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Summary

This report sets out key findings from the National Third Sector Survey undertaken by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Office of the Third Sector in 2008. Some of the main results for Shropshire are highlighted within the report along with additional analysis undertaken in order to determine how Shropshire is performing in relation to the national average and the other local authority areas based in the West Midlands.

REPORT

1. Background

- 1.1 The National Survey of Third Sector Organisations was conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Office of the Third Sector. The survey was designed to support evidence gathering for National Indicator 7: An Environment for a Thriving Third Sector, and to gain a much better insight into the views and issues experienced by the Third Sector.
- 1.2 The results provided are for 2008 and will be used to set a baseline against which future annual survey results will be assessed.
- 1.3 The National Survey of Third Sector Organisations closed in December 2008 with a national response covering 48,939 organisations (47% of those asked to take part). A sample of Third Sector organisations were chosen from each of the 149 upper tier local authorities in England.
- 1.4 This covering report highlights key findings for Shropshire (see Appendix 1 for more details) and includes some more detailed analysis of the national survey results in order to put Shropshire's results into context.

2. Shropshire Results: Key Findings

- 2.1 Key findings included in the full Shropshire report shown as Appendix 1 are presented below under a number of key themes.
- 2.2 Sample characteristics
 - The Office of the Third Sector commissioned BMG Research and GuideStar Data Services to establish a total population of third sector organisations for each Local

Authority area. It is reported that Shropshire has 1,369 third sector organisations (this is based on available registers of third sector organisations such as the Charity Commission register and information provided by Companies House).

- Of the estimated 1,369 third sector organisations in Shropshire, 549 took part in the survey providing a response rate of 60%.
- The Shropshire Third Sector Organisations that took part in the survey predominantly focus their work on wider groups including the general public, children and older people (much smaller proportions worked with more specific groups such as homeless people, faith communities and ethnic communities).
- The service provision areas of culture and leisure, and education and lifelong learning, were the two categories in which most of Shropshire's survey respondents categorised themselves.
- The vast majority of survey respondents appear to be smaller groups and organisations. Table 1 below provides more detailed information but key points to note are that:
 - 69% of the respondents are from third sector groups with no full time equivalent employees.
 - 43% of the respondents have 10 or fewer volunteers including Board members.
 - 46% of Shropshire's Third Sector Organisations involved in the survey have an income of less than £10,001.

Table 1 Characteristics of Shropshire's Survey Sample

Annual Income	%	Number of FTE employees	%	Number of volunteers	%
No income	3	None	69	None	5
£1- £2,000	13	1	7	1 to10	43
£2,001- £5,000	17	2	4	11 to 20	28
£5,001- £10,000	13	3 to 5	9	21 to 30	8
£10,001- £25,000	15	6 to 10	2	31 to 50	7
£25,001- £50,000	8	11 to 30	4	51 to 100	4
£50,001- £100,000	6	31 plus	2	101 plus	3
£100,001- £500,000	8	Not stated	4	Not stated	2
More than £500,000	4				
Not stated	13				

Note: FTE = Full Time Equivalent, Volunteers include Board/Committee Members
Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

2.3 Capacity

- 91% of Shropshire's respondents felt they had been either very successful or successful in meeting their main objectives over the last 12 months.
- 55% felt they had sufficient resources over the last 12 months to meet their main objectives.

2.4 Local funding

- 36% of Shropshire's survey respondents stated they currently received funding from the County Council or their District/Borough Council (the survey was completed prior to Unitary Authority status).
- 20% were dissatisfied with the range of grants available through local funding (19% were satisfied).

- 17% were dissatisfied with the process of applying for local funding or bidding for contacts (13% were satisfied).
- Overall, 17% were satisfied with local statutory grant funding/contract bidding arrangements (13% were dissatisfied).
- Satisfaction levels concerning questions related to local funding/income appear higher than the satisfaction levels obtained for questions related to national funding/income.

