

Report of the Cabinet Leader

The Big York Survey

Purpose

1. The report is to provide the Cabinet with an initial view of the findings from the Big York Survey and understand the next steps for the survey data, plus provide an opportunity to discuss any specific items of interest that arise from the survey.

Background

2. The Big York Survey (BYS) marks a new approach to gathering customer insight and is the first survey of its kind within York and will be repeated on an annual basis. It is designed to track perceptions on the main themes in the council and city plans and to provide insight into key areas of focus.
3. The BYS is the first city-wide satisfaction and feedback survey since the Place Survey in 2008. It sought views on a broader range of outcomes than for previous city-wide surveys, such as the Place Survey, but whilst this new approach is not completely comparable with previous surveys, it does still include some elements that have been maintained to ensure comparability on key questions.
4. Inclusion of these comparable questions also enables comparison with other authorities that have also continued to survey their residents using these questions.
5. The results of the survey will:
 - Provide data and intelligence on quality of life - what local residents think are the most important issues facing them/the city;
 - Be used alongside service data to measure and track delivery of the Council Plan and provide input into service planning and priority improvement;

- Give direction of travel on the city's priorities and outcomes – how perceptions on priority areas are changing;
 - Signpost to areas for further investigation and consultation (through targeted and tailored engagement and consultation); and
 - Provide disaggregated data – ensuring that feedback results can be broken down spatially, and as far as possible, by various demographic and equality profiling groups. (This is only possible where there is a suitable sample size for the group of interest)
6. More specifically, the results will be used as a key input for activities such as:
- Development of service plans and budget proposals
 - Ward work and improving the community contracts
 - Work on the Single Equality Scheme and achieving EFLG excellence
 - Future surveys, consultation and engagement activities (tailoring both the approach and the areas of focus)
 - Contextual information when publicising or promoting the city e.g. for funding bids or award submissions
 - Identifying areas of resident concern to specifically address.

Analysis - Initial Overview of Findings

7. Overall, the findings highlight a range of positive factors plus some notable improvements since the last comparable surveys. Responses have also provided further support to our identification of in-year priorities for the council plan themes e.g. by providing further tangible evidence that residents overall see transport, access to housing and suitable jobs as the most important factors for them.
8. Many of the main areas for improvement are longer terms issues rather than 'quick fixes' and already have specific actions being taken as part of the council plan.
9. For example, the 'top five' areas that respondents think most need improving are:
- Traffic flow (54%)
 - Roads and pavement maintenance (46%)
 - Supply of affordable decent housing (46%)
 - Job prospects (37%)
 - Public transport links (30%)

10. The above are a key focus of the priorities to Create Jobs and Grow the Economy and to Get York Moving and hence resident views in these areas would be expected to improve as the plans for these progress over the coming months and years.
11. Residents feel that the most important aspects in making York a good place to live were:
 - low levels of crime (81%)
 - good health services (doctors, hospitals etc.) (76%)
 - good schools (73%)
 - good public transport links (72%)
 - clean streets (72%)
 - access to nature, parks and open spaces (68%)
 - cultural opportunities (66%)
 - affordable decent housing (64%)
12. The survey also highlights interesting variations amongst certain communities of interest e.g. it shows clearly where priorities for BME residents differ from the total results. Such variations are only just starting to be analysed in detail, but the core data of the survey will prove invaluable in shaping and targeting our policies and service delivery to specific areas of communities.

Positives Areas:

13. The results have highlighted a wide range of positive factors, but the most notable include:

Satisfaction with York: Residents' views on what it's like to live in York is very high - 92% satisfied or very satisfied.

Satisfaction with the Council: Satisfaction with the way the council runs York is also fairly high at 63% (notably improved since 2008 when it was at just 44%).

Better value for money: The number of people who think the council provides a good service given the money available is 45%, again an increase since 2008, when the figure was only 35%.

Crime and violence: nearly 80% agree their local area is free from Crime & Violence, with 11% neutral.

Volunteering levels: nearly half of respondents have given unpaid help in the last 12 months, with about one third doing so at least once a month.

Areas already being addressed:

14. Some of the concerns/issues raised through the survey have already had actions to address them, for example:

- **Increase for walking journeys**: 33% of people said that knowing the quickest route to take would encourage them to walk for more of their journeys – as part of the iTravel programme, a new dedicated walking website for York is currently being developed that will allow users to find, plot and share regular walking routes with others.
- **Smart bus ticketing**: 46% of people said that the thing that most needs improving on the bus service in York is the introduction of a ticket valid on any bus – through ticketing has recently been introduced on the major operators in York, with plans to expand this further next year.
- **Clean Streets**: The biggest suggestion for improvements to city centre areas was to keep it litter free and have clean pavements with 1 in 3 who made suggestions thinking this – the Smarter York Board has been formed to improve public realm and frontline environmental services and comprises residents, ward members and the Council working together.

