



Communities Scrutiny Group

Thursday, 23 January 2025

Residents Survey Feedback

Report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present the results of the Residents' Survey that took place in Summer 2024 and facilitate a Group discussion about the feedback provided by residents through the survey. The Residents' Survey is conducted every three years and seeks feedback from residents on key Council services and suggestions for making the Borough an even better place to live and work.
- 1.2 To identify where the Council can take action leading to improvements in resident satisfaction in the future.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Communities Scrutiny Group:

- a) Discuss the results and identify if any further actions should be taken as a result of the survey findings
- b) Agree for the Council to include relevant follow up actions in its Communications and Engagement and Customer Access Strategies 2025-2028 relating to ways in which residents can contact engage and feedback on services.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. It is important that the Council takes a proactive approach to listening to residents' views on its services and quality of life where they live so they feel wider support from the authority and its partners can address the key topics they raise.
- 3.2. Identifying possible improvements where the Council can take action directly or tailor existing actions to be more impactful in line with the survey feedback. This enables the Council to further shape services in line with resident needs and ensure engagement is effective.

4. Supporting Information

Background Information

- 4.1. The Council conducted a residents' survey in June, July and August 2024 which has provided insight into what residents think about the Council and how satisfied they are with the services provided.
- 4.2. The structure, format and questions are all based on previous surveys conducted by the Council and allow it to track satisfaction over a number of years.
- 4.3. The survey was promoted digitally and contained within the summer edition of the residents' magazine Rushcliffe Reports and heavily publicised across the Council's website and other digital channels.
- 4.4. 1,338 residents completed the survey, an increase on the 1,147 who completed the last survey in 2021 and 547 who submitted their views in 2018. Whilst feedback is important in terms of context this relates to only 1-2% of the local population who access Council services. There also has to be a realism in what the Council can do given the financial constraints it operates within.
- 4.5. A table of results is at Appendix A including comparisons to data collected in 2021, the last large scale residents' survey undertaken.

Cautionary Notes

- 4.6. There is a small downward trend in some areas of the levels of satisfaction indicated by residents in a number of areas, anticipated in line with The Local Government Association's similar resident surveys in 2024. Many factors may be responsible for public confidence in some public services and could overshadow some responses and have an impact on how people feel about the Council and other public service providers.
- 4.7. As above, this is not a local finding. The Local Government Association has reported that councils who surveyed this year are seeing a drop of 4-6% or greater on previous results – due to wider public confidence in the sector.
- 4.8. The Group is also asked to bear in mind that in local government resident surveys tend to group all public service providers together and it is often not clear whether views are directed specifically to the Borough Council or other parts of the public sector.
- 4.9. Results may also have been influenced by the continuing transition to residents' lives in a post COVID pandemic environment and cost of living increases with expectations of service delivery changing. It is possible this can effect the perceptions or realities of accessibility to public sector services.

General Questions – high levels of satisfaction

- 4.10. The survey contained 30 general questions which residents had the opportunity to express a view on. The Council has parameters for what it considers to be good levels of satisfaction and areas of satisfaction that are lower than desired – these are over 80% or under 60% respectively.
- 4.11. Of the questions surveyed, three are above 85% and eleven are below 60% in line with the Council's long-standing thresholds for resident satisfaction.

General Questions – levels of satisfaction above 80% threshold

	2024	2021	Difference
Percentage of people who have overall satisfaction with their local area as a place to live	81%	84%	-3%
Percentage of people who feel safe when outside in their local area during the day	90%	91%	-1%
Percentage of people aware of the Council's events programme	86%	83%	+3%

General Questions – levels of satisfaction between 80% and 60% threshold

	2024	2021	Difference
Percentage of people who are satisfied with the refuse and recycling service	78%	81%	-3%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with street cleanliness	64%	67%	-3%
Percentage of people satisfied with the way the Council runs things	61%	59%	+2%
Percentage of people who agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	61%	57%	+4%

General Questions – levels of satisfaction lower than 60% threshold

	2024	2021	Difference
Percentage of people who agree that the Council provides good value for money	43%	42%	+1%
Percentage of people who will speak positively about the	45%	44%	+1%

Council			
Percentage of people who think the Council acts on the concerns of local residents	45%	44%	+1%
Percentage of people who trust the Council	56%	55%	+1%
Percentage of people who agree that they can influence decisions that affect their local area	26%	26%	-%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with Rushcliffe Reports	41%	50%	-9%
Percentage of people satisfied with the variety of ways they can contact the Council	53%	59%	-6%

- 4.12. Of the questions with the higher percentage decreases, subsequent proposed actions will be discussed later in the report.