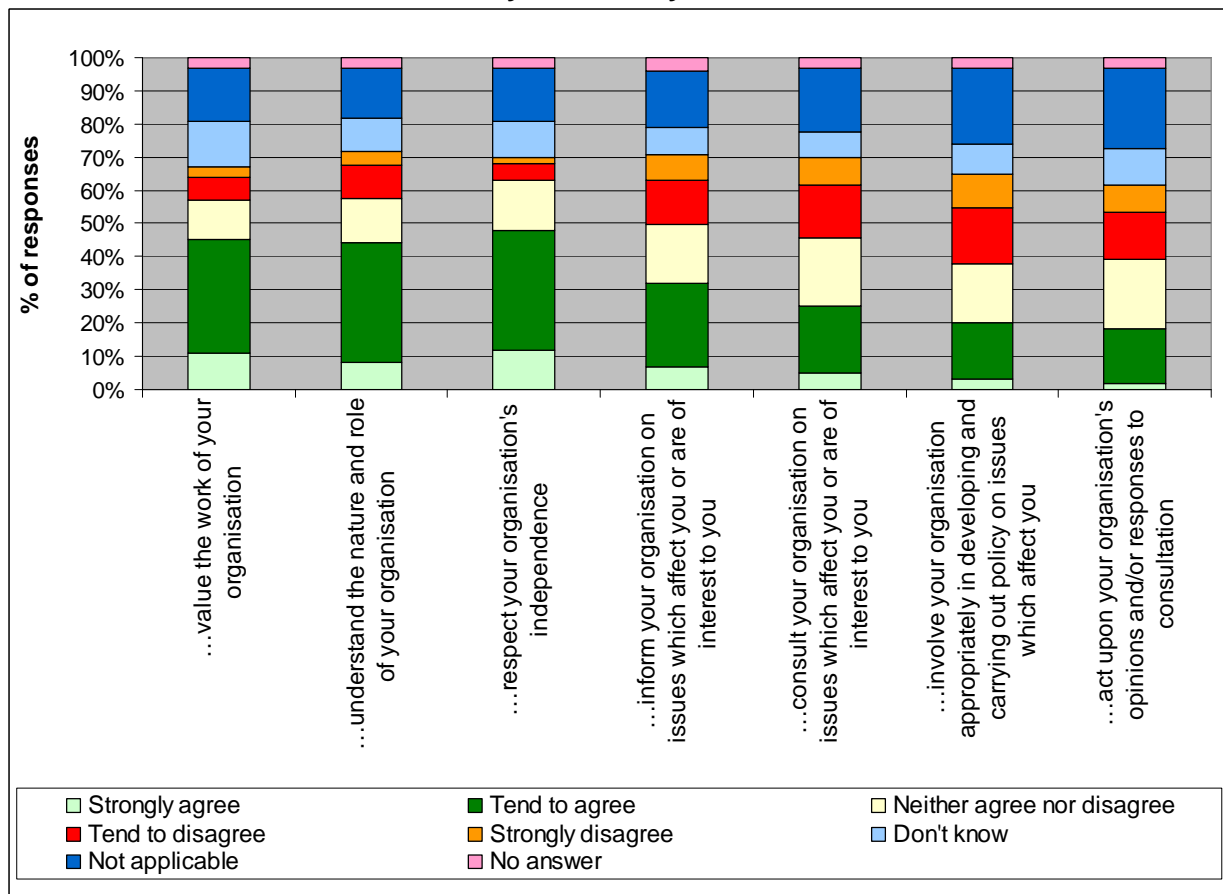
2.5 Advice and Support

- 19% were satisfied with the help, advice and support provided by statutory bodies when applying for grants/bidding for contacts (14% were dissatisfied).
- The survey results show that there are significant levels of dissatisfaction around issues such as long term funding and full cost recovery.
- Despite dissatisfaction in relation to some funding issues, the majority of survey respondents were satisfied with timely payments by statutory bodies.
- 30% were satisfied with the overall support they are offered in their local area (17% were dissatisfied).

2.6 Relationships and Partnerships

- Overall, 19% of Shropshire's Third Sector Organisations are satisfied with their ability to influence local decisions that are relevant to their organisation. A higher proportion, 23% are dissatisfied.
- Figure 1 provides more information concerning the views of survey respondents when considering relationships and partnerships. Overall the responses suggest there is a considerable level of improvement needed in the relationship between Shropshire's statutory bodies and Third Sector Organisations. Survey respondents report particularly low levels of satisfaction in feeling informed, consulted and involved. It is also evident that survey respondents do not feel that the statutory bodies in their area act upon their opinions or responses to consultation.

Figure 1 Views of the Third Sector concerning relationships with local Statutory Bodies
Local statutory bodies in your local area.....



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

3. Comparisons: England and the West Midlands

3.1 In order to put Shropshire's results into context it is important to compare performance with the national average and with other areas of the country. The West Midlands provides a useful comparison with its range of rural and urban authorities. Comparisons have been based around two key areas of the Third Sector Survey:

- Responses to questions 21 and 22 concerning relationships with local Statutory Bodies (the results for Shropshire are highlighted in Figure 1 above).
- Responses to the question used to measure National Indicator 7.

Relationship with local statutory bodies

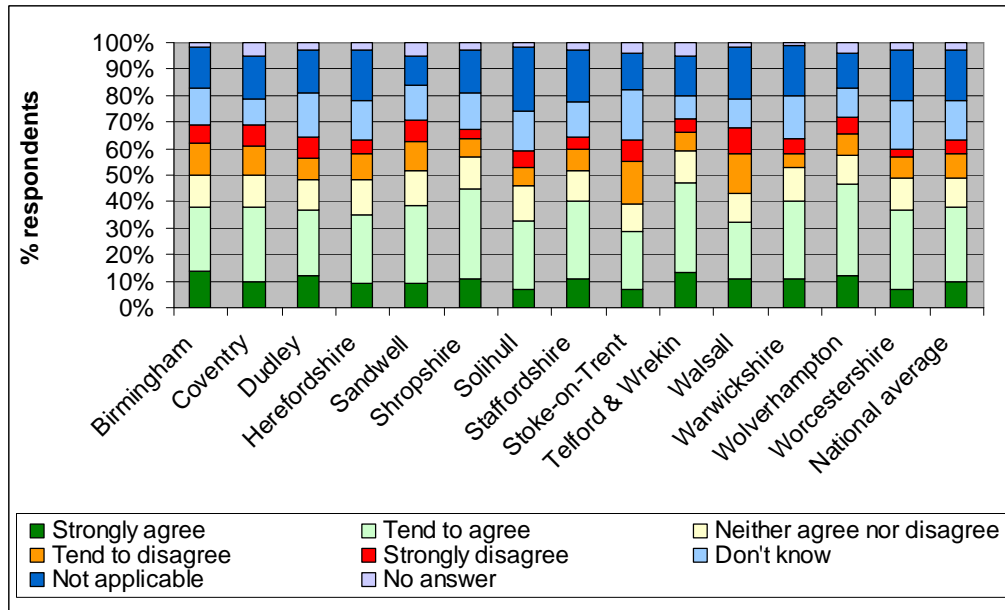
3.2 Figures 2 to 8 display comparative results for Question 21: 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Local statutory bodies in your local area...'

