

Cherwell District Council

Executive

7 October 2019

<h3>Results of the Residents' Satisfaction Survey 2019</h3>

Report of Assistant Director – Performance and Transformation

This report is public

Purpose of report

To provide the Executive a summary of the key results from the annual satisfaction survey and to identify areas to be reflected in future business and service plans.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the results of the survey, with particular reference to the priority service areas identified by respondents as set out in section 3.15.
- 1.2 Agree that the results and priority service areas identified will be used as part of the business and service planning process for 2020-21.
- 1.3 Agree to continue to develop the approach of consulting and engaging with our residents, ensuring we reach as many residents as possible making use of all communication tools available to us and keeping residents up to date with progress against the business plan.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Cherwell District Council has a strong track record of customer and community consultation and uses an annual satisfaction survey to understand residents' priorities, issues and concerns in order to shape and improve service delivery.
- 2.2 This report provides a summary of the results of the survey that took place during May and June 2019. The survey was carried out by a third party research agency company, Marketing Means on behalf of the Council.
- 2.3 The survey includes questions on most council services, value for money, priority areas and areas for improvement. Specific services that the majority of the general public wouldn't have accessed during the year (e.g. Development Control or

Benefits) are not included within the survey, although respondents are able to make any additional comments about council services in the open questions that are included within the survey.

- 2.4 The survey provides a statistically valid and robust data set to help inform decision making, prioritisation and service development.
- 2.5 An infographic summarising the results is included in Appendix 1. The Council's Insight Team are able to provide additional analysis if required and may be contacted by email: consultation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

3.0 Report Details - Headline key results

- 3.1 This section summarises the headline key results from the satisfaction survey.
- 3.2 It is worth noting that for the duration of the six weeks the survey was live, we had the following events which may/may not have had an impact on the feeling/responses of residents when completing the survey:
- Spiceball swimming pools closed for renovation
 - Announcement and closure of Castle Quay bridge
 - Announcement and demolition of Castle Quay North car park
 - European elections
 - Theresa May announces resignation
 - Compost giveaways
 - Better air quality drive in Bicester at the train barriers

Local area as a place to live

- 3.3 77% of respondents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, with 12% dissatisfied. 909 (92%) residents responded to this question. 40% of those respondents aged 75yrs+ were very satisfied with their local area as a place to live which was significantly higher than those aged 25-34yrs, 35-44yrs and 45-54yrs.

Here are a couple of extracts from our resident's responses:

- Banbury resident: *"I am very satisfied with local district council, I have always been treated with kindness and respect when contacting them. I think the service they offer with current cutbacks are excellent"*
 - Bicester resident: *"I think CDC do great job. I am really pleased with the way they deal with ASB – it's the only significant issue for me"*
 - Kidlington resident: *"Provide great services making this a very nice area to live". "Refuse collection is good, always know when my bin is going to be collected. When I have called the council, they have always been helpful"*
 - Rural – *"I can see that CDC area doing the best they can under challenging circumstances, overall I believe that CDC do better than many other councils"*.
- 3.4 Overall satisfaction with the local area as a place to live has remained fairly consistent across the period 2016-2019, with 80% very or fairly satisfied in 2016, 82% in 2017, 79% in 2018 and 77% in 2019. Dissatisfaction levels have ranged from 9-12% across the same period and those in the 'neither satisfied or dissatisfied' section has been around 11%.

- 3.5 New for this year, we ask customers ‘how satisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?’ as part of automated service-specific feedback emails, the results are very positive achieving 87% this year. The number of responses are small at present but very encouraging following an interaction with our services. We have also been running the same process with Regulatory services, again reporting very positive results of 86% satisfied.

Satisfaction with Services

- 3.6 55% of respondents were satisfied with the services provided by Cherwell District Council, with 15% dissatisfied. 931 (94%) residents responded to this question resulting in 55% were satisfied with the services provided by Cherwell District Council overall which remains at the same level as in 2018. 72% of respondents 75+yrs were significantly more satisfied with the services provided by the Council overall compared with those aged 45-54yrs and those aged 55-64yrs.
- 3.7 Anti-Social Behaviour, Household waste collection and Recycling collection/food and garden waste collection services were highlighted as the top three most important services in making somewhere a good place to live. Satisfaction with these services are high/improved:
- 87% satisfied with the Council’s green bin collection service
 - 81% satisfied with the Council’s household recycling collection service
 - 83% satisfied with the Council’s household food and garden waste collection service.
 - Anti-social behaviour satisfaction rates have improved to 35%.

