

Cherwell District Council

Executive

4 November 2013

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results 2013

Report of Head of Transformation

This report is public

Purpose of report

To update the Executive on the results of the annual satisfaction survey and identify any areas to be reflected in future business and/or performance plans.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the results of the customer survey, with particular reference to improvement in areas that were identified as priorities as an outcome of the survey undertaken in 2012.
 - The way the Council deals with anti-social behaviour
 - The Council's approach to dealing with environmental crime
 - Car Parking Services
- 1.2 To agree the priorities and areas of focus for future action as set out in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6.

2.0 Introduction

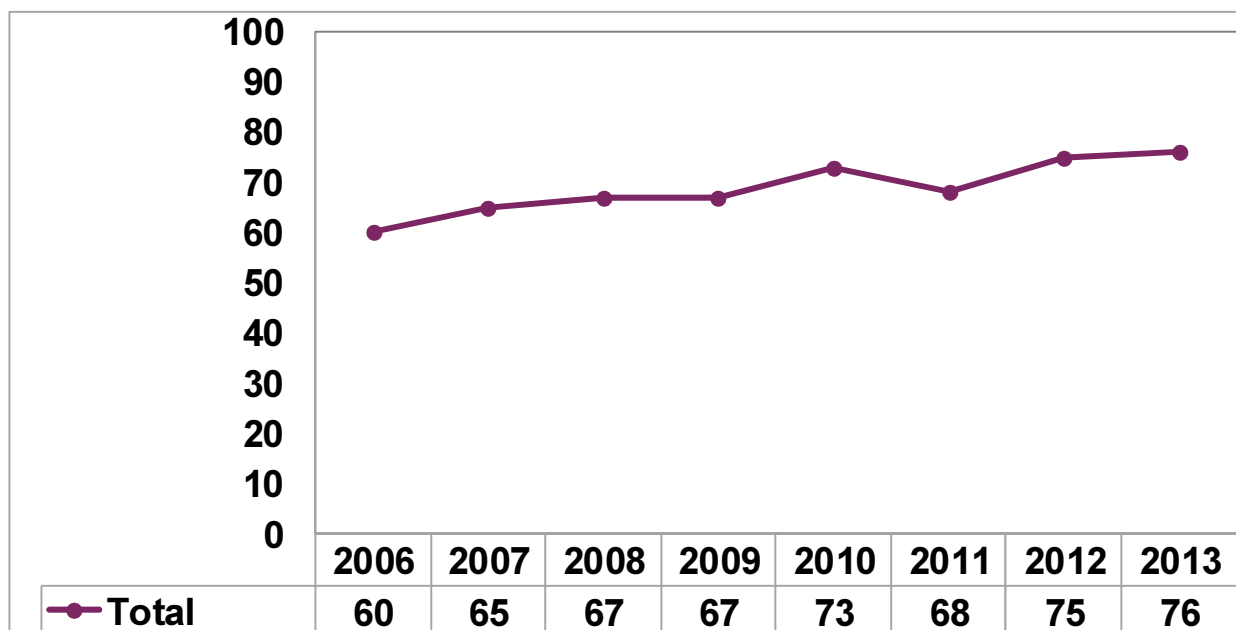
- 2.1 Cherwell District Council has a strong track record in customer and community consultation and currently uses a citizen's panel to help track customer satisfaction with council services and understand people's priorities, issues and concerns.
- 2.2 This report provides a summary of the results of the customer satisfaction survey undertaken in May/June 2013. The survey was conducted via the Council's citizen's panel and respondents were encouraged to complete the survey online. Hard copies were available for those that needed them.

- 2.3 The survey includes questions on most council services, value for money, spending priorities and quality of life issues. 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 questionnaire, although respondents are able to make any additional comments about council services in the open questions that are included within the questionnaire.
- 2.4 The Council has been undertaking customer surveys since 2006 and the data provides a statistically valid and robust trend analysis to help inform decision making, prioritisation and customer service development.
- 2.5 A full summary of the survey results is attached as Appendix 1. The Performance and 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

3.1 Overall satisfaction with the Council

The graph below highlights the overall satisfaction rating with the Council since the inception of the survey in 2006. The trend is one of upward improvement and a significant improvement of 16% since 2006 and of 8% since the low in 2011.



In terms of what drives overall satisfaction we know that there are a number of services that impact on people's views. This 'key drivers' analysis indicates that the services listed below have the biggest impact on overall satisfaction and, as such, are important to 'get right' in terms of customer service.

- 1) The Councils approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance
- 2) Local area as a place to live
- 3) Street cleaning service

- 4) Local car parking facilities
- 5) Leisure activities provided by Cherwell District Council
- 6) The way parks and play areas are looked after
- 7) Waste collection service

3.2 Satisfaction with Council Services

In addition to the overall satisfaction rating the survey provides more specific details about individual service areas. These results tend to be more likely to shift between years but give a good indication of where the council is getting things right and where improvement is required.

The table below summarises the satisfaction in the services areas included within the questionnaire and highlights percentage improvements since the inception of the survey. Looking at the results a general dip in satisfaction can be seen across several service areas during 2011, recovered during 2012 and consolidated but not significantly improved in 2013.

Of the Council's services recycling and waste collection consistently shows the highest levels of satisfaction.