Satisfactions increases and declines

- 4.13. Satisfaction in six areas has improved, one area has remained the same and in twelve areas has declined – in five areas, this decline has been more than 5% as shown in the table below:

	2024	2021	Difference
Percentage of people who think the Council keeps them well informed	55%	64%	-9%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with Rushcliffe Reports	41%	50%	-9%
Percentage of people who agree that they can influence decisions that affect their local area	26%	31%	-5%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with the variety of ways they can contact the Council	53%	59%	-6%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with a Council event they have attended	78%	84%	-6%

- 4.14. Given the ongoing transition of how, when and where residents expect services to be delivered in a transitional time for many public sector services, some drop in satisfaction levels as outlined above was expected and, therefore, these decreases will be areas focussed on later in this report.

- 4.15. The Council appreciates it can be difficult for residents to distinguish between the work of the Borough Council and the County Council or, in some cases, other public service providers.
- 4.16. Open comments at the end of the survey cover feedback to a range of different providers and, therefore it is consistent that the numerical questions also express some dissatisfaction with other partners' services.
- 4.17. This is then considered in line with the topics residents have raised in the next section.

More service specific questions

- 4.18. The survey also contains questions specifically related to the events service asked if they have used the service and, if they have, how satisfied they were.

Events

	2024	2021	Difference
Percentage of people who are aware of the Council's events programme	86%	83%	+3%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with a Council event they have attended	78%	84%	-6%

- 4.19. Very slight decreases could be linked to events took place after the survey It is very clear that the events programme is still valued by residents and showcased by consistent and in some cases increased visitor numbers such as at Proms in the Park and Lark in the Park events in 2024.

Streets, parks and refuse and recycling

	2024	2021	Difference
Percentage of people who are satisfied with street cleanliness	64%	67%	-3%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with parks and open spaces cleanliness	69%	71%	-2%
Percentage of people who are satisfied with the refuse and recycling service	78%	81%	-3%

- 4.20. Residents were asked about their views on satisfaction on streets, park and refuse and recycling. All received marginal decreases and possible actions will be discussed later in order for residents to communicate specific feedback on the services.

Communications

- 4.21. Residents were asked about how they would prefer to receive Council information and were able to choose multiple methods.

How would you prefer to receive Council information.	2024	2021	Difference
Rushcliffe Reports	59%	67%	-8%
The Council's website	40%	33%	+7%
The Council's social media channels	37%	25%	+12%
Via local press	14%	14%	-%
Other	7%	6%	+1%

- 4.22. Of note here are the results indicating the wish for increased digital communication on the website and social media. Whilst Rushcliffe Reports remains a way to inform residents, a movement towards other communication channels is increasingly desired. The action points later will consider including an audit of communications channels including Rushcliffe Reports as part of the Communications and Engagement Strategy to identify possible new methods to engage audiences further.

Resident feedback on specific issues

- 4.23. The next set of questions are phrased differently to the rest of the survey and ask whether respondents feel a number of factors are a problem in their local area rather than asking how satisfied respondents are. They are mainly connected to feelings of safety and anti-social behaviour. In the main, there are very low percentages of people reporting that these factors are an issue in their area. Highlighted below are the five areas where there has been an decrease in issues according to those who responded and one increase since the last survey in 2021:

Percentage of people who feel that the following factors are a problem in their local area:	2024	2021	Difference
Rubbish or litter lying around	32%	42%	-10%
People using or dealing drugs	23%	25%	-2%
Dog fouling	47%	49%	-2%
Vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage	19%	18%	+1%
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	10%	11%	-1%
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	9%	10%	-1%
Teenagers hanging around the streets	22%	22%	-%

- 4.24. 32% of respondents felt that rubbish and litter lying around and 47% of respondents felt that dog fouling were problems in their areas, both better than in 2021.
- 4.25. Whilst residents may be concerned any of the above issues are a problem in their area, performance data collected by the Council and partners would suggest otherwise. This is not to say that residents are incorrect, but that reality and perception do not always agree. The Council is always mindful that environmental concerns are a key priority for residents and continually seeks to promote the work the Council and its partners do to target action to address these issues.

