



What Matters to You? Corporate Plan Consultation Workshops Autumn 2015

A summary of key findings from the residents, staff and member workshops

FINAL

Prepared by
Corinna Beatson
Policy Officer- Consultation & Equalities

9th October 2015

Contents

Chapter	Pages
1 Background & Methodology	2
2 Newspaper headline visioning exercise	3-4
3 Mock budget setting exercise	5-7
4 Residents Insight	8-10
5 Feedback from attendees	11
6 Conclusion & Recommendations	12

Appendices

None

Document Control

Project title: What Matters to You? Corporate Plan Consultation Workshops

Document type: Final report

Issue	Date	Distribution
Final	9/10/15	Steve Capes
Final	9/10/15	Mike Hayes

1 Background & Methodology

Background

In July 2015 Derbyshire Dales District Council ran a residents survey to ascertain residents' views on what the Council's priorities should be over the next four years. 1,225 people responded, including 1,082 who had been selected at random.

In September 2015 the Council ran a series of six workshops to explore the findings of the residents survey in more depth.

Methodology

Three resident workshops were held across the District- in Ashbourne, Bakewell and Matlock and two staff workshops took place between 15th and 22nd September. A member workshop was also held on 1st October 2015. In total 59 people attended the six workshops.

20 local residents recruited from the Citizens' Panel took part, 11 were male and 9 female, the average age of residents was 63 years.

31 staff took part from services across the Council and 8 Councillors.

The workshops involved three activities:

1. A visioning exercise involving writing a newspaper headline for 2019.
2. A mock budget setting exercise.
3. Discussion around a series of pre-defined questions to gain insight into key services that emerged from the residents survey.

All attendees were asked to complete a feedback survey and were offered refreshments, local residents were able to reclaim their travel expenses.

2. Newspaper headline visioning exercise

Introduction

People were asked to imagine they were in 2019 and to give the headline they would most like to see written about the Derbyshire Dales in a local newspaper. The three most frequently mentioned words from the word cloud generated through the residents survey (Clean, Safe and Thriving) have been used to categorise answers and the following colour coding has been applied to the comments: **Matlock= Red**, **Bakewell= Blue**, **Ashbourne= Green**, **Staff= Black**, **Councillors= Purple** (all headlines are included).

Summary

By far the greatest number of headlines fell under the heading of 'thriving' which suggests this is the area in which aspirations are greatest. The aspects people felt would help achieve a thriving area included: affordable housing, thriving town centres, job creation, tourism and better transport infrastructure. There is a hint that these should not be developed at the expense of the 'attractive' and 'green' natural environment (mentioned in the word cloud and also under the heading 'Natural Environment'). Other themes with more than one headline suggestion are: 'Council Efficiency' (another of the headings in the residents' survey word cloud), 'Leisure Facilities' and 'Communications'.

Results

1. Clean

"**Matlock** voted cleanest town in the Country"
"**Derbyshire Dales** wins best kept environment award"
"**Top** award for our bin men"
"**Ashbourne-** wins national award for cleanliness"
"Thriving market towns- clean streets"
"**Derbyshire Dales** is top Council for clean streets"
"**Parks** award- 12th year 'blooming marvellous'"

2. Thriving

Affordable housing: "**Affordable** housing delivered to meet needs of local young people", "**New** policy on second/holiday homes 10% max", "**Derbyshire Dales** are leaders in affordable housing projects", "**New** retirement village opens", "**Affordable** houses especially for young people", "**New** affordable homes in Peak Park", "**Housing** opportunities for first time buyers", "Highest number of starter homes", "**Number** of affordable homes reaches 1600", "**Crack** down on empty homes- brought back into use", "**Home** swap scheme- large homes for new bungalows for older people", "**More** homes for local people," "**Housing** list drastically reduced", "**Houses** built on Cawdor Quarry," "**New** village in the Dales to solve housing crisis," "**Council** continues to lead the way on affordable housing- bungalows the envy of the Peak Park," "**Plans** accepted for new super village in Peak Park- new homes and vibrant community."

