

mobilise

One Haverhill – Neighbourhood Community Budget
Community Engagement
Insight Report
(Executive Summary)

A Report by Mobilise Public Ltd in partnership with
The Campaign Company



October 2012

“I don’t think they think about it collectively do they. I mean they turn the lights off and that saves the Council money but it actually costs the Police more money. They don’t care because they are saving themselves money. I think if they were to get married and join hands, and all work together they might all save money.”

Michelle, Haverhill Resident

**ONE
HAVERHILL**



1 Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 Mobilise and The Campaign Company were commissioned by Haverhill Town Council on behalf of ONE Haverhill to undertake large scale engagement of local residents as part of the Neighbourhood Community Budget process. The purpose of this engagement was to understand residents' experiences within the themes Services for Young People and the Physical Environment, and subsequently to derive insight into priorities, underlying causes of dissatisfaction, views on potential solutions and willingness to become involved.

Activity Undertaken

- 1.2 We have delivered intensive engagement activity over the summer and into early autumn. This can be summarised as follows:
- Undertook 524 surveys through face-to-face and electronic methods
 - Held Videoqube vox-pops sessions in the town centre and at events
 - Held two interactive sessions with Havebury Tenants Forum and the Safer Neighbourhoods Forum to validate and prioritise emerging survey findings
 - Undertook 3 focus group sessions with local residents, selected through the survey and segmented by age (16-24; 25-44; 45-64)
 - Delivered the Young People's Game at Samuel Ward Academy involving 48 young people working in teams to decide on interventions and priorities for Haverhill
- 1.3 At the outset we identified commuters, and migrant communities as being hard-to-reach in the context of this project. The project design was successful in targeting these groups.

General Satisfaction & Involvement

- 1.4 Residents are generally satisfied with Haverhill as a place to live, with almost three-quarters expressing a high level of satisfaction. There is also a high propensity to get involved with just over half of those surveyed saying they would get involved in local services if they felt they could improve them.

Services for Young People

- 1.5 Satisfaction with schools and colleges is high, and most are satisfied with services that help young people to lead a healthy life. Satisfaction was lower in the following areas:
- Supporting young people into training, apprenticeships and jobs
 - Preventing young people engaging in ASB and crime
 - Activities for young people
 - Support for young people with special needs

Supporting young people into training, apprenticeships and jobs

- 1.6 With 36.3% of respondents scoring low, this was the area within services for young people where satisfaction was lowest. The more in depth work suggested that within schools and academies, career guidance was thought to be good only if for those on the academic route, with less focus and support where this isn't the case. The encouragement to get as many children as possible into higher education seems to be having a negative side effective of devaluing other routes. Outside of school, Jobcentre Plus is perceived poorly, both in terms of the experience of the centre itself and the support provided in getting work. However support outside of school generally was seen as poor and knowledge of pathways into apprenticeship and training schemes as hard to come by. The apprenticeship bus, On Track and the LEAP Centre in West Suffolk College were seen as helpful resources.
- 1.7 There was a strong consistency across the age groups about the underlying causes of problems (rather than the service responses). Attitudes towards 'menial' work was a recurring theme as was the disincentivisation within the welfare system (why work if equally or better off on benefits). Perhaps surprisingly it was felt that there were jobs available but that there was often a skills or aspiration mismatch, where the jobs available were either out of reach (management jobs requiring higher level qualifications) or too lowly or unskilled and not meeting the aspirations of young people. There was also an issue of transport costs when seeking to work outside of Haverhill.
- 1.8 Inside of schools and academies residents believed there needed to be more focused support for non-academic careers guidance, more closely linked with apprenticeships and job opportunities. Outside of school it was felt that young people needed support that was more attuned to their needs, and part of a wider youth offer with people who could act more as mentors.

Preventing young people engaging in ASB and crime; and Activities for young people

- 1.9 We have chosen to bring these two categories together because in residents' minds they are two sides of the same coin. Indeed these issues scored very similarly with 29.3% and 29.68% of respondents respectively providing scores representing dissatisfaction in the survey. Our insight works suggests that residents recognise that the issue of ASB and crime is not as bad as in other areas, and even in Haverhill its extent depends upon where you live, with some areas worse than other. Parts of the town centre could be badly affected in the evening, and when talking about schools some residents mentioned student behaviour when leaving school.
- 1.10 Again similar narratives developed across the 3 focus groups when looking at underlying causes. Some people perceived that the Police were unable and/or unwilling to address low-level ASB issues and should intervene and generally engage more with young people. But almost all considered the lack of facilities for young people to be the significant issue. There is a collective memory of more, open access and low or no cost activities being available for young people even just a few years ago.

