

Engagement and Consultation Report



Yorkshire and the Humber Rural Network at the Great Yorkshire Show 13th-15th July 2010

'The Great Yorkshire Show is the country's leading agricultural event. ...over 125,000 visitors will enjoy this celebration of agriculture and country life.'
(Great Yorkshire Show website)



The Great Yorkshire Show was a fantastic way for the Yorkshire and Humber Rural Network to engage with the general public (estimated numbers of people engaged - 500), to have insightful conversations and gain valuable knowledge about life in rural areas.

Engaging the General Public

With hundreds of stands in competition for business it was key to have a unique attraction to our stand



We decided on the rural theme of scarecrows (staff in fancy dress). The scarecrows were a huge attraction on the day and really helped us to engage people with our stand. The scarecrows stood outside, waving and smiling. Many people stopped and were asking for photos, which was the perfect opportunity to ask them questions about rural issues and invite them in for a further conversation.

We also offered free tea and cakes which gave us the opportunity to have longer, more detailed conversations about rural life. We had a seating area which people greatly appreciated after a long day on their feet.



Creative Consultation: 'Ball and Tube Survey'

We asked people to choose the two key issues, for them, living in a rural area.



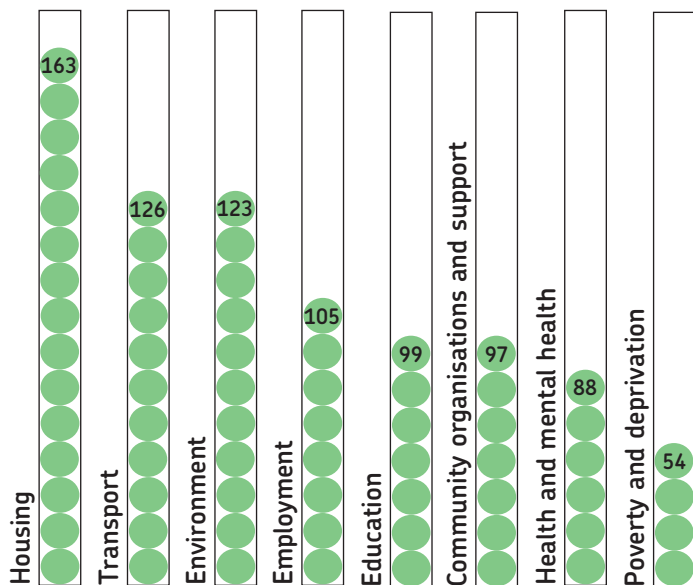
Choice of issues:

- Employment*
- Environment*
- Poverty and deprivation*
- Education*
- Housing*
- Transport*
- Health and mental health*
- Community organisations and support*

Each person was given two balls to place in the tubes which represented their key issues.

Results

We had 855 votes from approximately 400 people.



- 33 people responded that they liked the leisure facilities available in a rural area, interestingly these were mainly free activities. With adults responding that they liked walking the dogs and young people enjoying the fields and open space to play in.

Lots of space to run around
- *young person (aged 10)*

- 30 people responded that it was the people and the community spirit that made the countryside great. Young people liked it because it was friendly and adults really appreciated the great community spirit.

People support
and help

You know nearly
everyone living near
you in the village

Small community
so you get to know
everyone

Other responses included:

- Space and freedom
- Quality of life
- Fresh air
- Good schools
- Less traffic
- Feeling safe and low crime level
- Farmers and the farms



General Conversations

The show also gave us the opportunity to talk with local people about life in rural areas.



Comments included:

- No cheap houses and not much transport.
- Elderly people don't get much support and transport.
- Lack of broadband.
- Support needed for rural businesses to enable them to access more information and training
- Small businesses need better communications, including good broadband and full mobile coverage
- When building new houses there is a lack of development of infrastructure such as schools and shops.
- Farmers need to get a fair price for what they are selling.
- Need more post offices.
- Rural pubs and post offices need more support.
- Need to encourage more small businesses.
- Employment opportunities are not particularly local.
- High transport costs for older people, young people, and people travelling to and from work.
- Broadband speed especially for health services.



Comments from staff



It was great to hear young people voicing their opinions on such topics as affordable housing.

Willingness to participate in the consultation, and share how the issues consulted on impacted on their lives on a local level.

The level of community spirit that exists and the value people place on peace and quiet in rural communities

The main advantage for me was being able to chat with people from rural communities and VERY QUICKLY find out what was important to them. It was great to have the children and young people involved too.



Being there on Thursday, traditionally schools day, I felt the interaction with the under 16s was great and it helped them to start thinking about some of the rural issues which will affect them as they get a bit older.

I really enjoyed the day and it was a fantastic opportunity to listen to the views of people from around Yorkshire, and the UK. It was lovely to hear so many positive comments on rural life from the young and the old.



Conclusion

The Great Yorkshire Show was a fantastic opportunity to engage with the general public about their key issues and what is great about living in a rural area.

The feedback we received was that despite the challenging issues rural communities face, most people still value living in a rural area. The results from the consultation exercises highlighted that people really valued:

- the peace and quiet
- being surrounded by wildlife
- being part of a community

but there were issues associated with living in rural areas - the top three being:

- housing
- transport
- the environment



It was also encouraging to hear young people's views and how much they enjoyed living in the countryside but also how they had started thinking about the issues that would face them in the future.

Yorkshire and the Humber Rural Network and partners need to effectively influence key decision-makers on the issues raised to make sure that people continue to choose to live in rural areas!

We were supported at the show by:

- Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council - www.hwrcc.org.uk
- Rural Action Yorkshire - www.ruralclick.com/dbs/yorksccc
- North Yorkshire Rural Voice - www.ruralclick.com/dbs/yorksccc/dyncat.cfm?catid=1173
- Rural Infrastructure Support System - www.ruralconnect.co.uk
- Rural Partnership Plus - www.hwrcc.org.uk/index.php?/projects/rural-partnership-plus1
- South Yorkshire Rural Network - www.ruralclick.com/dbs/yorksccc

Yorkshire & the Humber Forum
Suite D10, Joseph's Well, Hanover Walk, Leeds LS3 1AB
t: 0113 394 2300 f: 0113 394 2301
w: www.yorkshirehumberforum.org.uk

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