

Settlement Strategy evidence base – Willersey

Issues from Willersey Parish Plan 2003:

Issues that were raised as part of the household/residents survey:

- Traffic related concerns: lorry traffic, safety risk of street parking, lack of suitable parking (especially Badsey Lane residents)
- Public transport: improvements wanted in timetabling, routes, cost and access for those with disabilities; bus shelter desirable
- Roads and footpaths: concerns over road/footpath maintenance
- The majority of residents rate electricity, water, environmental & postal services as reasonable to good; Worcestershire postcode causes difficulties for residents
- The majority of residents are satisfied with health provision, although some have difficulty getting to hospital/doctor and a small number with collecting prescriptions
- The village amenities were rated very highly, e.g. Willersey Stores, Post Office, village hall, village greens, recreation ground etc.
- 31% of respondents would pay higher council tax if it were to be spent in Willersey on street lighting, sports & social facilities especially for the young, maintenance of roads/footpaths/greens, traffic calming, car parking, facilities for the care of elderly, police or a bus shelter
- the three most important things about living in Willersey were found to be community spirit and a friendly/caring culture, scenic village and village facilities (shops etc.)
- a significant number of people identified the need for: after school clubs, adult evening classes, playgroup, nursery school and registered childminders
- better recreational facilities, for the younger members of the community in particular, were mentioned in other areas of the questionnaire with 22% of respondents prepared to pay higher council tax if it was spent for this purpose. There are also 12 residents who have volunteered to help with Youth and Sports clubs
- Sports facilities; the question “How could sports facilities be improved and what other clubs or societies would you like to see in Willersey?” produced a list consisting of sports gym, youth club for school children; tennis courts/bowling green; sports clubs (cricket, hockey, football, rugby for all ages); changing rooms/pavilion in rec; table tennis club, trim track & athletics, after school club for primary children; skateboard/roller blade area; swimming pool.
- The standard of policing is generally perceived poor, although 42% of respondents believe the mobile police station has been a success in improving contact with the community
- Fire & ambulance services were rated as acceptable by 36% and 48% of respondents respectively
- In terms of crime and anti social behaviour, main concerns were vandalism, house burglary, drugs and recreation ground disturbances
- Housing requirements: 5% of households reported a current need for alternative accommodation comprising rented (20 people), owner/occupier (20), shared ownership (3), specially adapted (3) and sheltered housing (3)
- The type of housing development residents would find acceptable was conversion of redundant buildings (40%), single dwellings (30%), local builder/small development (28%), council rented (24%), no development (24%) and large private development (4%)
- The way residents would like Willersey to develop: to stay as it is 73%, as a working community 43%, as a retirement community 11%, as a commuter community 4%, as a tourist centre 4%
- Primary school children’s survey, carried out as part of IT skills and art lessons; things they liked about Willersey: shops, recreation ground, school, friendly people, scenic village, feeling safe – things they disliked: older children/youths fighting in the recreation ground, lorry traffic, bad bends on roads in and around Willersey
- Teenagers’ survey; 11-15 year olds wanted more things to do; “best bits” about living in Willersey were seen to be the recreation ground, football, shops, friends, no poverty, feeling

safe and going to Campden school – the “worst bits” were seen to be boredom, village being too dark at night and not enough sport to do. They were asked what things they would like to see in Willersey; the answers were: junior football team, skate park, youth club, fast food, lights especially in the rec, organised activities/trips during school holidays, teen shelter like they have in other villages, swimming pool, paintballing.

- 16-20 year olds thought opportunities for jobs existed, but not careers; they felt opportunities for staying in the village were slim as everything is expensive, and the village was seen to be geared more for older people. The main problem for this group was transport; even though bus services were seen to be ok, return back late is not possible. Things that were listed when asked what would benefit young people: more organised activities, more clubs, more games, skate park, more attention from Parish Council, swimming pool, later buses from Stratford, fast food outlet.
- 13 businesses (30%) responded to the business survey, in the form of questionnaires for both employers and employees. Six businesses were experiencing skills shortages in building, engineering and catering trades. The question whether there were any improvements in amenities/facilities/services which would make Willersey a better place in which to do business and work was asked and produced the following answers: better access to Industrial Estate, off road parking for Badsey Lane residents, lunchtime opening for shops, PO half day closing, Parish Council and planning applications, child day care facilities, letterbox that can take A4 envelopes in Badsey Lane, tearoom/café, cycle paths, sports facilities, village website with info on local businesses and later evening bus service to Evesham.

