH WEST HEREFORDSHIRE (52)	40	34	0	26	0
SOUTHERN HEREFORDSHIRE (105)	36	49	1	13	2
SOUTH WYE (78)	36	47	10	8	0
FIGURES IN PARENTHESES DENOTES WEIGHTED SAMPLE BASES					

- Respondents in Ledbury and Bromyard are most likely to feel that the current level of consultation is too little, compared to those in Dinmore and Golden Valley who are most likely to be satisfied with the level of consultation. South Wye is the local area forum where respondents are most likely to feel that there is too much consultation.
- The figure below shows that almost all respondents feel that it is either important or very important for planning decisions to be made in an accessible and open way.

Figure 2



- Mean scores were calculated for the total response and for each subgroup, on the basis that one is not at all important and five is very important. The overall mean rating is 4.63 and none of the mean scores calculated for the subgroups fall below 4.23, highlighting the consistent view of all respondents towards the way in which planning applications should be made.
- Respondents were then asked how to rate how important specified objectives are when the Council is making a decision on a planning application. Respondents were asked to rate their answer on a scale of one to five where one is not at all important and five is very important.
- As the table below shows, all objectives were felt to be important with each one receiving a mean rating over 4.00.

Table 5

<b>RESPONDENTS RATING OF HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR THE COUNCIL TO CONSIDER SPECIFIED ISSUES IN RELATION TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS (ALL RESPONDENTS)</b>				
	<b>FAIRLY OR VERY IMPORTANT</b>	<b>FAIRLY OR VERY UNIMPORTANT</b>	<b>MEAN RATING</b>	<b>MEAN RATING SAMPLE BASE</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>		
PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	97	1	4.59	699
ROAD SAFETY AND TRANSPORT ISSUES	98	1	4.64	700
PROTECTION OF THE COUNTY'S HISTORIC HERITAGE	89	4	4.31	696
PROTECTION OF THE COUNTRYSIDE	95	1	4.59	692
IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURS	93	3	4.39	701
ENHANCEMENT OF THE CHARACTER OF TOWNS AND VILLAGES	88	3	4.27	699
BENEFITS TO THE PUBLIC	90	4	4.40	697

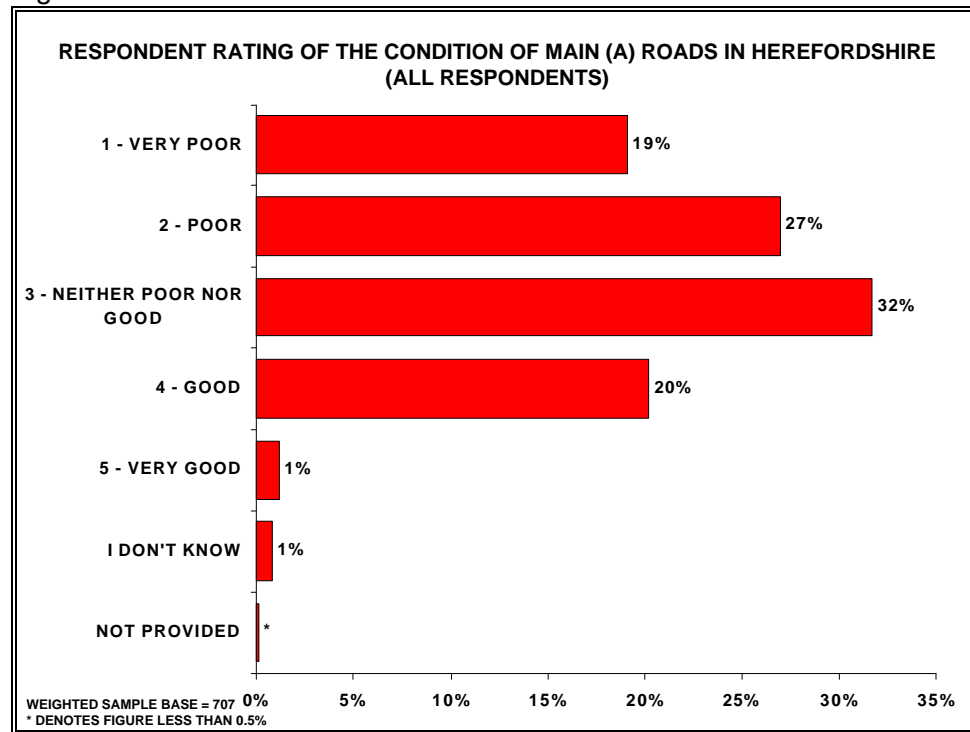
- Most important for respondents overall are road safety & transport issues, the protection of the natural environment and the protection of the Countryside.
- Respondents who have lived in Herefordshire for two years or less are the most likely to rate the protection of the natural environment as important or very important (mean rating of 4.81). Also respondents living in the local area forums of Bromyard and Dinmore are the most likely to feel that this is an important or very important objective compared to respondents living in other local area forums (mean ratings of 4.76 and 4.75 respectively).
- The protection of the county's heritage and the protection of the countryside are aspects that are most likely to receive a high importance rating from respondents who have lived in the county for two years or less (4.59 and 4.78 respectively) and respondents living in Bromyard (4.61 and 4.77 respectively).
- The impact planning applications have on neighbours is most likely to be given a rating of important or very important by respondents who are aged 55-64 years (4.55) and respondents who are living in Golden valley (4.58).

## 5.0 HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

### 5.1 THE CONDITION OF ROADS IN HEREFORDSHIRE

- This section is concerned with respondent perceptions of the condition of the roads in Herefordshire and the level of maintenance and repair provided by Herefordshire County Council for these roads. Respondents were asked to rate the condition of the roads in Herefordshire on a scale of one to five, where one is very poor and five is very good. Respondents were asked to rate their perception of the condition of both the main (A) roads in Herefordshire and also the condition of the other roads (e.g. B roads) in the county.
- The majority of respondents perceive the condition of the main (A) roads to be poor or very poor, as the figure below illustrates.

