

19 Satisfaction in Local Area



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This indicator measures the quality of the area in which local people live and their particular satisfaction with how The National Forest is changing the area. Information on overall quality at a local level is also provided through contextual regional and local authority data.

CONTEXTUAL DATA

- In 2008/9 satisfaction with the characteristics of the local area for people living in the East¹ and West Midlands² (88% and 86% respectively) was in line with the England average (87%).
- Surveys undertaken in South Derbyshire in 2008/9 found that 84% of respondents were either very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared to 74% in 2006³. When asked about the open spaces they most frequently used, 82.5% were either very or fairly satisfied with tree planted and grassed areas and 64% with schemes to attract wildlife⁴. 63% of respondents were also very or fairly satisfied with urban parks and open spaces³, which is slightly below the average for the East Midlands (66%) and England (69%). However, the number of respondents using parks and open spaces has increased from 81% to 89% since 2006³.
- In East Staffordshire, 68% of respondents to a 2010 survey said that they were fairly or very satisfied with the District's parks and open spaces⁵. More than a third identified access to nature (34%) and parks and open spaces (35%) as being the most important factors in what makes a good place to live⁵.
- In North West Leicestershire in 2010, 82.2% of survey respondents were either very or fairly satisfied with their local area. Overall, this represents an increase of 10 percentage points since 2006/7^{6,7}.

SATISFACTION WITH THE NATIONAL FOREST

The NFC monitors public interest in the Forest's creation. The following indices indicate high levels of public satisfaction with The National Forest:

- **Community Perceptions research:** In 2008, 200 local residents were surveyed to seek their views on how the Forest has changed the area in which they live and its impact upon their daily lives. 84% rated the standard of Forest sites as good or very good. There is recognition that the Forest has greatly benefitted the local area, making it a more attractive place to live; creating more places to visit and things to do; creating better places for walking; increasing local wildlife; and improving facilities for children⁸.
- **Citizen's Panel surveys:** In 2008, 1291 people were asked National Forest questions through local authority Citizens Panels⁹ (which cover wider areas than just the Forest). This showed high satisfaction levels with the Forest:

Do you think that The National Forest has improved the local environment?

Panel	No of responses	Yes*	No*
South Derbyshire	459	85.2%	10.2%
East Staffordshire	430	82.8%	8.3%
Charnwood	106	91.5%	7.5%
Hinckley & Bosworth**	296	68.2%	31.8%

* Percentages do not add up to 100% due to non-replies.

** Only a small portion of Hinckley & Bosworth falls within the Forest area.

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In what ways has The National Forest improved the local environment?

	South Derbyshire	East Staffordshire	Charnwood	Hinckley & Bosworth*
Expanding woodland landscape	81.7%	68.3%	78.3%	21.0%
New places for walking	74.8%	63.4%	74.5%	20.6%
New recreation/tourist attractions	55.3%	48.1%	53.8%	12.3%
More local wildlife	68.4%	53.2%	65.1%	16.2%
New green space near housing	44.3%	42.7%	60.4%	14.9%

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to non-replies or more than one option being selected.

** Only a small proportion of Hinckley & Bosworth falls within the Forest area.*

- **Visitor Surveys:** The National Forest Visitor Survey (2007) measured the impact of gateway installations at five tourism attractions on visitors' perceptions and awareness of The National Forest^{10,11}. Overall enjoyment and satisfaction levels at the attractions were particularly high at 91%.
- In 2008, visitor surveys were undertaken at Willesley Wood¹², a 42ha local community woodland owned by the Woodland Trust. 89% of respondents were local residents who had high satisfaction levels, supported by the number of regular repeat visits, the high likelihood to recommend the woodland to friends/family and the positive comments regarding the site.
- **Public comments:** Satisfaction with the Forest is also demonstrated by an increasing number of unsolicited comments – following community tree planting events, Plant a Tree and Business Benefits tree planting events and talks to local groups¹³.
- **Community involvement:** Sample questionnaires from conservation volunteers, healthy walking participants and schools following environmental education visits also show positive responses to the Forest's creation¹³.

ACTION:

- 1) Continue to monitor visitors and local community satisfaction with Forest creation.
- 2) Work with local authorities and other organisations to develop joint public satisfaction surveys.

DATA SOURCES:

- 1) East Midlands Regional Factsheet: www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/progress/regional/documents/east_midlands_factsheet.pdf
- 2) West Midlands Regional Factsheet: www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/progress/regional/documents/west_midlands_factsheet.pdf
- 3) South Derbyshire District Council Place Survey 2008/9.
- 4) South Derbyshire District Council Citizen's Panel [2008].
- 5) East Staffordshire Borough Council Citizen's panel survey [2010], questions taken from the Place Survey 2008/9.
- 6) North West Leicestershire District Council Place Tracking Survey [2010].
- 7) North West Leicestershire District Council General Survey [2006/7].
- 8) Community Perceptions of The National Forest [2008]. Alison Millward Associates.
- 9) National Forest Company commissioned Citizens Panel survey results for East Staffordshire, South Derbyshire, North West Leicestershire and Hinckley & Bosworth [2008].
- 10) National Forest Visitor Survey Report, Pre-Installation Stage, Phase One [2007]. QA Research.
- 11) National Forest Visitor Survey Report, Post-Installation Stage, Phase Two [2007]. QA Research.
- 12) Visitor Survey at Willesley Wood [2009]. QA Research.
- 13) National Forest Company annual monitoring [2010]