3.3 The analysis highlights a number of key points which are included as bullet pointed commentary around the Figures presented on the following pages:

- Shropshire is one of the best performing areas in the region for third sector organisations feeling that the work they do is valued by statutory bodies

(Telford and Wolverhampton are the best performing). Shropshire's results are significantly better than the national average (see Figure 2).

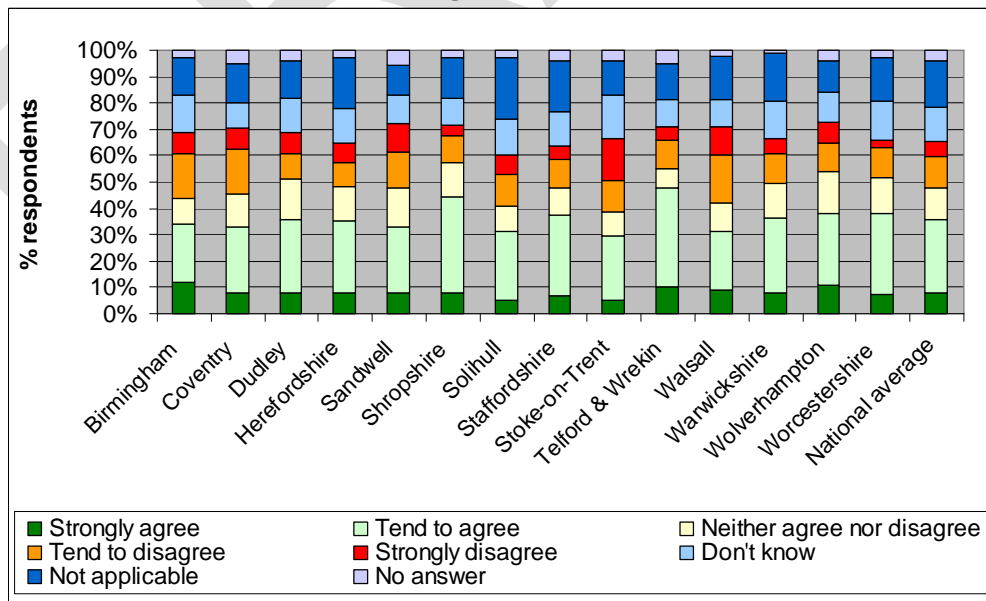
Figure 2 Local statutory bodies in your local area value the work of your organisation



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

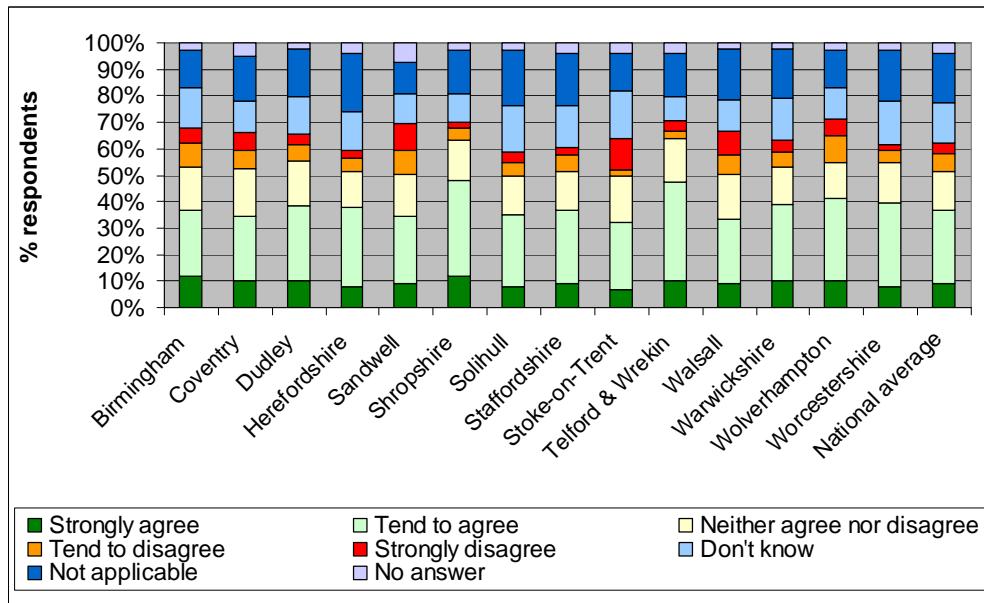
- Shropshire is the second best performing in the region (after Telford) for satisfaction levels concerning Third Sector organisations believing that their local statutory bodies understand the nature and role of their organisation (see Figure 3).
- Shropshire is the best performing area in the region for statutory bodies respecting the independence of Third Sector organisations (see Figure 4).