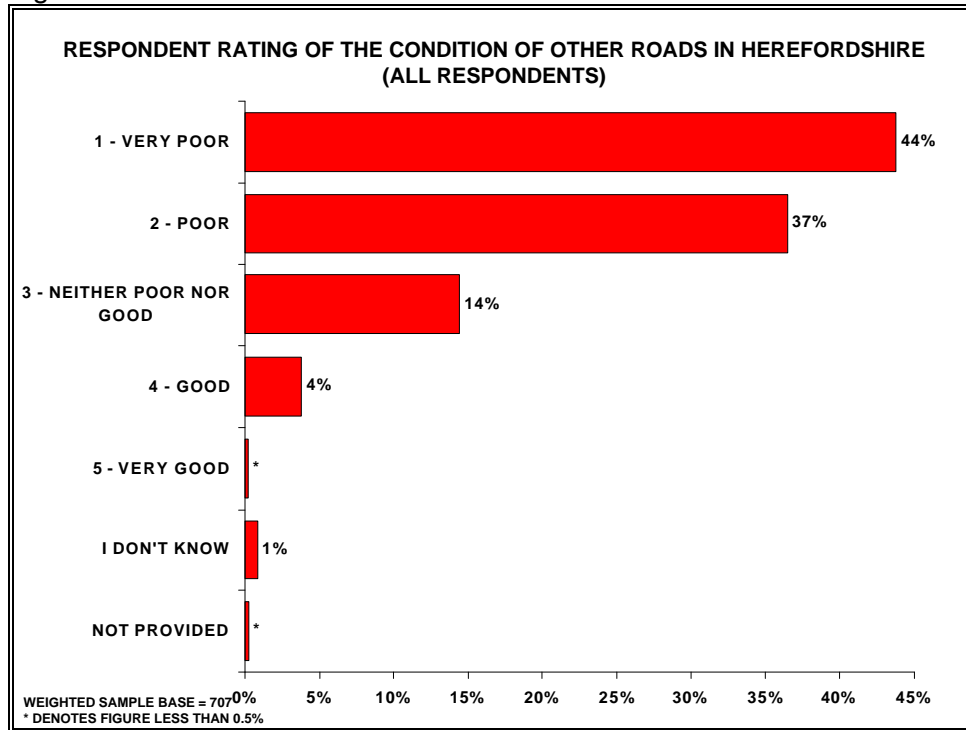
Figure 3



- A further third of respondents feel that these roads are neither poor nor good, and only one in five respondents rate main (A) roads as good or very good. There is little variation in the rating of the condition of the main (A) roads between subgroups, with the exception of respondents resident in Herefordshire for two years or less, 46% of whom perceive the main (A) roads to be good or very good.
- Respondents in Leominster and Southern Herefordshire are the least likely to rate the main (A) roads as being in poor or very poor compared to any other local area forum (32% of respondents in both areas). In comparison, respondents in Ledbury and North West Herefordshire are the most likely to show dissatisfaction with the condition of the main (A) roads (62% and 64% respectively giving a poor or very poor rating).

- The network of minor roads in the county are generally perceived to be in worse condition than the main (A) roads, with less than one in twenty respondents rating these roads as good or very good. The majority of respondents rate the other roads as poor or very poor, with a small proportion stating that these roads are neither poor nor good.

Figure 4



- Respondents who have lived in the county for two years or less are more likely to give the condition of other roads a positive rating (20% gave a rating of good or very good). Whereas respondents resident in Golden Valley are shown to be the most dissatisfied with other roads in Herefordshire (91% gave a rating of poor or very poor).

*Comparison of roads in Herefordshire to those in neighbouring counties*

- To ascertain a better understanding of respondent perceptions about the condition of roads in the county, all respondents were asked to rate the condition of roads in Herefordshire in comparison to the roads in five neighbouring counties, using a five-point rating scale where one is a lot worse and five is a lot better.

Table 6

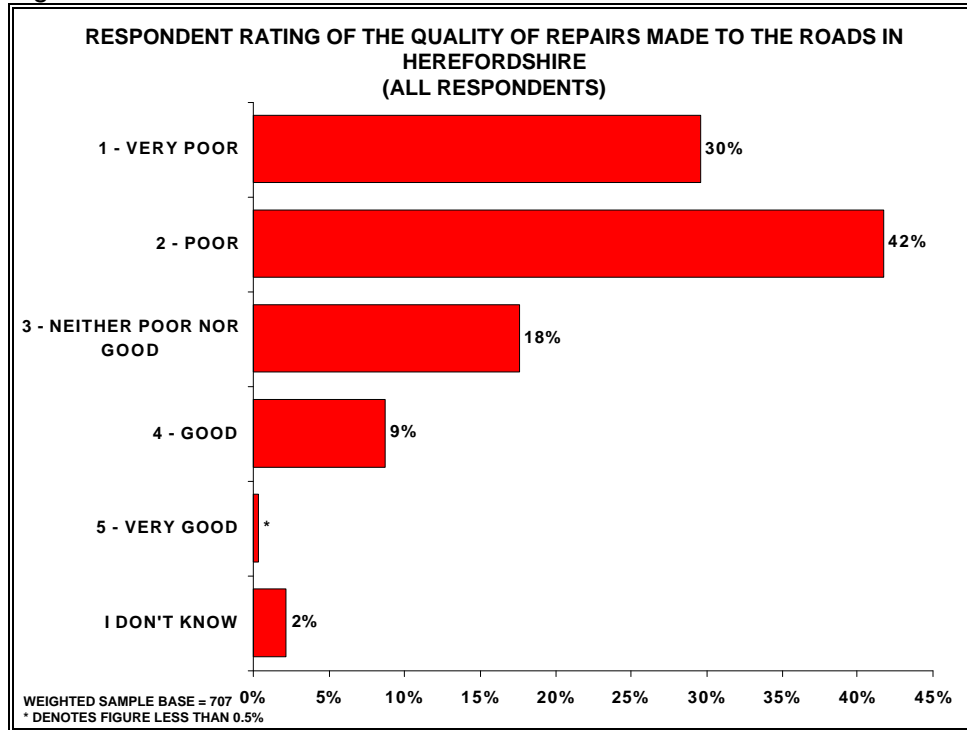
<b>RESPONDENTS RATING OF THE CONDITION OF THE ROADS IN HEREFORDSHIRE COMPARED TO THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTIES (ALL RESPONDENTS)</b>				
	<b>LITTLE OR A LOT BETTER</b>	<b>LITTLE OR A LOT WORSE</b>	<b>MEAN RATING</b>	<b>MEAN RATING SAMPLE BASE</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>		
GLOUCESTERSHIRE	13	35	2.49	483
WORCESTERSHIRE	13	37	2.48	490
SHROPSHIRE	8	26	2.51	351
POWYS	9	27	2.40	348
MONMOUTHSHIRE	11	25	2.56	376

- A large proportion of respondents have responded that they cannot provide ratings for some or all parts of this question and this is likely to be due to these respondents having limited knowledge of the roads in other counties.
- Of the respondents that could and did provide a response, the data shows that respondents are most likely to rate the condition of the roads in Herefordshire as a little or a lot worse when compared to the condition of the roads in Powys and Worcestershire.
- However the mean ratings given by respondents, comparing the condition of the roads in Herefordshire to those in neighbouring counties, all fall below the midpoint of 3.00 indicating respondents generally perceive that the roads in Herefordshire are in a worse condition than the ones in ALL five neighbouring counties.