Issues from Parish Council raised as part of Settlement Profile discussions:

- There may be a need for a limited build of social housing provided it is for young village families and to rent rather than buy.
- Childcare is *not* a problem; there is now a registered childminder and nursery/playgroup and pre-school facilities are available.
- The number of children using the library service is good – the school borrows boxes of library books for an extended period.
- services not as limited as the information suggests. The Parish Council is in the final stages of purchasing the recreation ground from CDC and proposes to install more play equipment. Most of the expressed wishes for leisure facilities such as tennis or bowls are manifestly unrealistic, and all these recreational facilities are available in neighbouring market towns and villages within easy travelling distance. There is also now a Youth Project in the village. There are fifteen active clubs and societies, mostly centred on the village hall. So all sections of the community are adequately provided for and the village is not as lacking as the somewhat unrealistic wish list” would suggest.
- The daily public bus services are adequate for a village of this size, there is a good level of car ownership, and the average drive time to neighbouring towns and villages for shopping and recreation is really very good.
- The risk of both surface and fluvial flooding should be up-rated in the light of experiences in the July 2007. There is in addition a major unresolved problem about surface water entering an antiquated sewerage system and flooding effluent in heavy rain. This happens often, there were 36 properties flooded in July 2007 but no remedial work has been instituted for either problem.
- Household income levels are regarded as adequate. Neither is there “a low rate of economic activity “: it is considered quite acceptable for a community of this size and composition.
- Conclusions: Key issues for the settlement; The issues listed obviously need to be monitored but are not in our view “key” in the sense of fundamental concerns – with the exception of housing affordability. This is reflected in the “Vision” Statement for the next twenty years.

Parish Council's vision statement:

"Vision Statement for the next 20 years: We are very satisfied with the present village community and wish it to continue along the same lines. It is a thriving community with good sustainable activities and services which are valued highly by its members. For it is unusual for a community of this size to generate the range of flourishing amenities, businesses and organisations/clubs which it does. We think this may be largely due to our stability and limited size which generate a true sense of belonging and involvement. Our "Vision" is to maintain this ethos of a vibrant community which *does* move with the times but at its own pace. By and large we have been protected in this by the CDC District Plan 2001-2011, particularly Policy 19 (and section 33.19) which "carries a clear presumption against new-build open market housing in any location beyond Development Boundaries". We trust that this protection will continue and would not welcome any major commercial or housing development. Our great concern is that the present exercise, a central government directive to replace District Plans by Local Development Frameworks, is a Trojan Horse. It is designed to undermine the present already weakened District planning controls, in order that the centre may have the ability to impose local decisions in favour of outside developers, to achieve its housing targets. See the possible shape of things to come with the current dispute over central government proposals to build an ecotown at nearby Long Marston. Despite the united opposition of local government in three counties, they have still been obliged to undertake the great expense of application for a Judicial Review, appealing largely on technicalities. In this light our Vision is totally at risk!"

Issues from Employment Land Study:

There are established industrial estates located at Willersely, Draycot Works (near Blockley), Northcot Business Park (on the site of Blockley Brickworks), and on the edge of Andoversford. Each of the sites includes a range of building sizes and ages with the older stock complimented by modern, steel frame light industrial units and offices. The sites are commonly dominated by one or two occupiers, for example a paper factor at Draycot Works and a uPVC Window manufacturer at the Andoversford Industrial Estate.

With the exception of the Northcot Business Park, the estates appear to be trading strongly. Limited vacancy levels on the sites, recent developments, and their good overall environmental quality indicate a strong trading position and healthy demand. There are limited opportunities for infill development at these sites. There are a number of vacant modern employment units at Northcot Business Park. On the whole, the established rural industrial estates do not provide scope for significant levels of future employment development within their existing confines.

Key issue to be addressed, as emerging from the Settlement Profile:

- District-wide issue: housing affordability