
Executive

22 September 2009

Report of the Chief Executive

Results of the Place Survey

Purpose of Report

1. To inform members of the outcomes of the first Place Survey and to ask for members views on options for next year.

Background

2. In 2008/09 the Place Survey replaced the annual Residents Opinions Survey (which was asked every three years as the statutory BVPI General Survey) and the statutory planning survey, library survey and benefits survey, which are required every three years at present (although asked more frequently).
3. Under the government's new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) framework, 18 'resident perception based' national performance indicators were introduced to gather local views on what it is like to live and work in a local authority area. These indicators are measured through the Place Survey, which takes place every two years. The survey also asks 14 satisfaction measures.
4. The Place Survey differs from its predecessor in two important ways:
 - it asks residents their views on their local area, the result of the combined efforts of all local services and partnerships, rather than solely on their local authority.
 - It focuses more on outcomes, rather than processes. In practical terms, this means that the questionnaire asks higher-level questions with less detail on individual services.

Methodology

5. All local authorities were required to achieve a confidence interval of more than +/- 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level to calculate the national indicators collected in the Place Survey. Authorities were also to aim to receive a minimum of 1,100 completed Place Survey questionnaires.
6. A postal survey was sent to a random sample of 3,145 residents during September 2008. Two reminders were sent to those who did not respond in October and November before the survey closed in December 2008. From this sample a total of 1,251 questionnaires were completed, a response rate of 40%. A sample of this size is accurate to +/- 2.8% at a 95% confidence interval.

National Performance Indicator and Satisfaction indicator results

7. Overall York has some very good results for both the NPIs and satisfaction indicators. Annex A shows results for the 18 National Performance Indicator (NPIs) results, five of which are also Local Area Agreement (LAA) indicators (NPIs 1, 4, 6, 17, 139) and the 14 satisfaction indicators, which cover the traditional results for satisfaction (such as with cleanliness, waste recycling, sports and leisure facilities, bus services, libraries, etc). Two of these also ask about value for money (VFM) and how involved our local citizens feel.
8. In summary, York is performing well when compared to 55 similar authorities, with 13 of the 18 (73%) NPIs performing above average (including all four LAA Place Survey targets).
9. Ten of the 18 (56%) NPIs are performing in the top quartile (including two LAA targets). These include those who feel they can influence local decision making (31.7%), satisfaction with local area (87.4%), and being treated with respect and consideration by local public services (78.3%).
10. This further includes perceptions of crime such as anti-social behaviour (11.3%), drunk and rowdy behaviour (18.4%), and drug use and drug dealing (17.6%) in their local area. None of the NPIs are in the bottom quartile.
11. In addition to our quartile position, York has some positive ranking positions. The most noticeable are that (out of 352 councils), York is ranked:
 - second for 'citizen involvement' (18.8%).
 - twelfth for 'citizens aged 65 and over who are satisfied with both home and neighbourhood' (91.9%).
 - 19th for 'keeping public land clear of litter and refuse' (67.4%).
 - 30th for citizens who think that 'drunk and rowdy behaviour is a problem in their local area' (18.4%).
12. In addition to the positive result for keeping public land clear of litter and refuse there are also some good results for other service areas. Of the 11 service areas five were in the top quartile of 55 unitary authorities (land clear of litter and refuse, local bus services, museums/galleries, theatres etc, and parks and open spaces). Three areas are within the second quartile, including doorstep recycling, local tip/HWRC, and transport information. Value for money (32.4%) and overall satisfaction with the council (43.8%) are also ranked within the second quartile against 55 Unitary authorities.

Breakdown of results – equalities analysis

13. The corporate equalities team have conducted analysis for the 18 NPIs and the 14 satisfaction indicators by the six equalities strands. Annex B shows the full results from this analysis.
14. The main differences highlighted in the analysis within the equalities groups are age, ethnicity, religion and to a lesser extent sexual orientation. The most significant

differences were within age, with 12 of the 18 NPIs showing a significance difference for age (mainly lower results for younger residents aged 18-34 years).

15. Results for ethnicity and religion need to be treated with caution. In total 64 people indicated that they were Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and 48 indicated that they had 'other' religion. However, not all respondents filled in the equality profiling questions, and not all of those who replied to profiling questions answered all the questions. The sample numbers are smaller still for some specific questions, but nevertheless are worth considering.
16. Overall, 18-34 year olds, BME respondents, and those with no religion and/or belief were less likely to agree that:
 - their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (NI1)
 - they belong to their immediate neighbourhood (NI2)
 - older people in their local area get the help and support they need to continue to live at home for as long as they want to (NI139).
17. There is little difference within the equalities groups for respondents agreeing that they can influence decisions in their local area. This is with the exception of age, in which younger residents were less likely to agree (20% of 18-34 year olds compared to 51% of 75 years and over).
18. In terms of residents' satisfaction with their local area as a place to live, there are positive results for gender, disability, religion and sexual orientation. However 18-34 year olds and BME respondents were less likely to be satisfied, with 80% of 18-34 year olds compared to 95% of 75 year olds and over. 70% of BME residents are satisfied compared to 88% of White British residents.
19. In terms of residents thinking there is a problem with people not treating each other with respect and consideration in their local area, and agreement that they have been treated with respect and consideration by their local public services in the last year, younger residents were less likely to agree, when compared to older residents.
20. For the satisfaction indicators it is again age in which there is most difference in satisfaction, with significant differences for 12 out of the 14 indicators. Within those, satisfaction with doorstep recycling and local tips/HWRC is prominent for the difference in satisfaction results amongst equality groups. Younger residents (18-34 years old), BME respondents, those whose religion and/or belief was 'other', and whose sexual orientation was 'other', were less satisfied with both the council providing doorstep recycling and local tip/HWRC.
21. Positive results from the equalities analysis show that although overall satisfaction was disappointing for the council providing sport/leisure facilities (35.9%), there was very little difference in satisfaction within the equalities groups.
22. There is little difference within the equalities groups for satisfaction with the way the council runs things, with the exception of age. Some 36% of those aged 35-54 years old were satisfied, compared to 62% of 75 years and over.

