



Burton Latimer Parish Plan

Household Questionnaire Analysis

Our Parish Plan project

As Burton Latimer grows and changes, it is vital that future developments reflect the views of our local community.

One way of making sure this happens is to involve as many local people as possible in the creation of a Parish Plan for the town.

The first stage of our Parish Plan project involved the development and distribution of a questionnaire for all Burton Latimer households.

The household questionnaire

Our questionnaire was designed, refined and tested by a group of Burton Latimer residents before being distributed to all households in the town.

The 22 questions – covering nine key themes – gave people the chance to say what they value about living in Burton Latimer, and how they think the experience of living and working in our town may be enhanced in the future.

Some of the questions asked people to assign a quality rating to specific aspects of Burton Latimer, and others provided space for people to give their views.

The questionnaire was delivered by hand to all 3,200 Burton Latimer households in February 2011. 706 completed questionnaires were returned – a response rate of 22%.

About this report

This report presents a brief summary of the questionnaire responses received from Burton Latimer households in February and March 2011.

Warwick Hunt
September 2011

The main findings

Many people said that they really welcomed the chance to give their views – and that all the issues covered by the questionnaire were important for our town. The most frequently mentioned topics requiring action were:

- **Housing** – in particular, in relation to the scale, pace and location of recent developments within the town (and those that have already been approved for the future), and the risks of overwhelming the infrastructure
- **Traffic and transport** – including the need to address speeding, parking problems, HGV traffic and the poor state of many side roads
- **Safety & crime** – with anti-social behaviour and underage drinking being highlighted as problems, along with a need for more effective enforcement (and possibly extension) of the town's no-alcohol zone
- **Local amenities** – in particular, the questions of how to attract and support businesses and shops to Burton Latimer more effectively, enhance local facilities in the town (with the public conveniences attracting particularly strong criticism) – and provide more help for those with disabilities
- **The local environment** – including the wish to see a generally cleaner, tidier and more vibrant town, improved (and litter-free) pavements and footpaths, and less dog fouling

Housing

Almost 50% of households said that no more housing development should be allowed in Burton Latimer – recognising that planning permission has already been granted for over 700 new dwellings to be built in the town.

For those who were prepared to consider additional housing, the re-development of disused or neglected land within the town was the most acceptable option.

Small pockets of in-fill housing and the use of small plots or garden land also receiving some backing – but there was negligible support for further large-scale development schemes.

Most of the comments received on this topic related to fears about the pace, location and type of housing development currently taking place.

In particular, people were concerned that house-building is running ahead of the necessary infrastructure developments (such as the number of school places) and that new and planned housing is not being built in the most appropriate locations.

The need to provide affordable housing for younger people – and for older residents wishing to downsize – was also highlighted.

More fundamentally, many people said that by growing too big, Burton Latimer risks losing its character – and compromising the very features that attracted them to the town in the first place (see overleaf).

The local environment

The highest levels of satisfaction were awarded to the Pocket Park, the conservation area and the Paddocks. The town's recycling facilities were also well-regarded – though with room for some improvement.

Three aspects of the town's environment were rated particularly poorly: the amount of litter and dog fouling; the state of public footpaths; and the provision of cycle-ways.

A more detailed version of this report is available at the Civic Centre, Burton Latimer library – and online at www.burtonlatimer.org

Education & employment

Half of the comments on this topic highlighted the need for more school places – for all ages – if the town's population grows to the size implied by recent housing plans. There was particular concern that the two local primary schools would not be able to cope, and the need for a secondary school to serve the expanding town was also noted.

Suggestions for improvement included providing more after-school activities and holiday clubs, and meeting the wider learning needs of local residents – including the provision of adult education (for example, through evening classes).

Safety & crime prevention

40% of respondents indicated that they never, or rarely, felt unsafe in Burton Latimer.

The most common situations where people felt vulnerable were: outside the Churchill Way shops – particularly in the evening; anywhere where groups of young people tend to gather; walking along secluded footpaths (for instance, along unlit paths and alleyways in the town, or through the Spinney); and on the King George V playing field after dark.

Local amenities & services

Overall, the library, post office, supermarkets and general stores received the highest ratings. The pharmacy and medical centre also scored well – though their move from the town centre to Higham Road had created difficulties for many.

On the downside, the range of local shops was ranked very poorly – with many people stressing the need to attract more retail outlets and businesses to the town (including, ideally, a petrol station and a dentist).

Two other aspects of this theme also received relatively poor ratings: the town's public conveniences (which were seen as poorly signed, dirty and smelly); and the amount of help available for people with disabilities.

Why do people like living in Burton Latimer?

The most frequently mentioned features that people said they value about living in Burton Latimer were:

- Burton Latimer is a small town, with a friendly atmosphere and a strong community feel
- it is surrounded by attractive countryside, which helps to create a pleasant and peaceful environment within the town
- the town is in a convenient, central location, with good road and rail links
- local shops provide most of our basic needs, and neighbouring larger towns are within easy reach for other items
- there is a good range of local amenities within the town – such as the library, post office and medical centre
- there are good bus links – especially to Kettering

Traffic & transport

The topics causing most concern included: parking (particularly in High Street and along Churchill Way); drivers failing to observe speed limits; highway maintenance; too many HGVs passing through the town (and especially along Finedon Road); and the poor quality of many pavements.

Two road junctions were highlighted as causing problems: the Church St / High St mini-roundabout; and the A6 / Cranford Road junction.

The local bus services were generally rated very highly. Suggested improvements included a later evening service to Kettering; new bus routes to serve Higham Road (especially the relocated medical centre and pharmacy) and Kettering station; and shelters at all bus stops.

Leisure & recreation facilities

People were generally positive about this aspect of Burton Latimer – with local places to eat and drink being rated particularly highly.

The most frequently suggested improvements were: more publicity for existing and new residents about what Burton Latimer has to offer; a leisure centre with sports facilities – and a swimming pool; more youth and teenage facilities; somewhere for senior citizens to meet; and more play areas for children in the town.

Places of worship

Only 30% of respondents commented on this topic – but their views were generally positive, with Burton Latimer's churches being seen as important, welcoming, focal points of the town for churchgoers and non-churchgoers alike.

In addition, Focus magazine, was highlighted as being a good source of information about what's going on in the town.

Local government

Two thirds of respondents indicated that Burton Latimer Town Council (BLTC) was "OK" or better at understanding local concerns and keeping people informed of its decisions and actions.

However, less than half said that they knew how to give their views to BLTC, contact a councillor or find out what happened at a BLTC meeting.

Suggestions for improving the link between BLTC and the local community included: encouraging individual councillors to be more visible; ensuring that questions to BLTC are answered reliably and promptly; holding regular surgeries at the Civic Centre; using the website to stimulate discussion on specific topics and receive feedback; and making more effective use of *Sounding Board* to explain and promote BLTC's role, activities and decisions.

What happens next?

The household questionnaire results, plus feedback from other public meetings, will be used to prepare our final Parish Plan – which is expected to be published in December 2011. For more information, contact Fergus Macdonald on 01536 725922.