Thriving town centres: "**Improved** town centres with more shops, **No** need to go to Sheffield for your shopping!" "**Thriving** market and town centre in Ashbourne"

"**Matlock** town centre plans approved- new look for Firs Parade with independent retailers and leading fashion store", "**More** high street stores", "**Most** improved towns

and facilities”, “Thriving market towns- award winning markets x2,” “Bakewell Road development completed.”

Jobs creation: “Jobs surplus- Dales has jobs for all”, “10,000 new jobs this year!”, “A variety of opportunities”, “Prosperous local economy” “Jobs, jobs, jobs – galore!” “New job offers from new business”, “Dales businesses are booming- increased investment and SMEs”, “Another 300 jobs created at Ashbourne Business Park”, “Better paid jobs, jobs, jobs.” “1,000 new jobs created- thanks to business support team”

Tourism: “Tourism boom expected.” “4 star hotel celebrates second anniversary with record numbers!” “Matlock- an attractive tourist area re-developed”, “Derbyshire Dales tops poll in being a good place to live and holiday- a holiday hot spot” “More cycling tours- Tour of Britain re-visits Matlock” “Record number of visitors to Dales,” “Tourism award in recognition of special events,” “Visitor numbers at all-time high,” “Phenomenal profits from Matlock Bath illuminations,” “Cycle link brings new wave of tourism to the District”

Better transport infrastructure: “Improved transport links” “Ashbourne has improved connectivity through rail and bus links”, “Ashbourne bypass opens at last”, “Rail link from Matlock to London direct, newer rail links for Matlock and Bakewell”

Top place to live: “Ashbourne voted best place to live” “Derbyshire Dales voted top place to live in UK (employment, quality of homes and unique natural beauty) x2” “Thriving, healthy and vibrant communities”

Natural Environment: “Wildlife sites designated. More walking trails to be marked out” “Training centre opens with eco-farming course”

3. Safe

“Street safety objectives achieved”

“Lowest crime rates ever”

4. Other

Efficient: “Council holds costs of providing services” “Council tax freeze for 10th year running”, “Services remain provided locally (through Council efficiency, effectiveness, private sector learning, income and profits generated)”, “Council services delivered on budget with high customer satisfaction”, “Council Tax frozen for 10th year running – front services continue unaffected,”

Leisure facilities: “Council opens internet cafes for young people”, “Council/town partnership opens state of the art club house including a cinema”, “Increased leisure opportunities (Cinemas, bowling alleys),” “Council wins prize for cycling and walking initiatives.”

Communications: “Fastest broadband speeds available”, “Dales leads the country in broadband speed, fibre optic and mobile phone coverage”

“Services for young people revitalised”

“Most active District in Britain”

“Derbyshire Dale is the healthiest District in England”

“Derbyshire Dales in UK top 10 for recycling”

“Cawdor quarry developed!”

“Council reforms secure long term investment”

“Local plan targets achieved- annual growth met”

“Council spending explained”

“Solar panels now being used on all Council buildings”

3. Mock budget setting exercise

Introduction

Residents, staff and members were asked to work in groups and spend the Council budget according to their priorities across a range of service areas (which reflected the services used in the residents survey).