	% change since 2006 *	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Overall Satisfaction	+16%	76	75	68	73	67	67	65	60
Recycling centres	+14%	91	87	88	87	86	83	77	77
Household recycling collection service	+4%	83	80	82	83	78	75	76	79
Waste collection service	+15%	82	80	76	78	70	68	67	67
Food and garden waste collection	+5%	81	80	80	76	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Street cleansing service	+11%	70	69	64	72	67	66	63	59
Local car parking facilities	+5%	64	63	49	63	64	63	58	59
Local parks and open spaces	+3%	75	77	72	74	73	70	71	72
Leisure facilities	+7%	69	76	74	71	68	63	58	62
Leisure activities	+3%	59	61	56	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Local area as a place to live	+2%	80	86	78	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Council's approach to dealing with environmental crime	+6%	48	47	42	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance	+22%	56	49	43	44	36	36	30	34

* – Percentage improvement since 2006 or the first year the question was asked
n/a – the question was not included within the survey in this year

3.3 Communication and Information Provision

In 2013 70% of respondents felt that the Council kept them 'fairly well' or 'well informed about the services and benefits it offered. This has been relatively stable

as a response since 2006 where 69% of respondents answered in the same way. 64% of respondents feel 'fairly well' or 'well informed' regarding what the Council spends its money on.

74% of respondents were happy with Cherwell link (up from 68% in 2008) and 75% were happy with the website (up from 62% in 2008)

From our detailed analysis of the results we know that access to good information about the Council and effective communication help to improve residents overall satisfaction. As such communication and information provision should remain a priority.

3.4 Perceptions of the Council: Value for Money and Trust

In terms of how residents view the Council as providing value for money the results are less positive. For 2013 only 45% of residents agreed with the statement 'Cherwell District Council provides value for money', with 18% actively disagreeing and 38% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

The table below tracks the results for this question since 2009 and highlights it as an area where more could be done to communicate the work that Council has done over the past several years in term of reducing its budgets, protecting frontline services and delivering value for money.

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% disagreeing with statement in 2013
38%	42%	37%	47%	45%	18%

Since 2012 the survey has also tracked a number of questions relating to budgets and trust, there is positive movement in terms of trust, respondents are clearly in favour of keeping council tax reductions to a minimum (reflecting the Council's existing policy) and increasing respondents are aware that to reduce costs services are likely to be affected.

Statement	% agreeing with statement		% disagreeing with statement in 2013
	2012	2013	
Council's don't need to cut services as enough money can be saved through efficiency savings	56%	50%	27%
I would rather pay more Council Tax to maintain services	18%	18%	62%
I trust Cherwell District Council to do what's right for residents in the current economic climate	42%	47%	26%

3.5 Customer Priorities

As part of the survey respondents are also asked to trade off services in terms of priority. This list gives us a ranked order of customer priority. Waste collection,

street cleansing and dealing with anti-social behaviour always tend to be reflected highly in the list and in recent years we have seen jobs and affordable housing move up the order of priority, for 2013 this pattern has not changed.

Ranking of Customer Priorities 2013



The diagram above highlights a 'top 6' of key services which are perceived to be a priority by local residents in greater magnitude than other council services.

- 1) Household waste collection
- 2) Household recycling collection and food/ garden waste collection service
- 3) Supporting the creation of jobs in the local area
- 4) Street cleaning and tackling environmental crime
- 5) Providing affordable housing
- 6) Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance

It should however, be recognised that the survey is only of local residents and that other stakeholder groups, e.g. local businesses may have slightly different priorities.

3.6 Suggested Areas for Future Focus

The list below highlights areas where it is recommended that continued focus is maintained. These recommendations are based on two factors, current levels of satisfaction and the extent to which the service is a high priority for local residents.

- a) Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour: whilst improvement in this area has been recorded it is still rated as one of the areas of lowest satisfaction and is an area of high priority for local residents.

- b) Dealing with Environmental Crime: littering, fly-tipping, graffiti and dealing with dog waste, all key in terms of delivering a high quality local environment and services that are valued by local residents. This is an area where the Council needs to improve (currently it has the lowest rating) and as such should remain a priority.
- c) Continuing to focus on Street Cleansing: like 'dealing with environmental crime' one of the 'top 6' priorities street cleansing is a service that is experienced by all residents and plays an important part in terms of quality of life and enjoyment living within a local area. It is a service upon which the Council is judged and valued by many residents and as such should remain an on-going area of focus.
- d) Continued focus on communication with local residents and businesses: as noted above the better the quality of communication and access to information about Council services local residents have the more likely they will be able to access services and be satisfied with the results. Whilst there are currently solid satisfaction ratings with communication it should remain an area of on-going focus.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 This report presents a summary of the findings from the 2013 customer satisfaction survey. It highlights a general trend of improvement across council services as well as areas where continued focus is required.
- 4.2 The report also highlights customer priorities and these will be used to help inform budget setting, the development of the Council's Business Plan, Performance Pledges and 5 year Strategy.
- 4.3 As well as these high level findings the survey includes a wealth of service specific detail that will be used by service managers to help underpin service planning.

5.0 Consultation

Cherwell Residents

The survey is conducted with local residents.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

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

Option 1: To accept the recommendations as outlined in part one of this report.

Option 2: To reject the recommendations and request additional work or alternative priorities arising from the survey findings.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Tim Madden, Head of Finance and Procurement, Tel 0300 003 0106,
tim.madden@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

7.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance, Tel 0300 0030107,
Kevin.Lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision - No

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

An Accessible, Value for Money Council.

Lead Councillor

Councillor Nicholas Turner
Lead member for Performance and Customers

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	2013 customer survey results
Background Papers	

None	
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