## **5.2 REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE OF ROADS IN HEREFORDSHIRE**

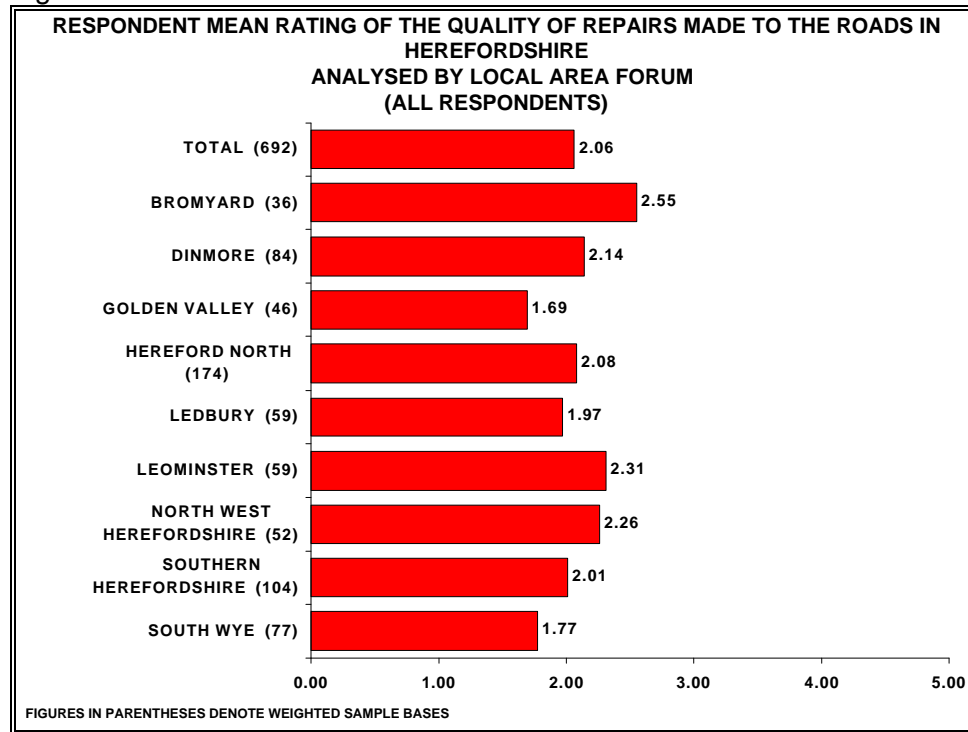
- The majority of respondents regard the quality of the road repairs in Herefordshire as poor or very poor (71%). Less than one in ten respondents rate the repairs as good or very good (9%) with just under one in five respondents perceiving the repairs to the roads as neither poor nor good (18%). The mean scores reveal that female respondents tend to perceive the quality of road repairs in a more positive light than male respondents do (2.15 compared to 1.97 respectively). Also respondents who have been residing in the county for five years or less (2.36), are more likely to perceive the quality of road repairs more positively than respondents who have been residing in the county for more than five years (2.01).

Figure 5



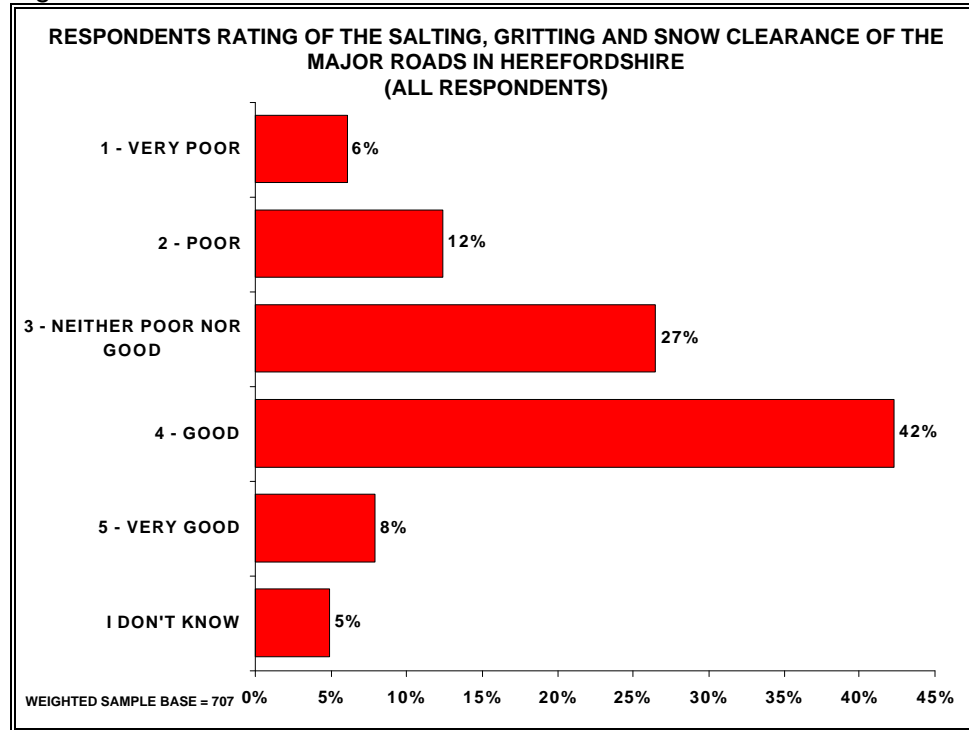
- Once again, further analysis of the mean score data by local area forum indicates that the respondents in Bromyard (2.55) are more likely to give a higher rating than respondents in other Herefordshire area forums, whilst Golden Valley is the local area forum in which respondents are most likely to be dissatisfied with the quality of repairs to the roads in Herefordshire (1.69).

Figure 6



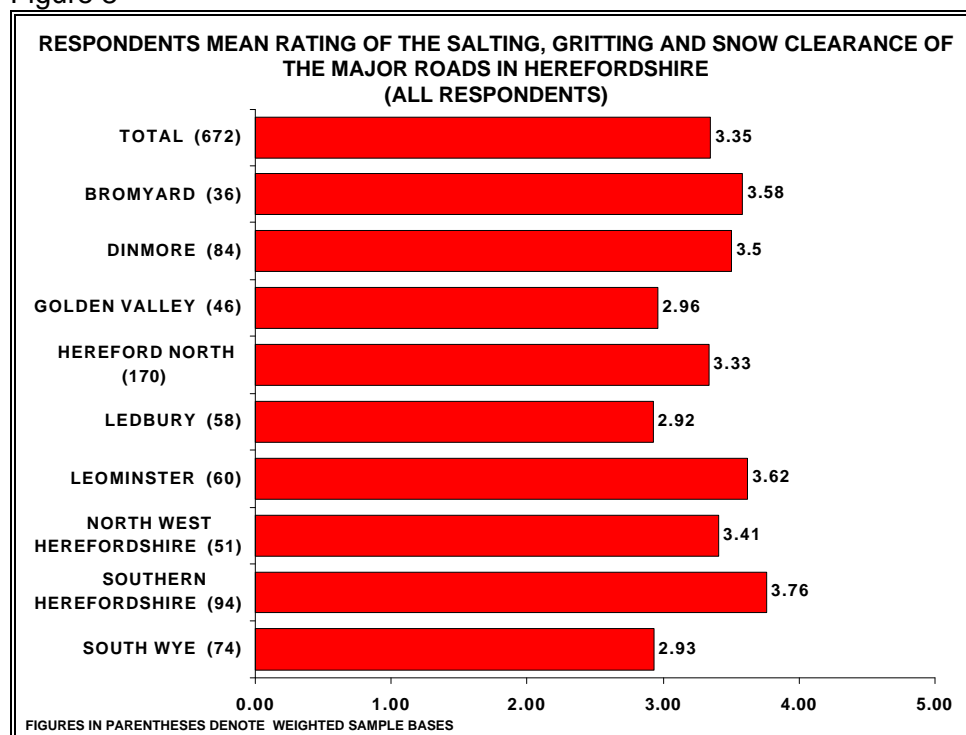
- Using the same five-point scale where one is very poor and five is very good, respondents overall perceptions of the salting, gritting and snow clearance of major roads in Herefordshire is more positive than their perceptions of the quality of repairs to the roads.

Figure 7



- The mean scores show that respondents who have been resident in the county for a shorter period of time (under five years) are generally more likely to perceive this aspect of highway maintenance in a positive light compared to respondents who have been resident in the county for more than five years:
  
- Length of residence                      Mean score
  - ◆ 2 years or less                              3.76
  - ◆ 2-5 years                                      3.65
  - ◆ 5-10 years                                    3.48
  - ◆ more than 10 years                        3.27
  - ◆ (Total mean score =3.35)
  
- Examining the responses by local area forum shows that respondents who rate the salting, gritting and snow clearance of the major roads in Herefordshire most positively are resident in Southern Herefordshire, Leominster and Bromyard. The data also shows that respondents living in Ledbury, South Wye and Golden Valley are the most likely to rate this service negatively.