It is worth noting here that Cherwell District Council remains the only council in Oxfordshire not to charge for garden waste collection. Here is an extract from a resident:

- Rural resident: *”I like the recycling when the compost is distributed, please keep the recycling centres and tips open”*

- 3.8 65% of respondents were satisfied with the street cleaning service. Throughout the year a number of neighbourhood blitzes are carried out with local residents to engage local residents in cleaning up their communities. The blitz teams also use this as an opportunity to educate residents about recycling.
- 3.9 52% of respondents were satisfied with the Council’s approach to dealing with environmental crime (littering, fly tipping, graffiti etc.). The council takes a proactive approach in educating residents about environmental crime starting in schools across the district.
- 3.10 Overall satisfaction with leisure facilities provided by the council was 54% and 70% of respondents were satisfied with the way parks and play areas are managed by the Council.
- 3.11 The main leisure facilities across Cherwell have seen an increase in usage within the first quarter of this year. Woodgreen Leisure centre 50m swimming pool has made the most of the hot weather over the last few months and seen an increase in residents making use of the outdoor facility. This summer Spiceball has undergone refurbishment works to the swimming pools and is now open again to the public. Cherwell’s FAST family programme continues to be successful, delivering

affordable activities in specific wards in Banbury, and now Bicester and Kidlington. Over 1200 individuals have a FAST card and 330 families which enables them to access heavily subsidised local offers. Cherwell has recorded 2500 attendances on the FAST programme, the highest achieving project in the country within the first 6 months.

The Diabetes programme which is funded by Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) continues to be delivered by the Leisure Team using Physical Activity as the delivery mechanism. Extensive work is also being carried out locally to ensure community club provision and opportunities are available for all and featured as part of the online wellbeing map.

- 3.12 Overall satisfaction with leisure activities provided by the council was 46%. This summer Cherwell has offered an extensive range of activities and free days out for families to attend across the district. The summer holiday programme has had over 4200 young people attendees, attending over 18 different activities.
- 3.13 Satisfaction with the council's approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance has improved to 35%. Satisfaction has improved in the way the council deals with anti-Social behaviour and remains the most important service area for residents when making somewhere a good place to live. This is reflected in the priority services outlined in section 3.15.
- 3.14 There will be a specific focus through the business planning and service planning process on the priority service areas set out in the next section of the report.

Priority Service Areas

- 3.15 This is the second year the revised service prioritisation question has been included. The question asked:

'Thinking generally about the services we provide, how important are the following in making somewhere a good place to live?'

'And thinking about the local area, which of the services below, if any, need improving?'

- 3.16 The service areas which were highlighted as most important were:
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour (78% very important);
 - Household waste collection (76% very important);
 - Household recycling collection and food/garden waste collection (74%) and
 - Street cleaning and tackling environmental crime (68%)

As highlighted earlier satisfaction with waste and recycling services remains high as does the Council's performance in this area.

Dealing with anti-social behaviour is a clear priority area for residents. This is reflected in the Council's business plan under the priority 'Clean, Green and Safe'.

Nationally, the District remains a low crime area; however, crime in the district has increased over the past year in line with the national trend. The Council continues to work proactively with partners in this area and action plans covering all

community safety and safeguarding activity are currently being further developed and implemented.

Accredited Community Support Officers (Community Wardens) are employed by Cherwell District Council and cover the areas of Banbury and Bicester. They have been accredited by Thames Valley Police and are able to use certain powers to assist them to carry out their daily role. Community Support Officers have powers to issue fixed penalty notices for the offences of littering and dog fouling, and they have access to the police issue airwave radio, enabling them to work more closely with their police colleagues.

The Community Support Officers have listened to the feedback from residents and improved their communications by creating a dedicated Facebook page which has attracted over 10,000 followers. This online presence has enabled officers to update the social media page on proactive patrols, working with Thames Valley Police and other agencies. This page is managed by the Community Support Officers with support from the communications team. The team also use this as an educational tool, staying safe, healthy and signposting of partner agencies when needed.

- 3.17 The service areas identified most frequently by respondents in most need of improvement were:
- Town centre development (54%);
 - Activities for younger people (46%)
 - Dealing with Anti-Social behaviour (42%)
 - Providing affordable housing (41%) has moved to the fourth position.

Town Centre development is a national issue, with many town centres struggling. This has been exacerbated by the well documented issues facing the retail sector over the past year. Cherwell has always taken a positive proactive approach to town centre development and will continue to do so. The Council played a key role in the development of Pioneer Square in Bicester and development of Castle Quay two in Banbury is underway and delivering the next phase of the development.