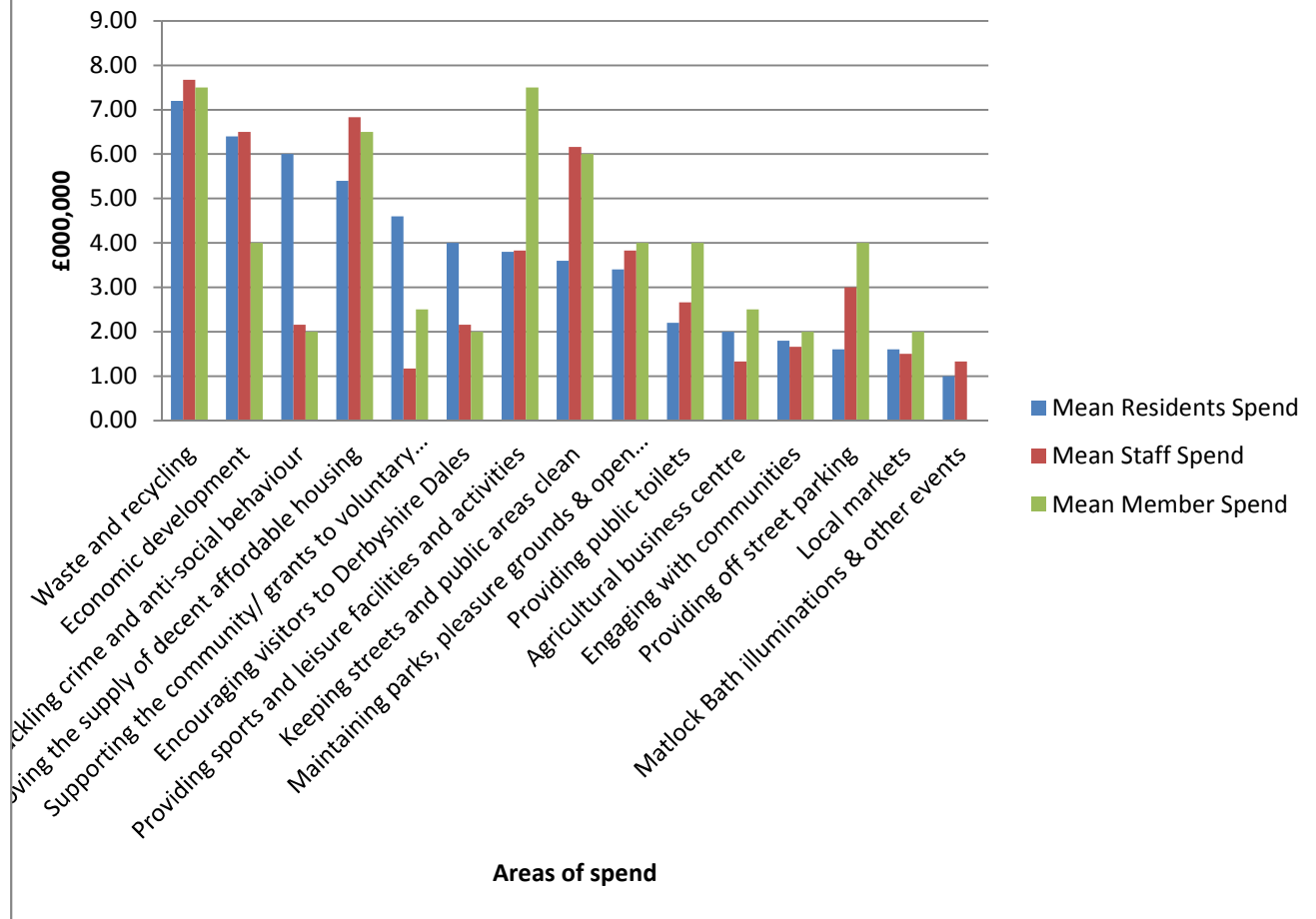
Summary of results

The table below and chart that follows show the average resident spend across the service areas from lowest to highest as compared to the average staff and member spend. Waste and recycling services are viewed as most important, economic development also ranks in the top 3 for residents and staff, but ranks 6th for Councillors and affordable housing ranks in the top 4 areas of spend for all three groups, a part from that there are some big differences in spend between groups.