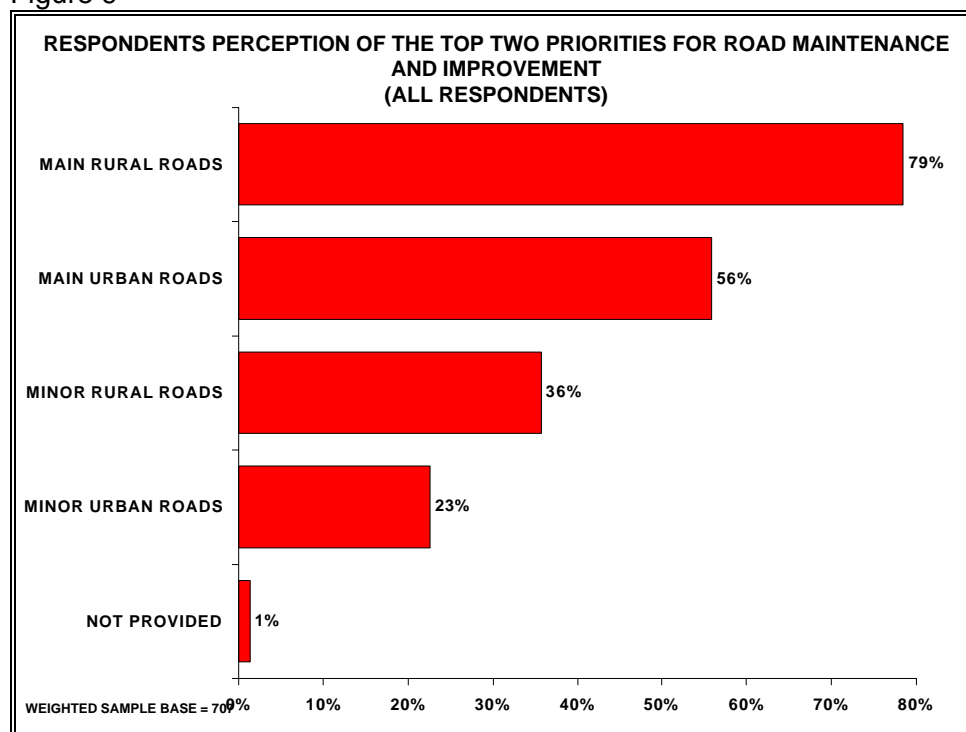
Figure 8



**5.3 FUTURE MAINTENANCE OF ROADS IN HEREFORDSHIRE**

- Respondents were then asked to identify which types of roads should be priority if the Council were to put more resources into maintaining and improving roads in the county. Out of four possible choices, the majority of respondents chose main rural roads and main urban roads.

Figure 9



- The priorities of respondents do vary according to the local area forum they live in. Although the largest proportion of respondents in each local area forum chose main rural roads as a priority, respondents in Golden Valley, and Ledbury are most likely to choose minor rural roads as their second priority (67% and 51% choose minor rural roads compared to the 30% and 40% who chose major urban roads as a priority in these local areas).
- Physical aspects of the highways were listed and respondents asked to rate how important it is for the Council to try and improve the maintenance of each one. Respondents gave their answers based on a five-point scale where one is not at all important and five is very important. All aspects received a rating over the mid point of 3.00, with all but two receiving a mean rating over 4.00, indicating that respondents feel all aspects are important to try and improve and maintain.

Table 7

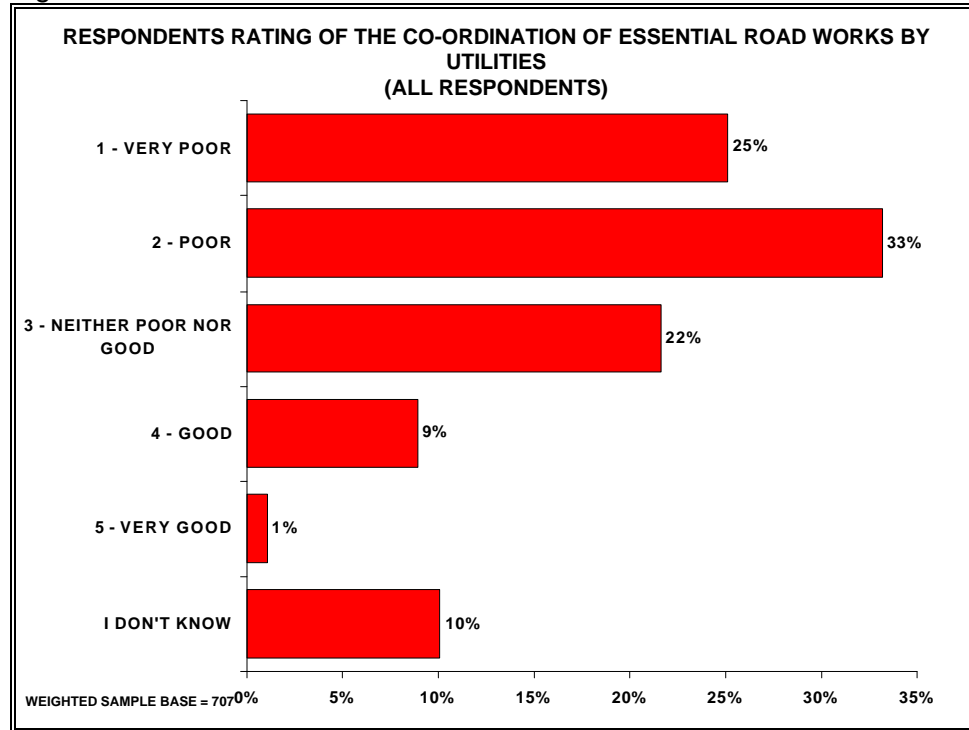
RESPONDENTS RATING OF HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR THE COUNCIL TO IMPROVE SPECIFIED ASPECTS OF THE HIGHWAY (ALL RESPONDENTS)				
	FAIRLY OR VERY IMPORTANT	FAIRLY OR VERY UNIMPORTANT	MEAN RATING	MEAN RATING SAMPLE BASE
	%	%		
ROAD SURFACES	97	1	4.60	700
PAVEMENTS	92	2	4.47	699
SIGNS	74	8	3.91	694
LINES/ROAD MARKINGS	77	6	4.00	695
DRAINAGE	93	1	4.58	699
CYCLE ROUTES	61	14	3.71	678

- The most important aspects in the minds of respondents however, are the maintenance of road surfaces, drainage and pavements. There are no significant variations in levels of importance given to the aspects between subgroups.

*Essential road works by Utility companies*

- Although Utility companies carry out their own road works, the Partnership wanted to gain an understanding of respondent perceptions of how well this work is carried out. Out of five possible scores (one being very poor and five being very good), respondents were most likely to rate the co-ordination of this work as poor or very poor, with just over one in five giving a neutral rating.

Figure 10



- Interestingly, the likelihood of a respondent giving a negative rating for the co-ordination of essential road works by Utility companies generally increases with age, as the following mean ratings show:
- Respondent age            Mean rating
  - ◆ 16-24 years            2.46
  - ◆ 25-34 years            2.31
  - ◆ 34-44 years            2.28
  - ◆ 45-54 years            2.02
  - ◆ 55-64 years            1.97
  - ◆ 65+ years              2.13
  - ◆ (Total mean score 2.20)
- Analysis of the mean scores calculated for the respondents in the nine local area forums show that respondents living in Ledbury, Southern Herefordshire and Leominster are most likely to give a high rating for this work (2.54, 2.43 and 2.40 respectively). In contrast respondents in South Wye are least likely to do so, with a mean rating of 1.81.

