

Consultation

6 General Consultation

Consultation, both with the community and interested parties, has become an integral part of strategy development. Therefore, throughout the development of this Strategy, consultation was undertaken with a variety of interested parties including town and parish councils, partner organisations and the wider community. The results of the consultation process have influenced the resulting policies. The consultation process is detailed below in chronological order.

- Throughout the process elected Members were involved in the development of the strategy.
- Spring 2002. An initial 'scoping' document, outlining what the Council wished to achieve through the Countryside and Open Space Strategy, was sent out for consultation in to all town and parish councils in the District, as well as key partners, a full list of which can be seen in Appendix 1. Many useful comments were received and these shaped the progress of the document.
- A variety of methods were used to gain the opinions of the wider community on countryside and open space issues. The February 2003 Peoples Voice included a questionnaire on these subjects, and a web version of the same questionnaire was put on the Council's web site. Previous People's Voice surveys were also used to gather information, as was the Council's community database - Mission Impossible. The consultation exercise was publicised in the North Wiltshire Newsletter.

Some of the issues highlighted during this consultation process are listed below:

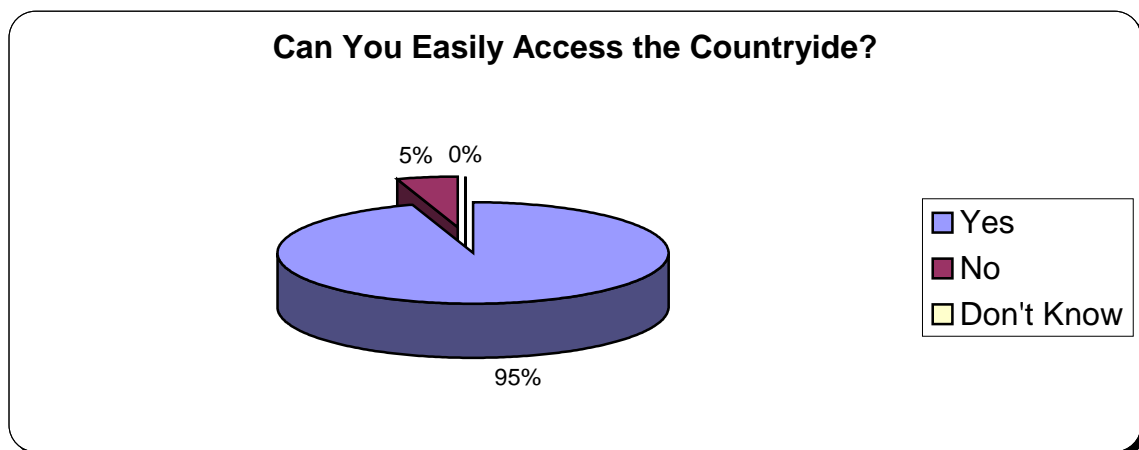
- The Strategy should promote closer working with partner organisations;
- As landscape and wildlife does not recognise borders then the Council should work with adjoining Local Authorities;
- The Strategy should address social issues and 'access for all';

- Powers for compulsory purchase of land should not be used to complete projects, rather negotiation should be used;
- There should be links to the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan;
- The health agenda should be included in relation to walking and cycling;
- The Strategy should lead to improvements of the Rights of Way network;
- Remember that most of the countryside is private land.

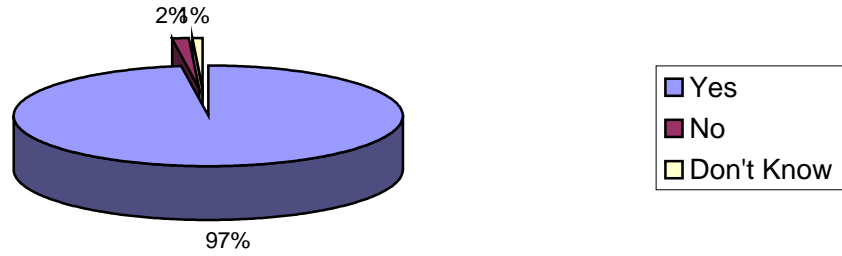
7 People's Voice

People's Voice is the citizen's panel through which consultation is undertaken with the public in Wiltshire, and helps to gather information on their needs, opinions and priorities

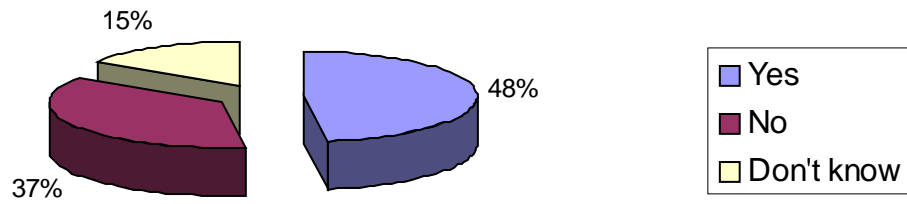
Results of the People's Voice Survey questions relating to the countryside are shown in graphical form below. The results, and of those questions pertaining to open space, are discussed more fully in the North Wiltshire Open Space Study.