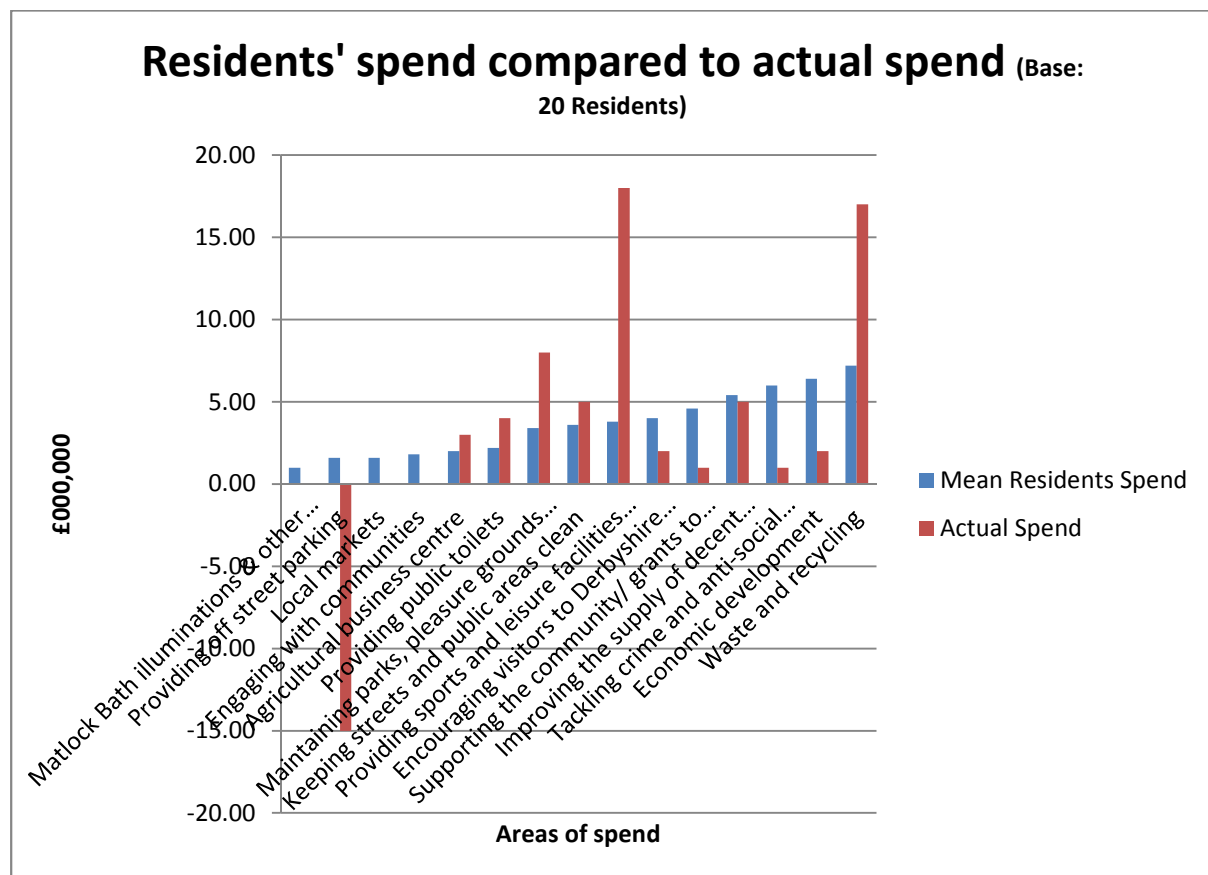
Service	Rank for Residents spend	Rank for Staff spend	Rank for Member spend
Waste & recycling	1	1	1
Economic development	2	3	6
Tackling crime & anti-social behaviour	3	8	11
Improving the supply of decent affordable housing	4	2	3
Supporting the community/ grants to voluntary groups	5	14	9

Residents' spend compared to staff and member spend

(Base: 20 Residents, 31 Staff, 8 Members)



Looking at the order of priority for residents spend compared to actual spend in the chart that follows, there are some noticeable differences. In particular 'providing sports and leisure facilities' which is the highest area of Council spending outside the statutory services, but which ranks 7th for residents. Resident participants felt spending on 'economic development' should be higher, on average they spent the second highest amount on this whereas in terms of actual Council spend it ranks joint 8th. Residents spend was also higher on supporting community groups than it actually is.



It is also worth noting that at the resident workshops a number of residents felt that the 'statutory services' should be examined to see if cost savings could be made there.

4. Residents' Insight

Introduction

Following the residents survey the Council's Senior Management Team met to discuss the results and posed a range of questions they wanted answers to through the staff and resident workshops- to add depth and detail to the statistics. The results (below) were presented to members at the member workshop and Councillors made a number of additional suggestions. In addition to all these comments, a large number of comments were generated through the residents survey and these are reported separately.

Summary of results

Thriving Town Centres: Bakewell and Hathersage centres were highlighted as already doing well. The main problems identified with Matlock and Ashbourne were: 'too many charity shops' and 'not enough product range' (especially clothing and hardware shops in Matlock), the lack of shops open on a Sunday in Ashbourne is a limiting factor.