Figure 3 Local statutory bodies in your local area understand the nature and role of your organisation



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

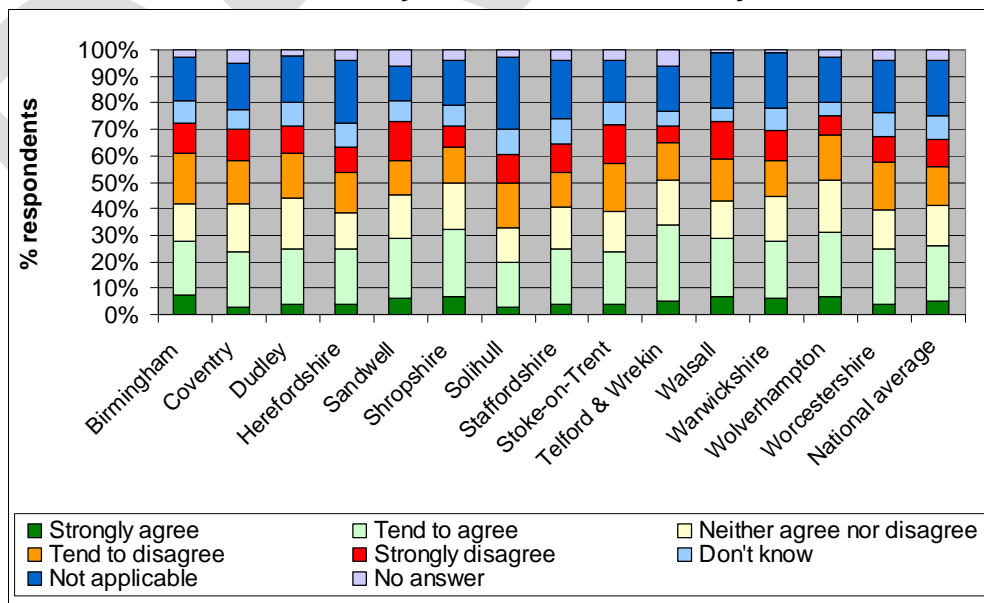
Figure 4 Local statutory bodies in your local area respect your organisation's independence



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

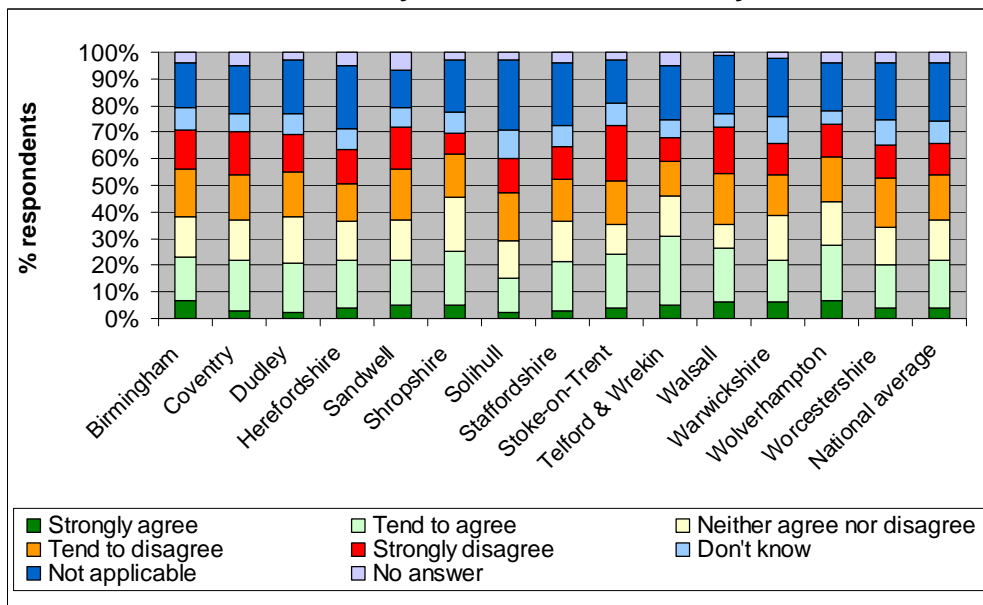
- Although Telford and Shropshire statutory bodies have the best results for informing Third Sector organisations on issues which affect them or are of interest to them, there are also higher levels of dissatisfaction with this type of involvement (see Figure 5).
- All areas of the region (and national results) show that Third Sector organisations do not display high levels of satisfaction with consultation by statutory bodies over issues which affect or are of interest to them. Attention is required in this area in Shropshire (although performance is in line with national performance) (see Figure 6).

Figure 5 Local statutory bodies in your local area inform your organisation on issues which affect you or are of interest to you



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

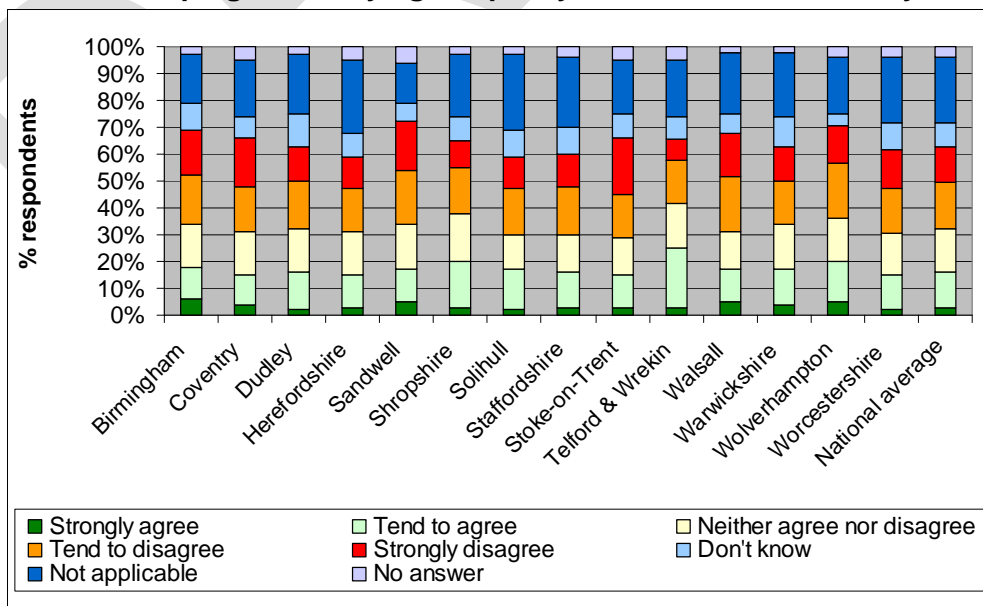
Figure 6 Local statutory bodies in your local area consult your organisation on issues which affect you or are of interest to you