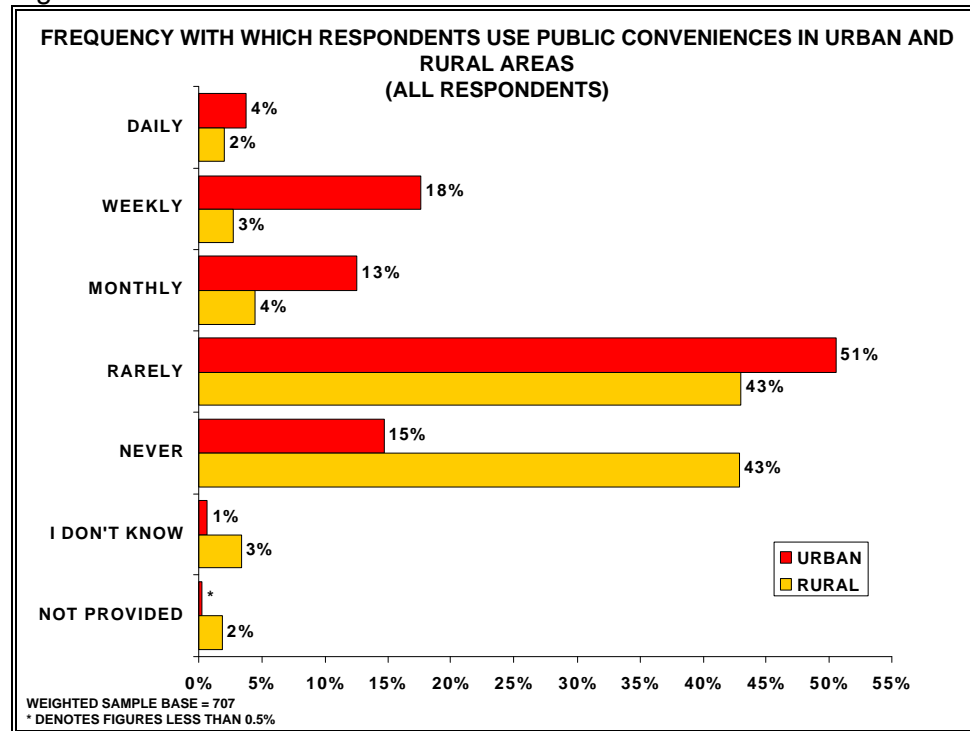
## 6.0 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

- This section examines respondents use of and satisfaction with the public conveniences that Herefordshire Council and other agencies provide in the county.

### 6.1 USE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

- The figure below shows that just under one in twenty respondents state that they use public conveniences on a daily basis in urban areas such as Hereford City and Leominster, and the use of public conveniences in rural areas falls even lower than this figure. The majority of respondents use public conveniences in both urban and rural areas less than once a month (rarely).

Figure 11

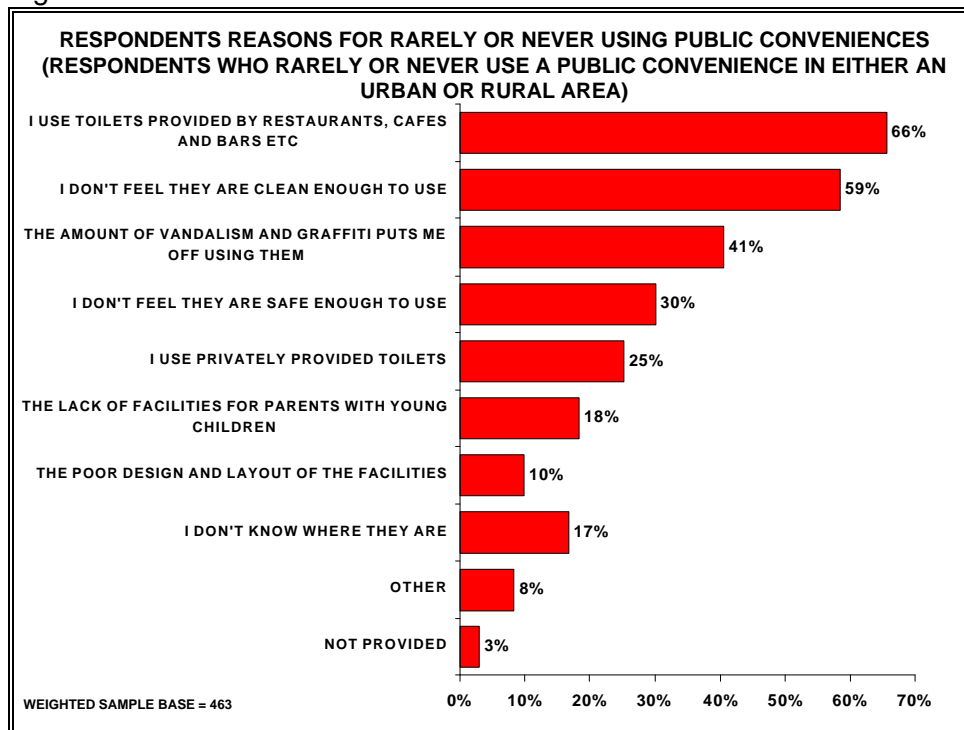


- In urban areas, respondents most likely to use public conveniences at least once a week are respondents resident in Golden Valley (46%) and in Leominster (29%), respondents aged 16-24 years (27%) and over 65 years (28%) and men (27%).
- There is less variation in the use of public conveniences in rural areas, however respondents living in Leominster (16%) and North West Herefordshire (11%) are more likely to use them at least once a week compared to respondents in other subgroups.

**Rare and non use of public conveniences**

- All respondents who either never use the public conveniences in Herefordshire, or use them less than once a month (rarely), were asked to report their reasons why. The most common reason is that they use toilets in restaurants, cafes and bars instead. Other reasons reported by at least two in five respondents are, not feeling that the public conveniences are clean enough to use and the amount of vandalism and graffiti in them.

Figure 12



- Respondents most likely to cite that they feel public conveniences are not safe are respondents in South Wye (52%) and in Hereford North (40%), and those aged 16-24 years (50%).
- Perceptions of the public conveniences not being clean enough to use, are highest amongst 25-34 year olds (77%), respondents living in South Wye (75%), in Leominster (73%) and in Hereford North (71%).

**6.2 FREQUENT USERS OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

- Frequent users (respondents who use public conveniences in urban or rural areas at least once a month), were asked to report the location of the public convenience(s) they use most often and with more than three-quarters citing Hereford City (77%), the public conveniences in this location are by far the most well used in the county. After Hereford City, Leominster (6%) and Ledbury (5%) are the only other locations used by at least one in twenty respondents. Worthy of noting is the fact that frequent users who live in rural areas are almost as likely to use public conveniences in Hereford City as frequent users who live in urban areas (74% and 79% respectively).

- All frequent users were then asked to rate aspects of the public conveniences they use most often on a five-point scale, where one is very poor and five is very good. In this case, as the numbers of frequent users who use public conveniences, other than those in Hereford City are too small to provide statistically reliable responses, the following analysis and discussion is based on all respondents only.