New questions

- 4.26. A section of the survey asked respondents on three new questions.

	2024
Percentage of people who agree that the Council takes action on the views residents have expressed or explained why it is not possible to do so	15%
Percentage of people who feel they are asked for their thoughts on topics and services that matter to them	22%
Percentage of people who agrees the Council listens to their views	17%

- 4.27. The follow up actions will address how the Council could look to increase these figures and listen, respond, explain and inform how and why services are shaped and delivered.

Open feedback provided by residents

- 4.28. The final section of the survey asked respondents if there was anything else they wished to inform the Council about. Kindly, over 40 people left compliments about the Council and its services including many comments on the Council's waste services.
- 4.29. The largest proportion of less positive comments related to services run by the County Council – 205 out of the 907 total comments overall related to road and pavement maintenance and a further 29 on the potential relocation of West Bridgford Recycling Centre.
- 4.30. These comments will be passed on to our partners to raise their awareness of the concerns expressed by residents. The fact that so many residents left feedback that relates to other organisations suggests a couple of things. That there is still an ongoing lack of understanding of which organisation does what

and so feedback relating to levels of satisfaction may also be influenced positively or negatively by residents' perceptions of services that we do not provide or that they are aware and wish to complain in any case.

- 4.31. 78 comments left by respondents to the survey related to kerbside glass recycling, set to be addressed by the forthcoming simpler recycling scheme from the Environment Bill in line with national changes in the coming years and an extensive budget commitment (see the January Cabinet Report on this subject).
- 4.32. There were 74 individual comments relating to the wider growth of communities and some planning matters. In the main, residents expressed concerns about the number of houses being built around the Borough and the perception that there is not sufficient corresponding infrastructure.
- 4.33. 550 other comments related to Council services as a whole. These included 68 comments related to the environment including litter on pavements and in open spaces, and a lack of bins, dog fouling, street sweeping, weeds and fly-tipping. 42 were on Planning matters and 21 on Council Tax. Others were received about anti-social behaviour, bring banks, a current planning application that covers Tollerton Airport and services and events being perceived as too West Bridgford-centric.
- 4.34. Residents kindly gave favourable feedback too on the Council's frontline waste and Customer Services teams with over 20 compliments.

Proposed Actions

- 4.35. Draft the Council's Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028 to include to further ways for residents to be engaged and ask questions on services so both the Council and the residents can be ever more informed. The could include an audit of communications channels including Rushcliffe Reports to identify possible new methods to engage audiences further. A budget proposal could see the magazine printed twice instead of three times a year as other channels are reviewed to inform residents even more effectively.
- 4.36. Consider more regular formal consultation, linked to the Council's performance framework replacing the triennial survey, to receive more up to date data to shape services. One of the challenges will be whether response rates will be maintained with regular consultation.
- 4.37. Focus the Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028 to increase ways residents can feedback on in particular frontline services such as streetscene, parks and refuse and recycling even more easily whether digitally or in person at Customer Contact points. There will always be limitations when service delivery is framed by legislation, such as the new Simpler Recycling requirements.

- 4.38. Capture data on the demographics of who is responding to surveys to ensure the Council is receiving a fair representation of views from across its communities to further inform service and engage with hard to reach groups.
- 4.39. Closely monitor and to respond accordingly to resident questions on local government reorgansiation and devolution.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

If no action is taken as a result of the feedback identified in the survey this may result in disengagement in local democracy and/or reputational issues with residents. Failure to listen to residents may also have an adverse effect on the quality of life in the Borough in direct contradiction of the Council's key priorities.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

Possible third-party co-ordination of the focus group, employing an engagement provider to assess and deliver the format, met from existing budgets.

6.2. Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

6.3. Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	It is important to ask residents of the Borough how they feel about living and working in the Borough so that this information can be used to inform decision making.
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	
Quality of Life	

8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Communities Scrutiny Group:

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- b) Agree for the Council to include relevant follow up actions in its Communications and Engagement and Customer Access Strategies 2025-2028 relating to ways in which residents can contact engage and feedback on services.

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Background papers available for Inspection:	None.
List of appendices:	1