



Report to Cabinet

Subject 2005 Overall Satisfaction Survey – Results

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1. Purpose of the Report

§ To present results from the 2005 Overall Satisfaction Survey.

2. Background

Councils are required to carry out a satisfaction survey every three years as part of Best Value requirements. The last of these statutory surveys was carried out in 2003.

As part of the 2005/06 Budget/Service Plan, Council agreed to carry out this survey annually from 2005 onwards. This allows performance against a range of key satisfaction measures to be tracked on an annual basis. Inclusion of supplementary questions also allows the Council to set benchmarks and measure progress towards its priorities, an important commitment made as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan.

Cabinet agreed the draft questionnaire at its meeting held on 8 September 2005. QCL Market Research were commissioned to carry out the survey on the Council's behalf.

Fieldwork was carried out in September/October 2005. Questions closely mirrored those required in the triennial statutory surveys, to allow for comparisons over time, and techniques employed also followed substantially the same practice used for the triennial surveys for consistency.

1,650 questionnaires were sent out to a randomly selected sample of residents from the Postal Address File. This largely mirrors arrangements for statutory satisfaction surveys, although just one reminder was sent (rather than two as in statutory surveys) and a slightly smaller sample was used to keep costs down.

810 responses were eventually received, representing a response rate of 50%. The difference between the margin of error on a sample of this size and one of 1,000 (required for the statutory survey) is less than 1%.

A copy of QCL's final report is attached at **Appendix A**. The report includes comparisons with previous surveys carried out in 2000 and 2003, where results can be compared.

3. Summary of results and key issues

I will make a presentation to this Cabinet meeting, outlining the results and issues raised here in more detail. This will include any significant differences in results between areas, and comparisons with results from other QCL clients who voluntarily carried out the survey last year.

Headline results only are set out below - overall, the results are good.

3.1 – Service Provision

- § Satisfaction with specific services has remained steady or improved slightly in most cases. Satisfaction with the recycling collection service shows the strongest improvement, but satisfaction with overall waste collection has fallen.
- § Overall satisfaction with the way the authority runs things has slightly improved compared with 2003, after falling between 2000 and 2003.
- § Over half of respondents thought the recycling collection service had improved over the past two years, with strong improvement perceived for a number of other services, including refuse collection.
- § Information provision is perceived to have improved, with 70% of residents now saying the Council keeps them very or fairly well informed.

3.2 - Quality of Life

- § Around three-quarters of residents say they are satisfied with Gedling Borough as a place to live – 23% being very satisfied. Parks, shops, local amenities and cleanliness of streets were seen as the best things about living in the Borough – high crime, vandalism, gangs of youths and litter were seen as the worst things. 55% rated their neighbourhood as either excellent or good overall.
- § Parks/open spaces and sport/leisure facilities were well rated, but cultural facilities and activities for teenagers were poorly rated and felt to be getting worse.

- § Clean streets were well regarded, but road/pavement repairs and traffic congestion were felt to be less good, with the latter though to be deteriorating.
- § Health and education services were well regarded, with high proportions indicating these are excellent, good or fair. Significant minorities, however, rated job prospects and wages/cost of living as poor.
- § Perceptions of crime levels remain problematic, with 40% rating these as poor and 60% feeling the level of crime has got worse over the past two years (it has in fact reduced).
- § Perceptions of anti-social behaviour have slightly improved across all categories between 2003 and 2005, though 58% still believe teenagers hanging around represent a very or fairly big problem and 52% thing the same of vandalism/graffiti/property damage. Moreover, in spite of the improvements in the comparative data, a significant minority think that many of these issues have deteriorated since 2003.
- § Attitudes towards young people are very mixed. Whilst 42% agree that young people in their area are well behaved and don't cause them any problems, 32% disagree. Similarly, 32% agree that young people are very often victims of crime and anti-social behaviour in their neighbourhood, and 24% disagree.
- § A significant majority feel that their neighbourhood is one where people from different backgrounds get on well together and where ethnic differences are respected. 40% of respondents take part in some form of voluntary activity.
- § There was very strong support for the continuation of the Council's priorities for improvement, with over 90% supporting continued emphasis on each of improving community safety, developing facilities and activities for children and young people and improving the Borough's appearance.

3.3 – Communicating results

Results need to be communicated to members, employees, and residents.

The QCL report has been made available on the Council's intranet and will be posted on the website after Cabinet has considered the results. Articles have appeared in both the GEN and "Contacts" magazine.

It is also suggested that the full results be referred to the next meeting of Scrutiny Chairs for information.

Results will be shared with key partners, including the Gedling Partnership and the Gedling Community Safety Partnership. This will allow the Council to

consider with its partners responses to some of the key quality of life issues that are of most concern to residents.

4. Resource Implications

Costs of carrying out the survey each year have been built into base budgets, substantially through reallocation of previous Best Value consultation budgets.

Delivering improvements suggested as necessary by the results may require further budgetary provision – these would need to be considered on an as and when basis.

5. Recommendation

Cabinet is recommended: -

- To note the report
- To refer the results to Scrutiny Chairs meeting for information.
- To refer the results to the Gedling Partnership and the Gedling Community Safety Partnership to inform the development of future activities as appropriate.