Table 8

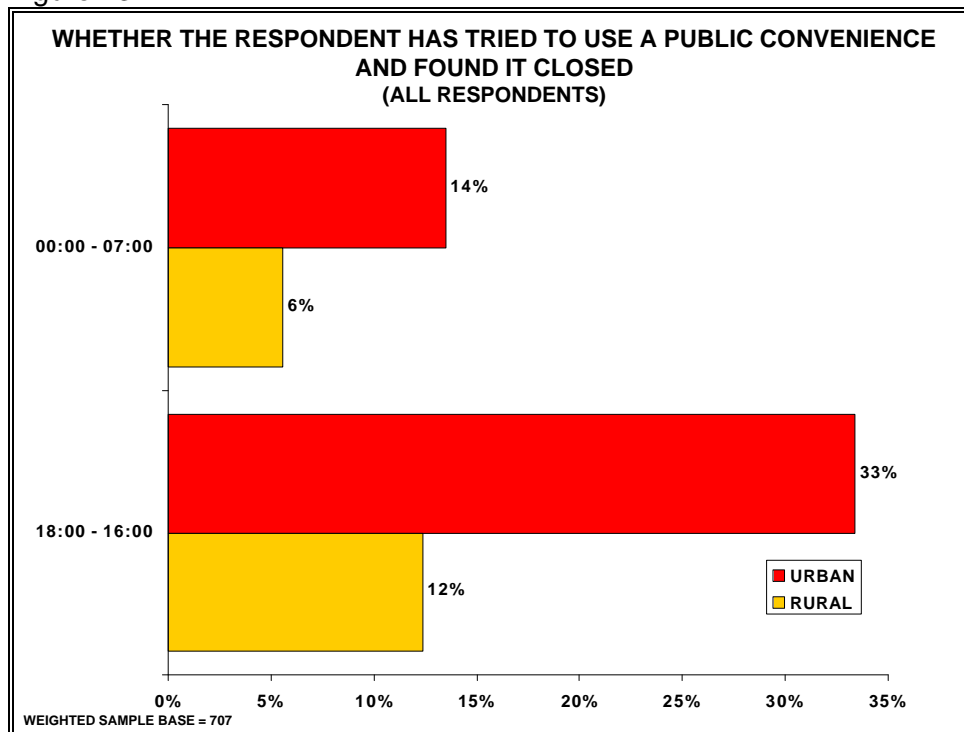
<b>RESPONDENTS RATING OF SPECIFIED ASPECTS OF THE PUBLIC CONVENIENCE THEY USE MOST OFTEN (ALL RESPONDENTS)</b>				
	<b>POOR/VERY POOR</b>	<b>GOOD/VERY GOOD</b>	<b>MEAN RATING</b>	<b>MEAN RATING SAMPLE BASE</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>		
THE LOCATION	19	55	3.40	236
THE OVERALL CLEANLINESS	29	31	3.01	238
THE DESIGN - THE LAYOUT OF THE FACILITY	24	37	3.13	238
THE CONDITION - THE GENERAL STATE OF THE BUILDING	34	30	2.94	237

- As the table above illustrates, three out of four aspects receive a mean rating above the midpoint of 3.00, with the aspect receiving the highest rating being the location of the public convenience. The results indicate however, that the majority of respondents do not perceive the public conveniences they use to be of a high standard, particularly in terms of the cleanliness and the general condition of the buildings.
- Almost two-thirds of frequent users state that they feel safe using public conveniences in Herefordshire (62%). Just under a third state that they do not feel safe (30%) and the remaining 7% are unsure or did not provide a response to this question.

### **6.3 OPENING HOURS AND SIGNPOSTING**

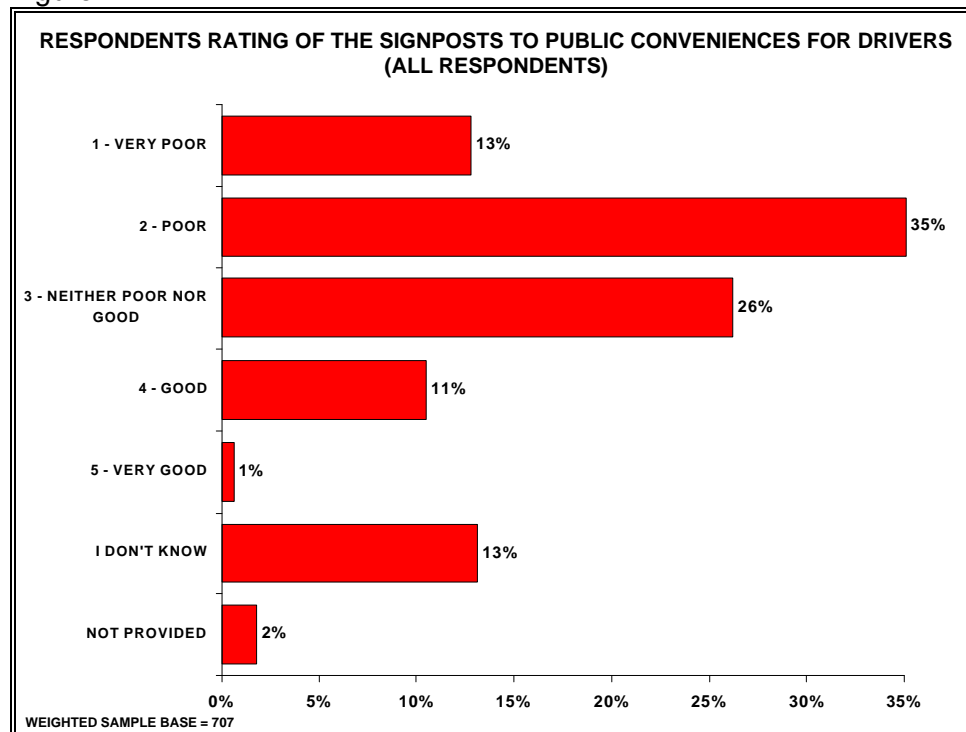
- To explore whether the opening times of the public conveniences in urban and rural areas are adequate, all respondents were asked whether they have ever tried to use a public convenience outside its specified opening times (7am - 6pm in urban areas and 7am - 5pm in rural areas).