Options for next year

23. The Place Survey fell into 2008/09 and there is a budget available of £8k this financial year.
24. The Place Survey needs to be conducted every other year, an increase on the statutory obligation which previously was every three years through the General Survey. To combat consultation fatigue the DCLG recommends reducing the overall number and frequency of consultations saying the Place Survey should replace the Best Value User Satisfaction Survey and also the Planning, Benefits and Library surveys.
25. Regardless of the statutory requirements, the council has in the past conducted the Residents' Opinion Survey (resop) annually.
26. As mentioned in paragraph 15 above, we are sometimes using very small sample sizes when conducting lower level analysis. There is an option to (for instance) double the sample size and send out twice as many questionnaires. However, simply doubling the sample size would still not give us large enough numbers for statistically reliable analysis for some groups, based on the existing return rate. This would also nearly double the cost of the survey, which is unbudgeted.
27. There are four options for next year outlined below.

Option 1 – Ask the 'Place Survey' every year.

28. This would be the least change option, as it would effectively just replace resop with the Place Survey. It would continue to give us trend information on the questions that remain from the resop (about 70%) and in many respects be the simplest to administer. This would also not address the DCLG concerns about consultation fatigue.

Option 2 - Run Place Survey every other year, with other more specific research in the 'fallow' year, such as focus groups on one or two topics and a limited quantitative survey.

29. It is in the nature of quantitative data (such as the Place Survey) that there is little analysis that can be done past the trend information and benchmarking. The underlying reasons behind the percentages can only be surmised. Running the Place Survey every other year will allow for the budget in the fallow year to be spent on getting into the thinking behind the previous year's Place Survey. This would give the council much stronger ways of understanding the public perception of our services.
30. Focus groups would need to be run by an external company, as we do not have the resources in-house to do this work. This would cost around £1k per group with a requirement of around eight focus groups of 8-12 people, a cost of £8k – the budget for the year. There would therefore be no additional cost in the second year.
31. This option would allow us to focus on specific issues that have been raised by the Place Survey, such as the attitudes of young people, older people and BME groups. It would also allow us to focus the NPIs that are in the bottom quartile.

Option 3 - Run the Place Survey every year with other more specific research such as focus groups on one or two topics later in the same year.

- 32. Essentially this combines options one and two. It would allow the benefits of both – year-on-year data for trend analysis and the opportunity to understand more the issues that concern people most through more in-depth research.
- 33. This would cost around £18k - £10k for the place survey and the £8k for the focus groups, a shortfall of £10k on the existing budgets.

Option 4 - Do not conduct any surveys in the 2009/10 financial year, saving the budget.

- 34. This option would leave the council with no formal way of gauging customer attitudes or understanding existing Place Survey data.

Implications

Financial

- 35. The financial implications of the options are included above.

Human Resources (HR)

- 36. There are no direct HR implications.

Equalities

- 37. The equalities data from the Place Survey has been to the Equalities Leadership Group and will be discussed by the Social Inclusion Working Group.

Sustainability issues

- 38. Although parts of the survey refer to sustainability, there are no direct sustainability issues in this paper.

Legal

- 39. There are no legal issues

Crime and Disorder

- 40. Although parts of the survey refer to crime and disorder there are no direct crime and disorder issues

Information Technology (IT)

- 41. There are no information technology issues

Property

- 42. There are no property issues.

Other

43. There are no other issues.

Risk Management

44. There are some risks associated with possible consultation fatigue or alternatively the council not getting adequate feedback from customers.

Consultation and engagement

45. The council's Corporate Management Team has been consulted in the preparation of this paper.

Recommendations

46. Members are asked to note the contents of the Place Survey and the analysis included in the annexes.

47. Marketing & Communications recommend that in the fallow year of 2009/10, the Place Survey budget is spent on getting into the thinking behind the 2008/09 results rather than conducting a full survey. This would be a cost-neutral option.

48. Members views on increasing the sample size for the next Place Survey are sought.

Reason: To ensure time is set aside to gauge customers attitudes to public services and combat consultation fatigue.

Contact Details

| Author: | Chief Officer Responsible for the report: | | | |
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| Matt Beer Head of Marketing and Communications Tel: x1071 | Bill Woolley Acting Chief Executive | | | |
| | Report Approved | ✓ | Date | 9 September 2009 |
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Specialist Implications Officers:

Equalities – Evie Chandler and Gemma Jackson

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A: Analysis of 18 NPIs and 14 other satisfaction measures (A3 spreadsheet)

Annex B: Place Survey results by six equality strands (powerpoint slides)