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

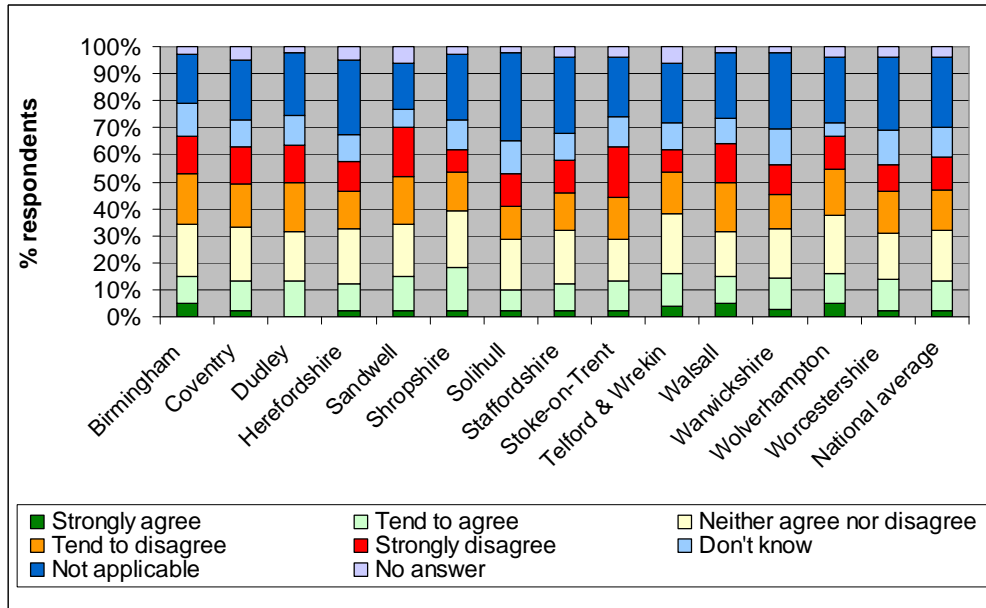
- In a similar way to consultation, the results for appropriate involvement in developing and carrying out policy do not show high levels of satisfaction. Shropshire's results, although in line with national and regional results, again require improvement (see Figure 7).
- The final element of the question (see Figure 8) looks at whether statutory bodies act upon Third Sector organisations' opinions and/or responses to consultation. Shropshire's results show the highest levels of satisfaction (those agreeing or tending to agree) but this is not a significant achievement given the poor results achieved across all areas.

Figure 7 Local statutory bodies in your local area involve your organisation appropriately in developing and carrying out policy on issues which affect you



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

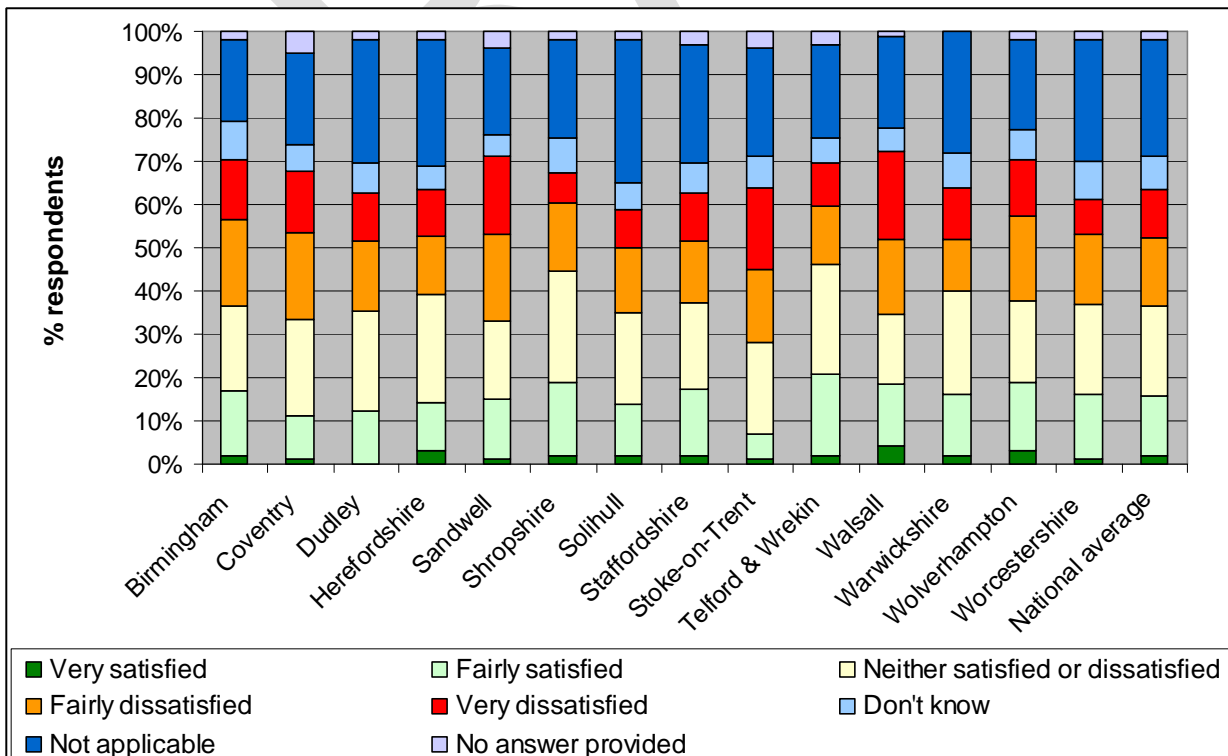
Figure 8 Local statutory bodies in your local area act upon your organisation's opinions and/or responses to consultation