Figure 13



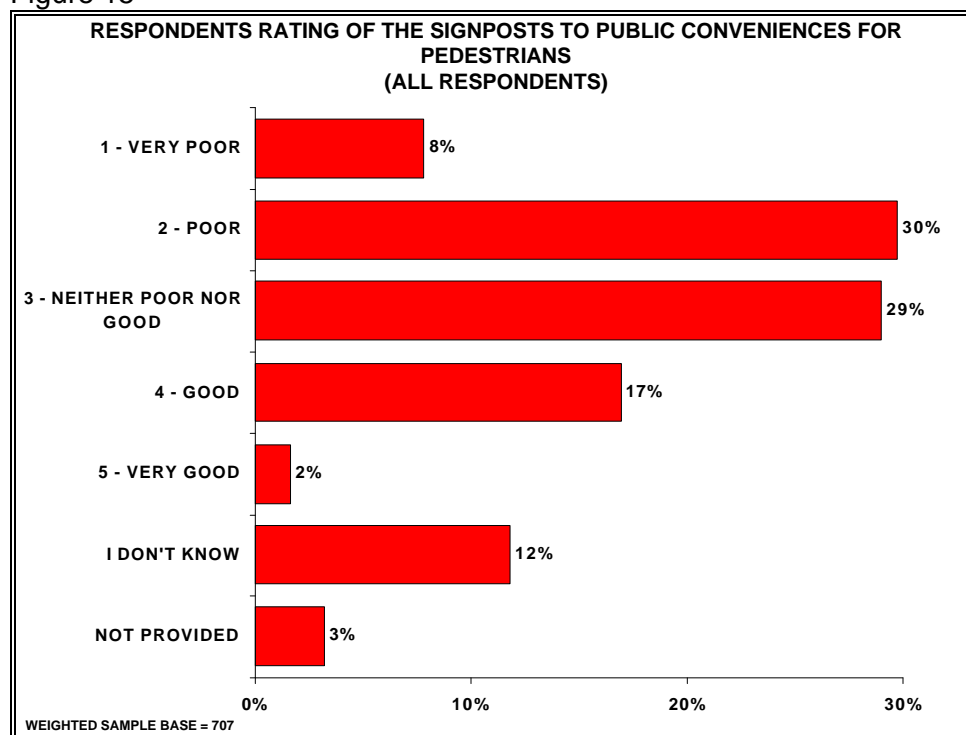
- Between the hours of midnight and 7am, one in seven of all respondents have tried to use a public convenience in an urban area (14%). The proportion who have tried to use them rises to a third of 16-24 year olds (33%), just over a quarter of respondents living in Leominster (27%) and just under a quarter of respondents living in Ledbury (24%).
- In rural areas the proportion of all respondents who have tried to use a public convenience in this time period is just 6%, however this figure rises to one in five respondents who live in Ledbury (20%), about one in six respondents who live in Leominster (17%) and just under one in eight of 16-24 year olds (13%).
- Exactly a third of all respondents have tried to use a public convenience in an urban area between the times of 6pm and midnight (33%). Respondents who are most likely to have tried to use these facilities during this time period are respondents aged 16-24 years (73%), respondents who live in South Wye (44%) and in Ledbury (43%).
- One in eight of all respondents (12%) have tried to use a public convenience in a rural area between 5pm and midnight. Respondents who live in Leominster (27%) and in Ledbury (26%), and respondents aged 16-24 years (20%) are most likely to have tried to use them.
- The majority of all respondents rate the signposting to public conveniences for drivers as poor or very poor. A substantial proportion give a neutral rating stating that they are neither poor nor good, and only one in nine respondents rate the signposting positively enough to give a rating of good or very good.

Figure 14



- Signposting to public conveniences for pedestrians in Herefordshire is perceived to be good or very good by just over a quarter of all respondents, with a similar proportion providing a neutral rating. However as the figure below highlights, almost two in five respondents feel that the signposting for pedestrians is poor or very poor.

Figure 15

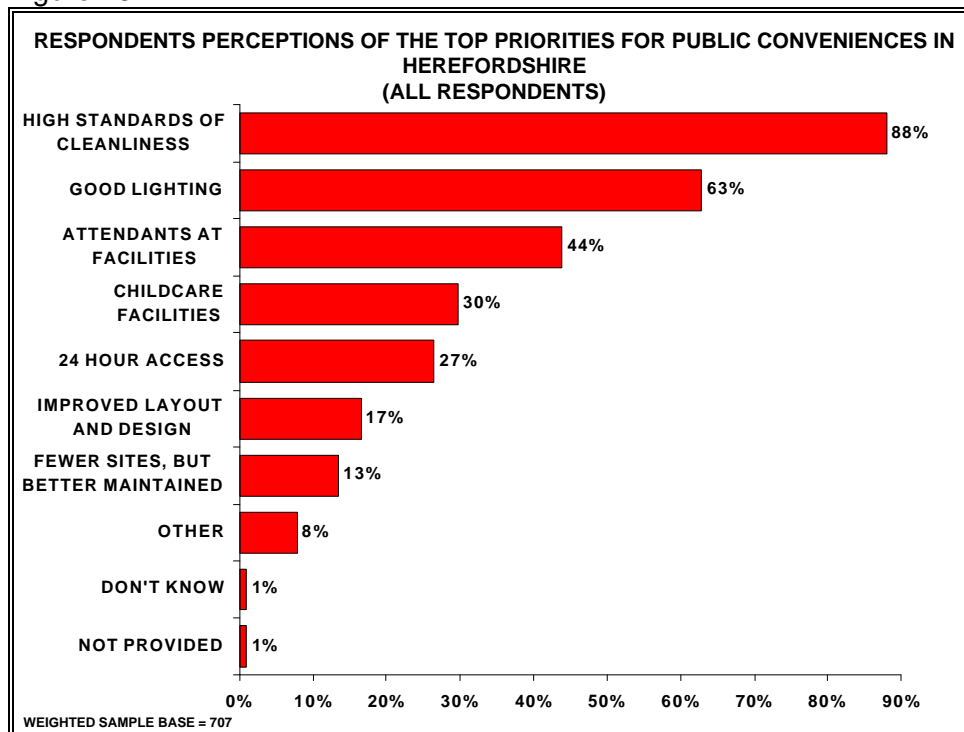


### 6.4 FUTURE MAINTENANCE AND INVESTMENT

#### Top three priorities

- Respondents were asked to indicate from a specified list, which three aspects are in their view, the top priorities for future maintenance and investment in public conveniences in Herefordshire.

Figure 16



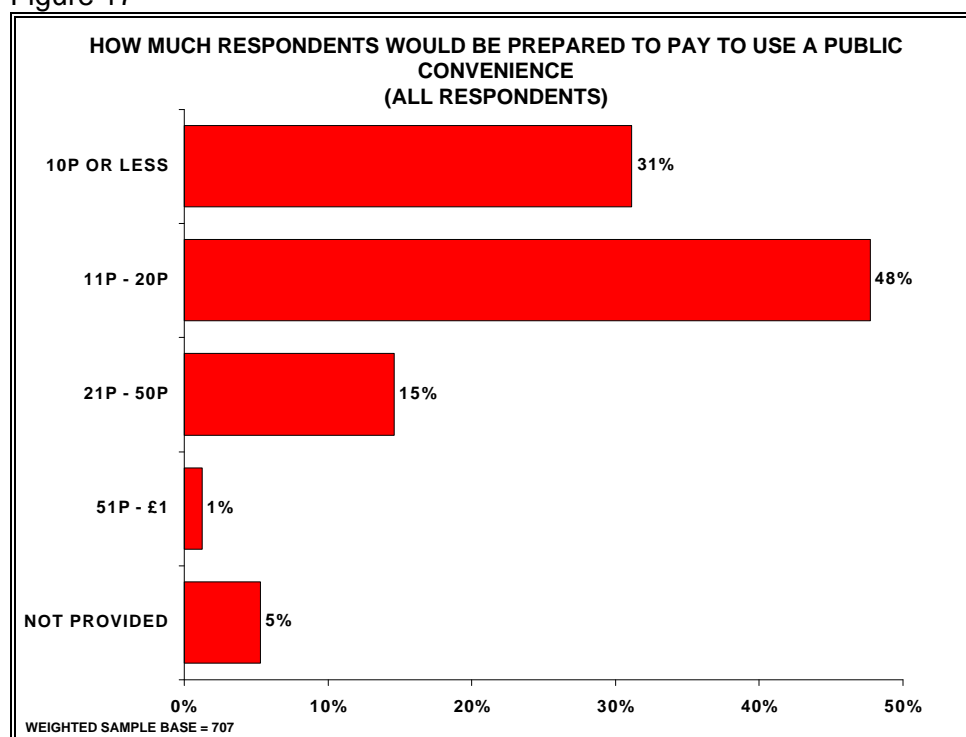
- Perhaps not surprisingly, a high level of cleanliness, mentioned by almost nine in ten of all respondents tops the priority list, followed by good lighting and then attendants at facilities.
- There is a general trend for respondents in older age groups to view good lighting as a higher priority than respondents in younger age groups with 73% of respondents aged over 65 years reporting this aspect as a top three priority, falling with each age group to 51% of respondents aged 25-34 years. Childcare facilities are also more important for particular groups of respondents, eg respondents aged 25-34 years (54%), respondents who have lived in the county for two years or less (47%) and women (35%).
- Reflecting the trend observed for the question regarding attempted use of these facilities outside of current opening hours, respondents aged 16-24 years are the group of respondents most likely to report wanting 24 hour access as a top priority for public conveniences (47%). Respondents who live in Golden Valley (39%) and Leominster (38%) are also more likely than respondents overall to cite 24 hour access to public conveniences as a top priority.

