



Report to Cabinet

Subject: Satisfaction Survey and Budget Consultation 2010

Date: 13 January 2011 (deferred from 2 December 2010)

Author: Head of Strategy and Performance

1. Purpose of the Report

- To report back on results of the combined customer satisfaction/budget consultation survey carried out in September/October 2010.

2. Background

Following confirmation from the Coalition Government that the Place Survey was to be discontinued, it was agreed for 2010 for the Borough Council to carry out a slimmed down customer satisfaction survey, combined with a budget consultation exercise. The agreed methodology was through publication of a special edition of the Council's "Contacts" magazine, with a 4 page questionnaire included, for completion in hard copy form or on line. Details of the approach were reported to Cabinet on 2 September 2010.

Survey work was carried out during late September/early October, and results were collated and analysed during October/ November.

I will present the results to the meeting – summarised results and some key issues arising are set out below.

The technique used for this survey varied from that used for previous surveys. This makes it more difficult to draw reliable comparisons between the two - therefore where such comparisons are made, they should be seen as a guide to trends rather than an absolute measure of comparative performance.

3. Summary of Results

3.1 – Response summary

1,298 responses were received. This represents a response rate of 2.5%, which is considered to be good for an exercise of this type.

The vast majority of responses were from residents – just 47 came from businesses.

Geographically, Arnold was slightly over –represented, compared with Carlton/Gedling/Netherfield (36% compared with 31%). 10% of responses came from the Mapperley area, with 20% coming from parishes.

By age, older people were over-represented compared with the Borough population profile as a whole, particularly those aged over 65. This is to be expected to an extent in a householder survey. In analysing the results, I have taken care to check whether this group’s views were consistent with those of the wider sample - where they are consistent, the overall result is unlikely to be affected, but where they are not, it is possible that the result is slightly skewed towards the views of this age group. I will make clear any significant differences in my presentation.

30% of responses were received on line. This is by some margin the highest proportion of on line responses received by the Council for a survey of this type.

3.2 – Satisfaction with Borough Council services

Residents were asked how satisfied they were with 4 “universal” council services provided for and used by all residents.

How satisfied with	% satisfied ¹
Household Waste Collection	94%
Street Cleaning	64%
Parks and Open Spaces	71%
Council Tax Collection	60%

Results for Household Waste Collection significantly exceed already very good results from the 2008 Place Survey. Those for Parks/Open Spaces and Street Cleaning are broadly in line with 2008 Place survey results. Satisfaction with Council Tax collection was not included in previous similar surveys.

Residents were also asked whether they used a number of other council services and, if they did use them, how satisfied they were with the services in question.

¹ Calculated by adding together % very satisfied and % fairly satisfied, in line with convention used for Place Survey and previous similar exercises

Results for these services were more mixed, though it is possible some found the question confusing. I will explain this further at the meeting.

3.3 – Overall Satisfaction with the Council

Residents were asked whether they agreed that the Council provides good value-for-money; whether they felt well informed about the Council and its work; and whether, overall, they were satisfied with the Council and its work.

Issue	%
Does Gedling Borough Council provide good value-for-money?	55% agree
How well informed do you feel about Gedling Borough Council and its work?	80% well informed
Overall satisfaction with the Council	63% satisfied

These results improve on an already positive result on value-for-money in the 2008 Place Survey; maintain high levels of performance for information provision last measured in a 2009 Nottinghamshire Citizen's Panel exercise; and continue a gradually improving trend in overall satisfaction.

3.4 – Budget consultation

Given the likely need to make savings in 2011/12 and beyond, residents were asked on which services they thought the Council should spend less and for which services they thought spending should be protected, based on a list of 15 service areas as categorised in the Council's budget.

The top 5 answers in each category are set out below.

Service areas where the Council should spend less	% saying spend less
Civic events	89%
Events and shows	76%
Sports Development, Exercise and the Arts	64%
Planning	59%
Grants to the Voluntary and Community sector	56%

Service areas where the Council should protect spending	% saying protect
Street cleaning	89%
Household Waste Collection	82%
Community Protection	82%
Parks and Open Spaces	71%
Licensing and Environmental Health	67%

In general terms, more detailed analysis of results shows that: -

- Respondents are more likely to want to see core universal services protected, along with services protecting the community
- Men are more likely to support spending less on services than women
- Respondents from rural areas are notably more likely to support spending less across a range of services
- Younger people are less supportive of reducing spend on Sports Development, Exercise and the Arts (though over 50% still saw this as an area where the Council could spend less) and of reducing spend on leisure centres
- Younger people are more supportive of reducing spend on Council Tax/Housing Benefit and on Customer Services.

Residents were also given the opportunity to suggest other areas where savings could be made. 622 people responded to this question and the top 5 suggestions (with numbers making the suggestion in brackets) were: -

- Reduce weekly black bin collection (164)
- Reduce staff and councillor expenses (131)
- Reduce number of and salaries of council staff (123)
- Reduce/abolish car park charges to boost economy and business rates (68)
- Reduced funds and grants to voluntary sector (58)

4. Resource Implications

The results of the survey have the potential to be one factor informing budget and service planning considerations now in progress and are being fed into those discussions.

5. Recommendation

Members are **recommended** to note the report.