Suggested improvements to town centres included:

- Making sure people live near town centres (minimise holiday and second homes),
- Encourage people to shop locally,
- Facilitate and encourage entrepreneurship e.g. via voluntary agencies and fee free market stalls for a year,
- Support and promote local markets selling local produce,
- Encourage a variety of quality shops,
- Improve shop facades,
- Ensure car parks are well signposted,
- Encourage community transport to bring residents into town,
- Keep a central focal point (remove car parking from Ashbourne market area).

To encourage visitors, ensure a good supply of:

Local produce/ products including food and drink, markets, accommodation (not holiday cottages), events and leisure activities e.g. in local parks, and ensure there is better marketing of existing attractions e.g. antiques shops on Dale Road.

Additional suggestions from Members:

- Enhance public realm (trees, paving).
- Hold Sunday farmers markets and other initiatives to encourage other traders to open on Sundays.
- To minimise un let shops have a Council tax discount for non-charity shop lets.
- Promote parks and leisure centres to encourage tourists.
- Develop the market area in Matlock into a multi use facility (market hall, winter garden including performance space).

Car Parking

The residents' parking scheme was generally felt to work well and respondents wanted to keep it. It was noted that after 11am residents leave and are replaced by visitors. There was a suggestion that the scheme should start from 3pm

The following suggestions were made in relation to car parking:

- More car parks needed with better signage.
- Consider allowing free parking for big events.
- Allow parking charges to be reclaimed at Leisure Centres.
- Consider making parking free on Sundays to encourage trading.
- Consider a park and ride for Matlock in peak season.

Additional suggestions from Members:

- Continue with residents parking permits
- Re-consider charges e.g. free parking for 30-45mins, first 1-2 hours cheap and a big increase for long stay, higher charges in town centres and compared to rural areas.
- Liaise with Derbyshire County Council to restrict on-street parking.

Keeping streets and public areas clean and attractive

"Yes, we want to keep it clean" (Ashbourne resident)

The general view is that town centres are clean but rural streets are not so. There were suggestions for encouraging schemes for volunteers to help clean streets (Tim LETS scheme in Ashbourne).

Some people felt more and better located litter bins are needed, and more education to prevent litter being dropped.

There was a suggestion that Council planting schemes should encourage wildlife.

Additional suggestions from Members:

- Encourage Parish Councils to precept and undertake street cleaning.
- Ensure approaches to the District and town centres are clean (more inspections).
- Take more enforcement action against littering.
- Ensure there are sufficient dog bins.
- Community education- work through schools.

Tackling crime and anti- social behaviour

"It is safe and we want to keep it that way" (Matlock resident)

The issue is that people want to maintain the low level of crime and would be reassured by a more visible police presence. There were suggestions that the Council could publicise more good news about low crime rates.

Additional suggestions from Members:

- Facilitate better awareness of actual crime levels as the District is safe.

Public toilets

"Better not to charge and give a positive image of the area" (Matlock resident)

There was also the opinion that toilets are needed in the rural villages for visitors.

Additional suggestions from Members:

- Consider attendants and extended opening hours at larger facilities, and charge to recover costs.
- Offer incentives to encourage local groups/ parish councils to take over facilities.
- Consider eco-toilets in rural areas.

Creating local employment and business opportunities

“Provide/ encourage good quality apprenticeships”. (Ashbourne resident)

“Ensure there are a range of jobs- to keep a range of people living locally”
(Ashbourne resident)

Other suggestions for the type of business people wanted were: More industrial estates with small scale manufacturing/ high tech businesses and better use existing sites e.g. Riverside.

High paid and high skilled.

Retail park, independent/ artisan business, good transport links to jobs elsewhere

Additional suggestions from Members:

- Provide business hubs with a range of facilities, vacant sites for inward investment and training and enterprise centres.
- Work with businesses in Derby and Nottingham to encourage them to relocate here.