- 1.11 Unsurprisingly therefore participants focused on the provision of more facilities and activities for young people. This would include the re-establishment of a place (some people felt this should be 'places' for territorial reasons) where young people could hang out. Some made the link across to the need for a central place to go where the provision of employment and mentoring support is available as a part of the overall service. It was felt that it was important that young people take the lead in this with the support of agencies, but with a large focus on volunteering and older young people being provided with the training and support to provide younger ones with activities and clubs.

Support for young people with special needs

- 1.12 Special needs came out clearly as another issue for local residents, with 24.1% of residents who feel local services don't work well. Survey and insight work suggests problems with assessment, and only limited local provision around learning disabilities. Other needs require travel to 'Bury or beyond', and this also has an impact on the social needs of these young people as opportunities are generally linked geographically with facilities.
- 1.13 One person in the focus groups suggested local provision was soon to improve with the opening of two specialist facilities in the town. It was also mentioned that there were parents involved in support groups locally and these could provide a vehicle for improving opportunities to socialise.

Physical Environment

- 1.14 Here satisfaction levels are generally high, with many saying they are satisfied with grass verges & trees, litter and refuse, and the general appearance of Haverhill. Respondents particularly liked this year's flowers and bunting and wish they could have it every year. Three areas of dissatisfaction did emerge however:
- Quality of roads and pavements
 - Switching off of street lighting at night
 - Maintenance of parks and open spaces

Quality of roads and pavements

- 1.15 47.24% of survey respondents provided scores representing dissatisfaction. Insight work suggests that the issue lies not in the town centre or on major roads, but in the side roads and residential areas. In more extreme cases it was suggested that this is causing damage to cars. Often pavements are uneven, making the pushing of buggies and life for wheel chair users more difficult.
- 1.16 Some have reported difficulty in reporting such issues, especially where ownership between organisations is in dispute. However a further problem is the response. There is a strong perception that reporting is not taken seriously and makes no difference. Pot holes appear and are either left for a considerable time (even after reporting) or poorly repaired only to

appear again. If, as services suggest, the 'poor repair' is an emergency fix to be followed by a more permanent solution, then this is not being communicated to residents.

- 1.17 A single place to report issues was seen as helpful but only if it actually got things done. There was also a suggestion of linking road and pavement maintenance to that of providing employment and training opportunities for young people.

Switching off street lighting at night

- 1.18 This was not an area covered in the survey design but it emerged strongly as a touch point issue with residents. There are strong concerns regarding its potential impact on safety (shift workers starting/returning in the dark and people returning after a drink), anti-social behaviour and crime (wheelie bins set on fire and garages being broken into) and damage (wing mirrors being smashed off cars). It is felt that these concerns, and the costs associated with them, override any savings that might accrue. Suggestions to improve the situation include switching off every other light, using LED/more energy efficient lights, and varying switch off time depending on the day (some days will have more people out at night).

Maintenance of parks and open spaces

- 1.19 Initially within the survey, respondents had indicated they were generally satisfied with parks and open spaces, but when surveying at the Rec it became clear that there were concerns regarding maintenance, litter and drug litter. Through the insight work it became clear East Town and New Pond parks are highly thought of, but other parks seem to have suffered from a lack of maintenance over the years and are in a cycle of decline as people care less for them.
- 1.20 The prevailing view was that improving the range and quality equipment & facilities would help increase people using the parks which would help prevent abuse when underused. Gating parks so they can be locked at night would also prevent misuse. Residents pointed to the success of where there are wardens both for maintaining the parks but also in stimulating activity and engaging young people in appropriate uses. It was also suggested by residents that there is a role for volunteers having a greater input in managing and wardening of parks so long as they have support from services when things need sorting out.

Prioritisation

- 1.21 When it came to prioritising the most important issues or services to address, there was a high degree of agreement between the groups we undertook this with (Havebury Tenants Forum, Safer Neighbourhoods Forum, Focus Groups and Samuel Ward Academy young people). In general, young people's issues are prioritised more by all age groups with relatively equal priority given to the young people jobs, training and apprenticeships theme and the young people ASB and activities theme. Though the prevailing view was to prioritise the young people's activities theme because it was seen as a tool to prevent ASB, and as the pre-cursor for effective support into jobs, training or apprenticeships.