The provision of affordable housing is again another national challenge; however, Cherwell has a strong track record in supporting the delivery of affordable housing. The Council's Build! team has completed 260 homes since its inception, developing affordable homes for sale as shared ownership or to rent.

- 3.18 The results of the priority services questions will be used as part of the business and service planning process for 2020-21.

Communication and Value for Money

- 3.18.1 882 (89%) residents responded to this question resulting in 38% agreed Cherwell District Council provides value for money, an increase of 4.9% compared with 2018. This is interesting as Cherwell District Council increased its proportion of council tax this year for the first time in over 9 years.

As previously mentioned, further to the above additional questions asked, we ask customers 'do you agree or disagree that CDC provides value for money' as part of automated service-specific feedback emails, the results again are very positive

achieving 43% this year. Regulatory services are reporting even higher results of 56% satisfied following interaction with this service.

The service specific feedback is very positive, requesting customers to feedback quickly following an interaction is not only great customer service but also enables a proactive response to resolve any issues quickly.

- 3.19 Around half of respondents did not feel very or fairly well informed about the benefits and services the Council provides (55%) however residents feeling informed about what it spends money on has increased to (50%).

The Council uses a variety of communication methods to communicate with residents, including among other Cherwell Link (quarterly residents newsletter delivered to all households in the district), social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Linked In etc.), the Council website, press releases and public consultations. The council also reports on its performance against the business plan on a monthly basis which contains information around progress against our Measures and Key Performance Indicators. Information about how the Council spends its money is also included in the Annual Performance Report.

Of those who responded 73% were satisfied with Cherwell Link (the Council Magazine) and 72% were satisfied with the Cherwell District Council website. We have, as a result of last years results ensured that articles going into Cherwell Link and press releases (where we can) are linked to the business plan and service areas and as a result Cherwell Link satisfaction has increased from 67% to 73%.

- 3.20 It is recommended that officers undertake a review of how the Council communicates with residents to ensure we reach as many residents as possible with key service updates and that we effectively communicate progress against our business plan objectives and how the Council spends its money.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 The Customer Satisfaction Survey is an annually commissioned consultation which provides the Council with a standard source of data for gauging satisfactions levels across the district, which enables informed decision making with regard to service provision and priorities.
- 4.2 The results of the survey and the additional analysis carried out will be used to inform the Council's budget and service planning process for 2020 onwards. Officers have been tasked to carry out further analysis into the priority areas identified by residents and to review how the council communicates with our residents. The Insight and Communications team will be working closely with all services to ensure a robust action plan is in place to feedback to residents what we are doing and why.

5.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 The annual satisfaction survey provides the Council with a standard source of data for gauging satisfactions levels across the district about service delivery and value

for money, which enables informed decision making with regard to service provision and the planning of priorities.

- 5.2 The service specific satisfaction and feedback enables services to react quickly to any issues identified and also provides the council with more frequent satisfaction results.
- 5.3 It is important that the results are used as part of business and service planning and those areas of further investigation as outlined in section 3 of this report are progressed. These further investigations by officers, coordinated by the Insight Team, will provide the council with more detailed customer feedback and insight enabling evidence-based decision making.

6.0 Consultation

- 6.1 The Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey was undertaken between 7 May and 21 June 2019. The resident survey was sent to a sample of households across the district to gauge satisfaction with Council services and the area where they live, as well as asking about service priorities. The survey was sent out to a random sample of 3,500 households.

7.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 7.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

To reject the findings of the satisfaction survey results and not incorporate them as part of the business and service planning process for 2020-21. This has been rejected as the survey provides the Council with a standard source of data for gauging satisfactions levels across the district, which enables informed decision making with regard to service provision and priorities.

8.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report

Comments checked by: Joanne Kaye, Strategic Business Partner: Finance, 01295 221545 Joanne.kaye@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 8.2 There are no legal issues arising from this report, on the grounds this is an informal consultation on the council's own initiative rather than a response to specific legislation.

Comments checked by: Richard Hawtin, Team Leader – Non Contentious
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Risk Implications

- 8.3 There are no risk implications arising from this report. Risks are managed as part of the operational risk register and escalated to the Leadership Risk Register, as and when necessary.

Comments checked by: Louise Tustian – Acting Performance & Communications Manager, 01295 221786 louise.tustian@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

9.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: [Insert yes or no]

Community Impact Threshold Met: [Insert yes or no]

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

The satisfaction survey results cover the Council as a whole as well as the local area and will inform the business and service planning process for 2020-21.

Lead Councillor

Councillor Richard Mould, Lead Member for Performance Management

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	2019 Satisfaction Survey Infographic
Background Papers	
None	
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