Areas of concern:

15. There are certain responses which provide cause for concern and action is underway to address the issues raised. For example:

- **Understanding of Protecting Vulnerable People priority**: A higher than anticipated proportion of ‘don’t know’ responses in relation to perceptions of progress on some of the council’s priority areas, particularly around protecting vulnerable people.
 - Colleagues from ACE are reviewing the results of the BYS alongside other customer feedback to understand this area in more detail.
 - However, performance against the social care quality of life was surveyed through questions on people’s control, how they were treated, the quality of their personal care etc. and York’s performance in this area has improved since last year and was higher than the regional average and the average for comparable areas in the UK.
- **Supply of affordable housing**: 46% said that the supply of affordable decent housing needed improving.

- Housing supply is a known pressure in York and the ‘Get York Building’ programme has been established to increase the number of new homes available in York particularly increasing the number of affordable homes that are available.
- Work is underway to move housing sites forward including Hungate. Planning Committee recently agreed changes to planning requirements for Hungate to stimulate development. Negotiations are ongoing on a number of other development sites including Terry’s and some rural sites.
- Influence on local area: 29% of people agree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area, compared to 42% who disagree with 28% being neutral on the matter.
 - The place survey from 2008 asked the same question and a comparable but very slightly higher number (32%) agreed they can influence decisions.
 - Community Contracts are in development in many Wards, giving communities a greater say in the services they receive. In addition growing community involvement in ward action planning and service monitoring is expected to increase the number of residents who feel they can influence decisions. New methods of communication are also being trialled, including the use of social media and Your Ward Online.
 - However, over 90% still say they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live – so whilst not feeling they can influence the decisions, in the majority of cases people are still satisfied with the overall result in their neighbourhood.
- Jobs Progression Options: one third of people were concerned that people have to commute out of York to work and 45% felt they personally would have to commute out of the York area to develop their career.
 - Creation of higher skilled jobs is a key element of the council plan and these findings are being further analysed to understand more of the detail on which residents have this view and how far the existing plans will address the issue. Findings will inform the above plans, which will be updated as required.

16. Annex A contains a summary of the key findings, grouped into key themes from the survey.

Consultation

Context of the Survey and Response Rates:

17. The response to the BYS has been positive, with 1,117 replies. These were received through three different channels:
 - Postal - 2300 survey papers sent out, 686 returned (30% response rate)
 - Face to face - 148 individuals
 - Online - 283 (through promotion on Twitter, Facebook, University of York website, CYC website and via Talkabout panellists)
18. The BYS uses a targeted approach through a combination of channels and sampling techniques (e.g. Twitter, CYC & partner websites, postal, face-to-face etc.). Groups under-represented in previous surveys have been specifically targeted to ensure a more representative response – for example, this has meant specific work with BME groups and young people.
19. It is also linked into other key surveys including “Confidence in the Police Survey” (SYP/NY Police/University of York/CYC) and the “Children and Young People’s Plan Consultation” (ACE). This allows further aggregation of data whilst avoiding duplication.
20. 30% is a very good response rate for a postal survey; especially one of this size and one which covers such a range of topics – surveys usually get a higher response where they are related to a single issue. Although not directly comparable, the last Place Survey got a higher response rate, but was much shorter, providing a more limited set of data. Responses were given by a representative sample of York residents and on a sample of this size results are accurate to $\pm 2.9\%$.
21. The online response rate is as would be expected, based on previous online surveys. There have only been 2 recent surveys to get a higher online response – the Budget Consultation and the Cycling City survey. In both cases, there were specific issues which would tend to attract a higher level of interest.
22. There is no doubt that the online channel has greater potential than we have currently exploited. To increase the response rate in future surveys, we are looking at options to increase the number of email addresses that can be targeted, without resorting to unsolicited mass emails or impinging on privacy.

23. Overall, the new methodologies and targeted sampling give confidence in the quality of the responses and that the information reflects the views of a genuine cross-section of our population.

Council Plan

24. The BYS is a key component to meeting the objective in the council plan of being completely in touch with our communities. The results of the survey also provide key insight into the progress, understanding and public perception of the work to deliver the council plan priorities. The findings will shape the current and future work programmes.

Implications

25. The implications are:
- Financial – The survey findings will assist in allocation of resources and budget setting.
 - Human Resources there are no specific human resource implications to this report.
 - Equalities – covered in the body of the report
 - Legal - there are no specific legal implications to this report.
 - Crime and Disorder – covered in the body of the report
 - Information Technology - there are no specific information technology implications to this report.
 - Property - there are no specific property implications to this report.

Risk Management

26. No known risks associated with the report.

Recommendations

27. Members are asked to:

- 1) Note the findings of the Big York Survey
- 2) Note the actions being taken as a result of the Big York Survey
- 3) Commit to repeating the Big York Survey on an annual basis

Reason: To ensure that the council gains representative feedback from residents to inform service design and delivery.

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	Report Approved	√	Date 25 October 2012
Wards Affected: <i>All</i>			
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Annexes:

ANNEX A – BYS Summary of key findings