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

3.4 Figure 9 displays comparative data for Question 22 of the survey: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your ability to influence local decisions that are relevant to your organisation. Although Shropshire is among the top 3 performers in the region in terms of satisfaction levels all areas of the West Midlands (and the national average) show that there are high levels of dissatisfaction with Third Sector organisations feeling that they can influence local decisions.

Figure 9 Overall satisfaction with your ability to influence local decisions that are relevant to your organisation



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

National Indicator 7: Comparisons

- 3.5 Question 23 is used to inform reporting for National Indicator 7. Question 23 reads: Taking everything into account, overall, how do the statutory bodies in your local area influence your organisation's success? The NI7 score reflects the percentage of Third Sector Organisations who believe local statutory bodies have a 'positive' or 'very positive' influence on their success. Local authorities will be judged on the improvement they make in this score by 2010.
- 3.6 Where Third Sector Organisations are both satisfied with their ability to influence local decisions, and have some contact with local statutory bodies, then they are likely to give a high NI 7 score such as 75%. However, where there is dissatisfaction with the ability to influence local decisions and little or no contact with local statutory bodies, then a low percentage score will be achieved.
- 3.7 Table 2 shows the results for England, the West Midlands and Shropshire. For each, the percentages who feel local statutory bodies have a negative impact is lower than those percentages who see a positive impact. However results do not show high overall scores. Shropshire's result is better than the national and regional averages. 10% of Shropshire's Third Sector Organisations felt that statutory bodies in the local area have a negative or very negative influence – the vast majority of respondents felt that the statutory sector had neither a positive nor negative influence.

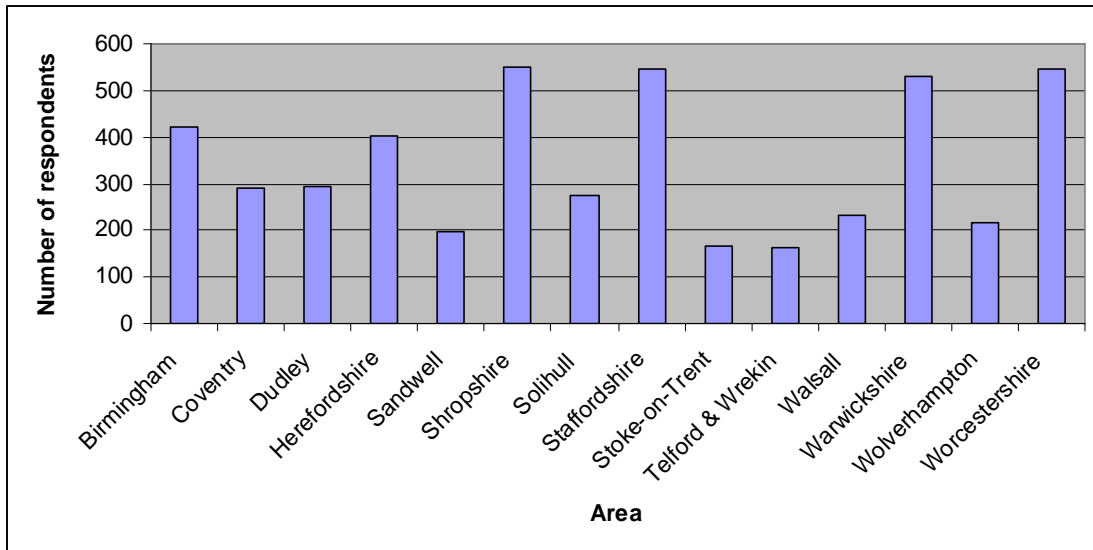
Table 2 NI7 Results: National, Regional and Shropshire

	National	West Midlands	Shropshire
NI 7 Score	16.2%	15.8%	16.9%
Very positive influence	1%	2%	1%
Positive influence	15%	14%	16%
Neither positive nor negative influence	51%	50%	57%
Negative influence	9%	11%	6%
Very negative influence	5%	6%	4%
Don't know/ No answer	19%	17%	16%
Number of respondents	48939	4826	549
Response rate	47%	47%	60%
Total number of registered third sector organisations	170552	15453	1369

Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

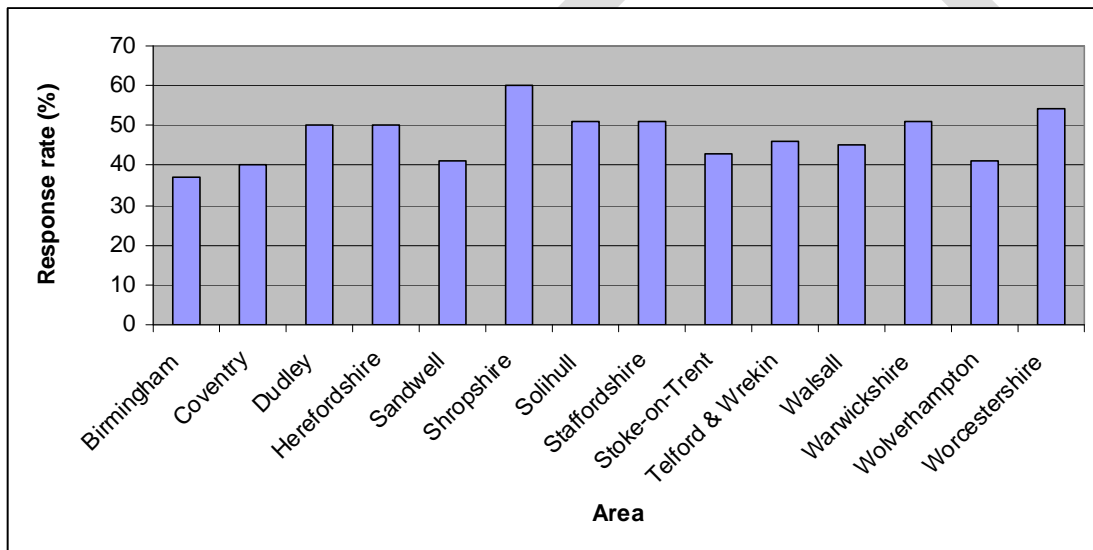
- 3.8 The following charts have been used to compare Shropshire's results to other areas in the West Midlands region. Figures 10, 11 and 12 show:
- Shropshire achieved a high number of survey responses compared to other areas within the region. Overall 549 Third Sector Organisations in Shropshire completed a survey.
 - The survey response rate for Shropshire was the highest in the region at 60%. 549 of Shropshire's 1,369 Third Sector Organisations took part in the survey.
 - Shropshire has a large number of Third Sector Organisations in comparison to other areas within the region. Shropshire has the 5th highest number of Third Sector Organisations in the region, with considerably more than similar areas such as Herefordshire.

Figure 10 Number of Survey Respondents



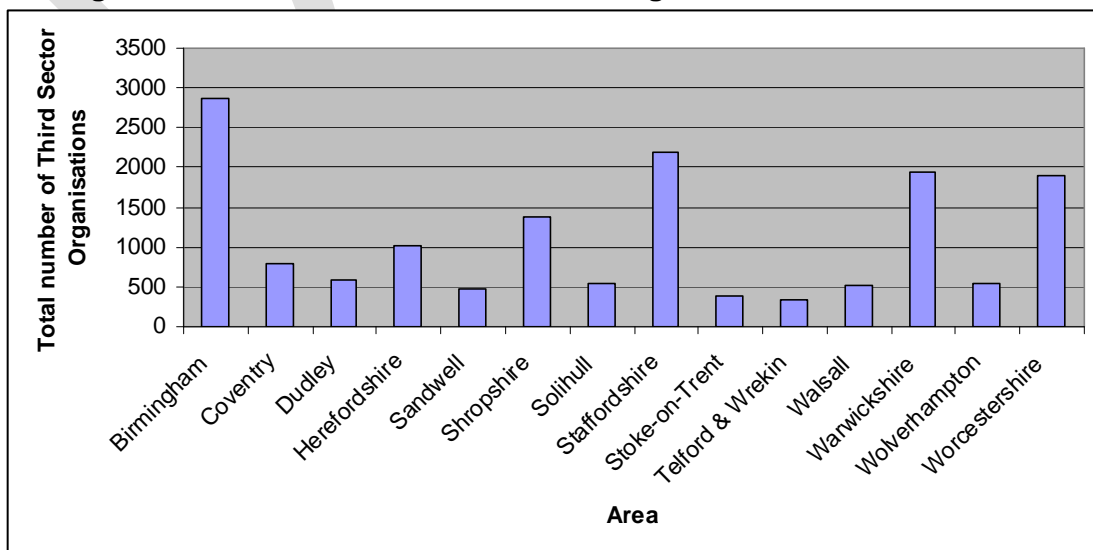
Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