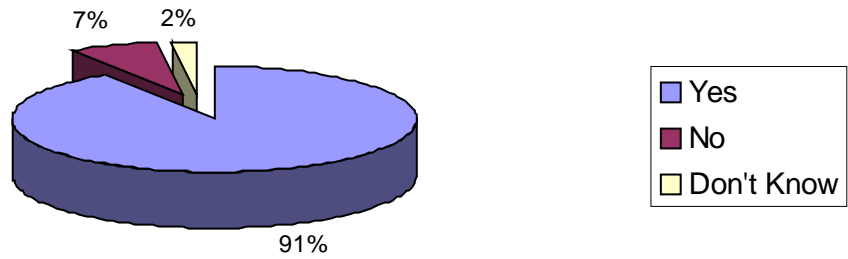
Do You Think That Our Landscape Heritage is Important?



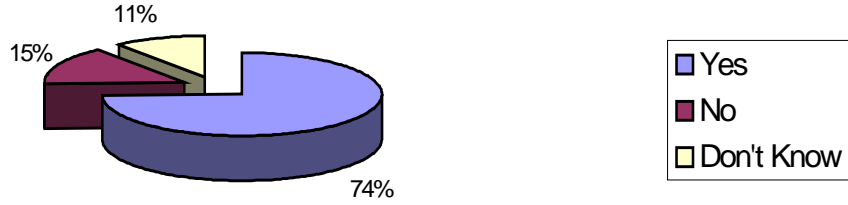
Do You Think That Protection is More Important than Recreational Use of the Countryside?



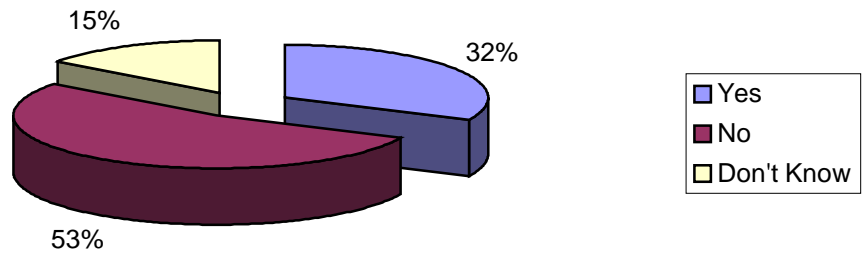
Are You Concerned About Pollution?



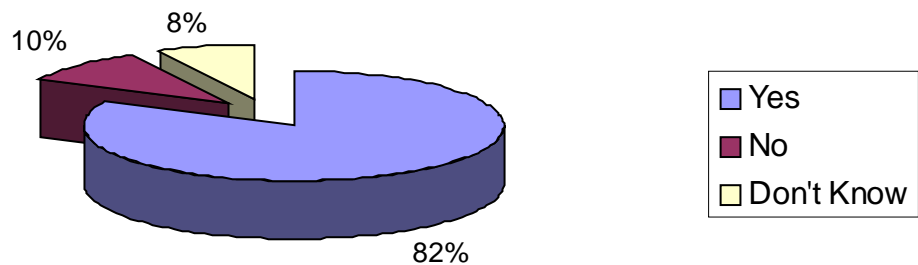
Would You Like to See More Dedicated Sites Such as Local Nature Reserves?



Do You Think That Adequate Protection is Given to the Countryside and Wildlife?



Should More Trees be Planted in the District?



People's Voice shows that there is overwhelming concern for the protection of the landscape and control of pollution, whilst there is also great support for increasing the tree cover in the District. Just under half of the respondents thought that protection was more important than the recreational use of the countryside, indicating that whilst people feel the countryside deserves protection, they also wish to make use of it for recreational purposes. This may be borne out by the high number wanting to see more designated sites, and the creation of more cycling and walking routes. The number who can access the countryside is surprisingly high, and could reflect the high level of car owners in North Wiltshire or, simply the fact that North Wiltshire is a predominantly rural district, and therefore a great number of people are generally considering themselves to already be in the countryside.

The views illustrated above are incorporated into this Strategy.