Affordable Housing

Participants at the workshops considered affordable housing to be: something less than £100k, joint ownership schemes, right to buy, Council housing, regulation of quality and rent levels in private rented sector. “What local people can afford- linked to local incomes” (Matlock resident)

Affordable housing was felt to be something needed mainly by young people (18-30) but a bigger range of alternative housing (smaller and more accessible) is needed for older people too.

Additional comments from Members:

- Definition should include both purchase and rental costs. The focus should be on up to 30 year olds. More bungalows are required to release larger family homes into the market.

Views on Council Tax

Views were mixed. Almost no one would be prepared to pay more for the same service but may pay more for improved services. However, those present felt uncomfortable about making a decision on Council Tax without more information and more representation from different sectors of local society.

Comments from Members:

- A minimal increase in Council Tax may need to be considered - to cover a funding gap. There must be clear explanation of what the funding is for and which services will be improved.

5. Feedback from attendees

59 people took part in the residents, staff and member workshops. 45 people (83%) provided feedback and this has been summarised below.

Satisfaction with all aspects of the workshops was high, with them all scoring between 4.6 and 4.8 out of a maximum of 5. The highest score was for the interesting content.

	Score (1 is poor, 5 is excellent)
Length of the event	4.5
The content was interesting	4.8
I had enough chance to express my views	4.6
We listened to your views	4.7
The event overall	4.7

Opinion of the event overall

All but one of the comments received from the 45 participants were positive with comments like: “Very interesting, enjoyed it”, “Very well organised and informative”, “Good format, interesting and nice to be asked our opinion”, “Very good- very well facilitated – learnt a lot and felt as if own views would be taken seriously”, “Excellent”, and “Worthwhile”.

Specific comments for future improvements

A few suggestions were received regarding how similar future events could be improved:

Staff workshops

- Any similar future events should be longer (half an hour to an hour).
- Consider emailing the budget exercise to staff for those that wish to comment further.
- If future events are held, to help with office cover and being able to take lunch, consider holding these outside the lunchtime period - before or after 12-2pm.
- Hold more events like this to enable staff the opportunity to put their thoughts and opinions forward and become more involved.

Resident workshops

- The hearing loop system needs to be available for use.
- Even greater transparency would be welcomed.
- A wider cross-section of participants should be encouraged.
- Consider starting resident events later (e.g. at 6.15pm).

Would you recommend attending one of these events to others?

Everyone who answered this question said they would recommend attending the event to other people.

Yes: 100% (44 people) No: 0%

6. Conclusion & Recommendations

Conclusions

These workshops have been very well received by residents, staff and Councillors alike. They seem to indicate there should be one improvement priority- thriving town centres and two maintenance priorities- clean and safe. However, the workshop results are a little at odds with the residents survey in that the need to keep the area clean and attractive and to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour did not emerge as such big issues as the need to create thriving town centres. It should be borne in mind that far fewer people participated in the workshops (59 in total) compared to 1,225 from the survey, so more weight should be attached to priorities in the resident survey and the workshops used to develop insight into areas and ideas for aspects of services to develop further. As a result six recommendations have been made below.

Recommendations

1. Use the results from the Corporate Plan workshops together with those from the resident survey to help shape the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan. Ensure the reports containing the results are made available to members, staff and the public.
2. Consider working with local residents across all age groups and other stakeholders to generate a town by town plan for creating a thriving local community and covering the areas identified through these workshops (including a focus on car parking). This could be started through the local plan process.
3. Maintain a high level of publicity of positive news stories around crime and anti-social behaviour.
4. Ask the Community Safety Partnership to investigate information on the perception of crime, to identify any issues of concern to residents and how to tackle these and alleviate their concerns.
5. Conduct a regular resident satisfaction survey (every 2 years) into street scene services, as the last survey on satisfaction was conducted in 2011. This will help identify any areas of concern and will assist with performance monitoring.
6. It is recommended that Councillors and staff continue to be invited to take part in workshop style activities where major policies/ strategies involving all service areas need to be developed. If this takes place it is recommended that wider publicity and other strategies are used to encourage better representation across demographic groups in the community and service areas in the Council. The positive comments made in the feedback could be used in the publicity for future events. The suggested improvements listed section 5 should also be considered for future events.