*Willingness to pay for the use of public conveniences*

- Respondents appear to be more willing to pay for the use of public conveniences if they are well maintained at consistently high standards (67%), than if there is an attendant on duty (56%). Just over a quarter of respondents are not prepared to pay to use public conveniences in either proposed situation (26% and 27% respectively).

- Respondents most likely to be willing to pay to use the public conveniences if they are maintained at a high standard are those who live in Bromyard (77%) and Ledbury (75%). Respondents most likely to be willing to pay for the use of public conveniences if they have an attendant on duty are those in Bromyard (65%), in Ledbury (63%) and in North West Herefordshire (63%), respondents aged 55-64 years (63%) and respondents with a limiting condition or disability (62%).
- Respondents cite a cost of between 11p and 20p most often when asked how much they would be prepared to pay for using public conveniences if either they are well maintained and / or an attendant would be on duty. A considerable proportion of respondents feel that a payment no higher than 10p is most acceptable, and just 1% of respondents would be prepared to pay between 51p and £1.

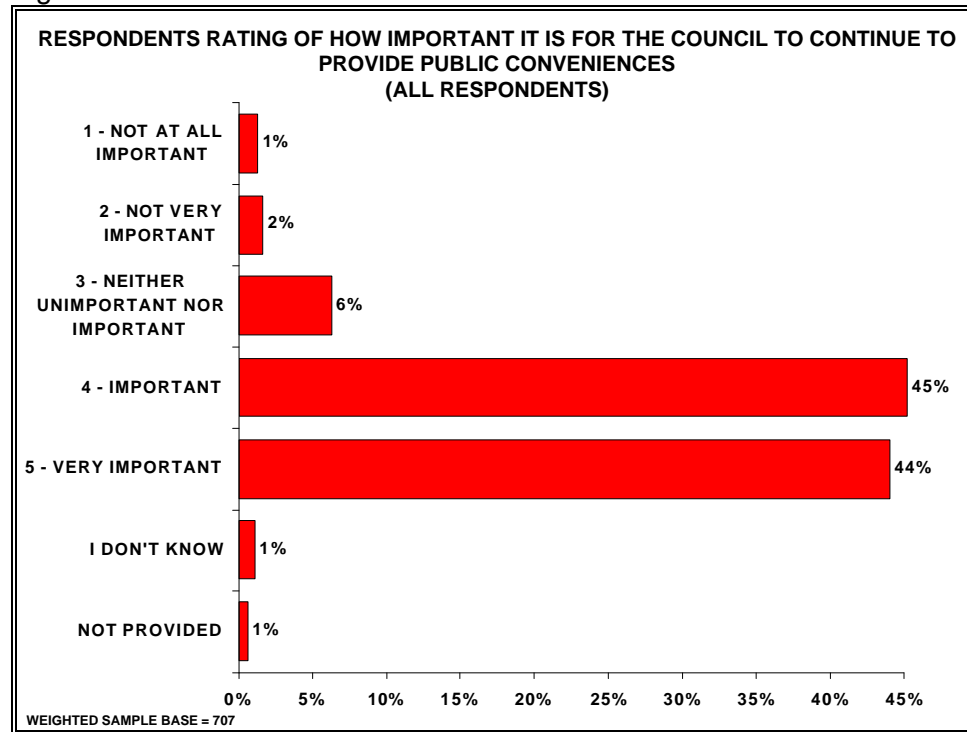
Figure 17



*Future service provided by the Council*

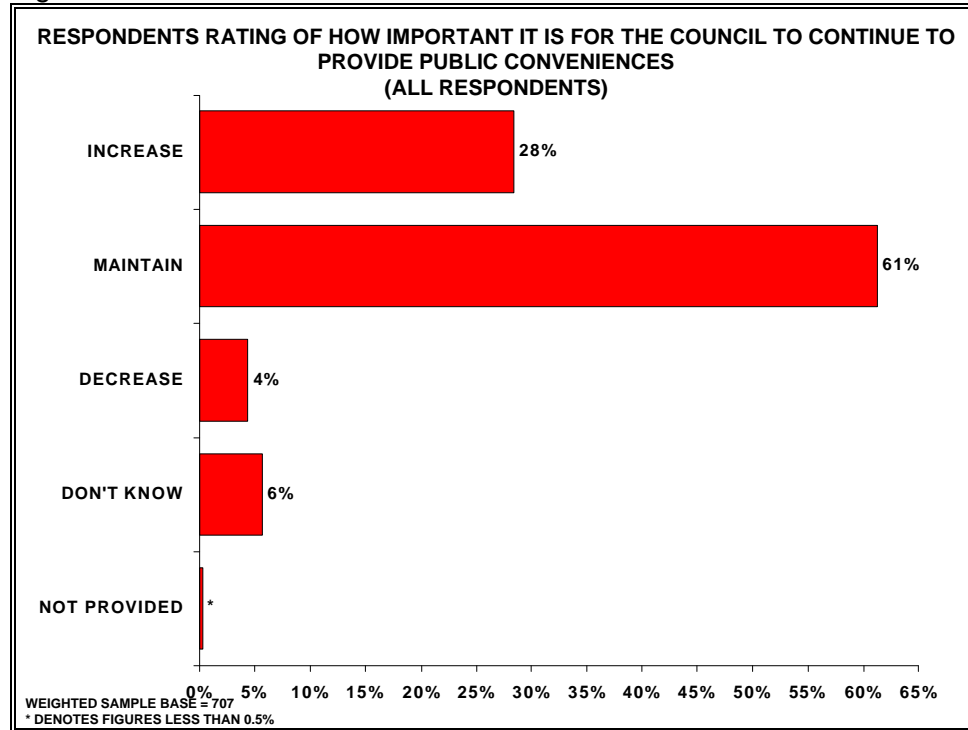
- Respondents were asked to rate the importance for the Council to continue providing public conveniences, using a rating scale where one is not at all important and five is very important.

Figure 18



- The overwhelming majority of all respondents perceive that it is important or very important for the Council to continue providing public conveniences in the county. Across subgroups, this perception remains constant, with all mean scores calculated being above 4.00 (total mean score of 4.31).
- Three in five respondents feel that the authority should maintain the current number of public conveniences in the county, with just over a quarter perceiving a need for an increase in the number currently available to use.

Figure 19



- Respondents in the following areas are more likely than the overall population of respondents to perceive a need for more Council public conveniences; Ledbury (49%), South Wye (44%) and Bromyard (38%).

Figure 20