Figure 11 Survey Response Rate



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

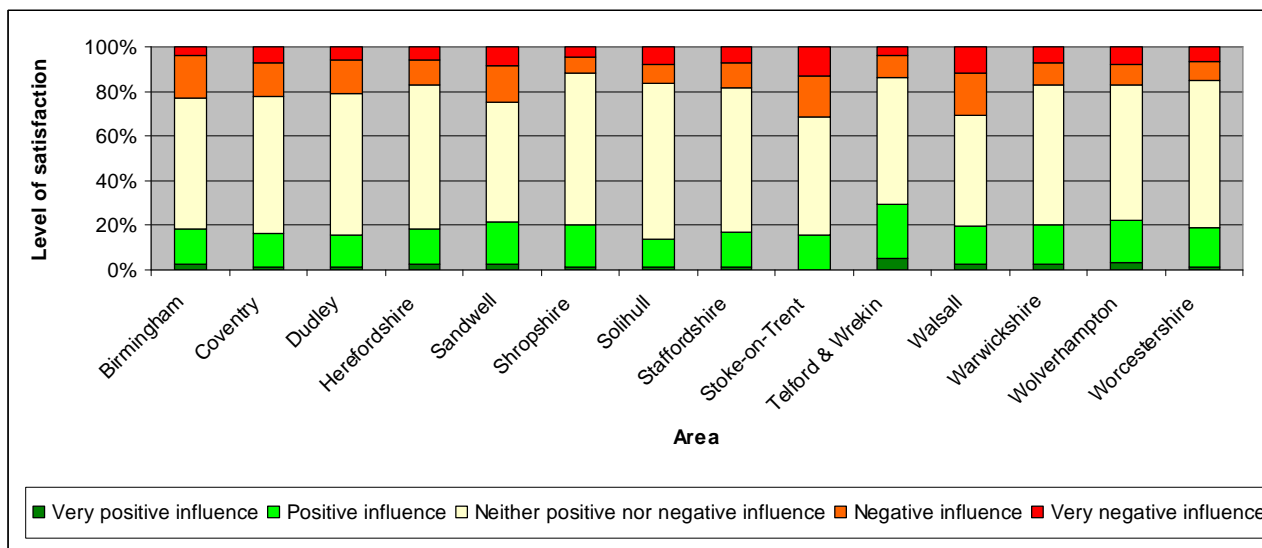
Figure 12 Total number of Third Sector Organisations within each area



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

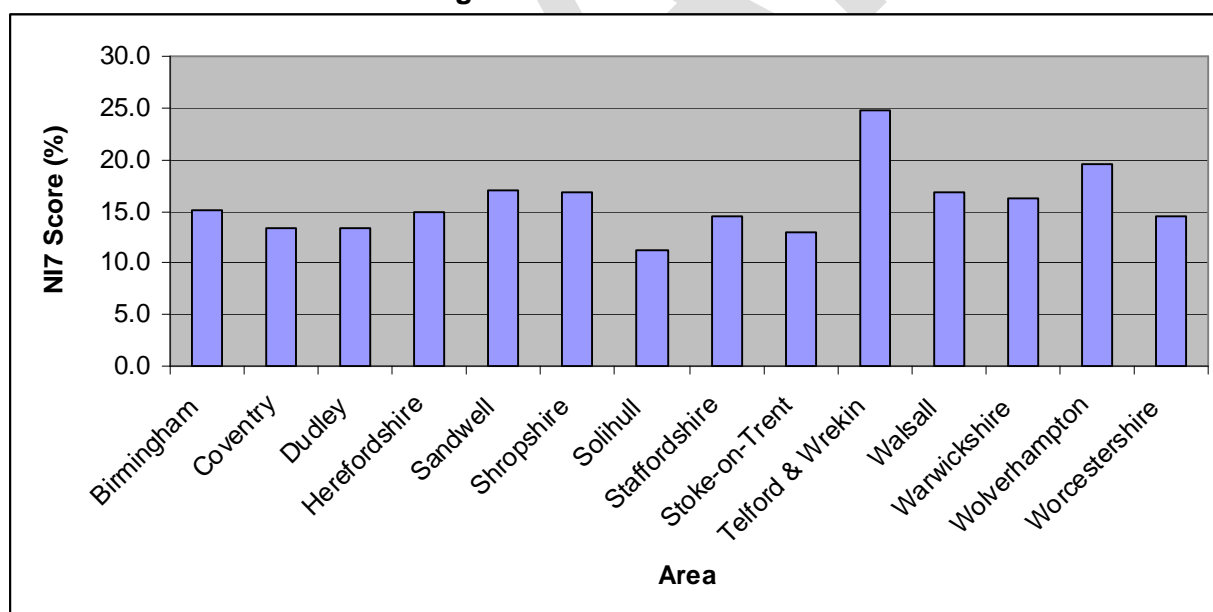
3.9 Figures 13 and 14 provide some comparison across the region in relation to the NI7 measure. The results show that Shropshire achieved the 4th best results in the region (14 areas in total). The top performer in the region was Telford and Wrekin with a score of 24.7%.

Figure 13 How do the statutory bodies in your local area influence your organisation's success?



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

Figure 14 Overall NI7 Score



Source: National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, Cabinet Office and IPSOS MORI 2009

3.10 Comparing results for the whole country it is possible to see that the best performers are St Helens, Blackburn with Darwen, Telford & Wrekin, Lewisham and Knowsley. It is recommended that Shropshire looks to these areas to ascertain whether there are any areas of good practice to learn from.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Although analysis of the West Midlands results, national results and those reported for other local authority areas, suggests that Shropshire is performing either in line with, or above average, the results show that there is significant room for improvement. It is evident that there is a need to improve the relationship between local statutory bodies and Third Sector organisations, particularly in relation to perceptions concerning consultation activity, involvement in policy making and in acting upon feedback from the voluntary and community sector.
- 4.2 It is suggested that the Shropshire Partnership and Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly are the best fora through which to further improve the relationship between statutory bodies and the Third Sector. The current work taking place to develop a Compact for Shropshire Council is a good example of how agreement can be made to improve future joint working.
- 4.3 The next stage of work should be to consider best practice (Telford and Wrekin provides a suitable benchmark to aim for), and to determine the actions that may be implemented to generate improvement. This work should help to ensure that, in future, Shropshire is considered to have an Environment for a Thriving Third Sector (National Indicator 7).