

APPENDIX E

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 31 MARCH 2009

Title:

PLACE SURVEY 2008 – RESULTS

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Richard Gates]
[Wards Affected: All]**

Summary and purpose:

The 'Place Survey' was carried out by Waverley and all other Local Authorities in England in Autumn 2008. The standard survey methodology and questionnaire were set by central Government. The survey sought to collect data to inform some of the new National Indicators introduced by the Government in 2008/09. In addition, the survey asked for residents' perceptions of the place they lived, and their satisfaction with various public services.

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the survey to the Executive, along with comparisons of the National Indicator results with other Surrey authorities. Unfortunately national comparisons, which were due to be published by the Audit Commission on 9 March, have been delayed. Officers will share national figures with Members when they are available to put them into context.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The Place Survey captured residents' perceptions about aspects of life in Waverley and their satisfaction with public services that relate to all of the Council's Corporate Priorities. The Corporate Plan's 'Value for Money' priority contains specific targets relating to achieving top quartile satisfaction levels with Waverley's services.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no specific equality and diversity implications arising from this report. The Place Survey questionnaires all contained contact details for residents to request a large print or translated version. This report is based on data which has been weighted by the Audit Commission to try and ensure the results are representative of the demographic profile of the area.

Resource/Value for Money implications:

There are no resources implications in this report. The Place Survey captures resident's perceptions of whether their local councils provide value for money. The 11 Surrey Boroughs and Districts, together with the County Council worked in partnership to procure the same contractor to carry out the survey – leading to efficiency savings and greater value for money.

Legal Implications:

Carrying out the Place Survey and the annual reporting of performance against the statutory National Indicators (NIs) are legal requirements on the Council.

Background

1. The new 'Place Survey' was carried out by Waverley and all other Local Authorities in England in Autumn 2008. The standard survey methodology and questionnaire were set by central Government. The survey sought to collect data to inform some of the new National Indicators introduced by the Government in 2008/09. In addition, the survey asked for residents perceptions of the place they lived, and their satisfaction with various public services.
2. A copy of the survey questionnaire is attached at Annexe 1. In accordance with the Government guidelines this was not solely branded from one Local Authority, but sent from both the Borough and the County Council with a generic 'Surrey Services Working Together' strapline. The 11 Surrey Boroughs and Districts, together with the County Council procured the same contractor, QCL Market Research, to carry out the survey – leading to efficiency savings and greater value for money.
3. The questionnaire was sent to 2,500 randomly selected addresses across the Borough at the end of September 2008, and two further reminders were sent to those who did not respond in October and November 2008. 1,344 completed questionnaires were received, giving a response rate of 54%.
4. Once the results were collated they were submitted to the Audit Commission to be 'weighted'. This tries to ensure that when the data is analysed the results are representative of the demographic profile of the local authority area. All information in this report is based on the weighted data.

Place Survey Results

5. QCL's report analysing Waverley's results in detail is attached at Annexe 2. This gives a detailed breakdown of responses to each question within the survey.
6. The table below shows three of the key 'headline' results for the survey, which are the indicators which are included as part of Surrey's Local Area Agreement (LAA):

LAA Indicator	Description	Waverley Result
NI 4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their local area	28.4%
NI 5	Overall / general satisfaction with local area	86.2%
NI 21	% who agree that the local council and the police are successfully dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues.	28.5%

7. One of the primary purposes of the Place Survey was to collect data to enable reporting against 18 of the Government's new National Indicators (NIs) which were introduced as a way of measuring the performance of localities in 2008/09. Waverley's results for each of these National Indicators is attached at Annexe 3, along with Waverley's position when compared to the other Surrey districts/boroughs.
8. It should be noted that there is little variation between the results of the Surrey districts/boroughs on many of the indicators, so the rankings can be a little misleading. For example, NI119 – self reported measure of people's overall health and well-being – where the highest result for this indicator is 83% and the lowest is 81%, so the differences between areas are not be statistically significant.
9. A report comparing the full Place Survey results within Surrey has been prepared by QCL. It is a lengthy report, so copies have been placed in the Members' Room.

National Comparisons

10. The Audit Commission was due to publish national comparisons for all of the Place Survey national indicators on 9 March 2009. However, it has advised that these have been delayed and there is not yet a confirmed date for their publication, although they have confirmed that the national results will include comparisons across all of the indicators.
11. This delay is unfortunate as greater value could be achieved of Place Survey results if comparisons nationally were available.

Target setting / Action planning

12. It can be difficult to identify ways of influencing and improving perception and satisfaction indicators, as many of the drivers – particularly in a broad survey relating to all public services – are beyond Waverley's control. For example, news items in the national press can greatly influence people's perceptions of community safety issues.
13. A publication by the LGA in November 2008, *the key drivers of resident satisfaction with councils*, examined the drivers of overall perceptions of satisfaction and value for money of local authorities, based on previous national surveys. Whilst these surveys were branded and focused specifically on collecting views about councils rather than wider 'public services' or 'place', but the principles influencing satisfaction are similar. This publication states that "the strongest driver of 'perceived value for money' – and the primary driver of resident satisfaction with councils – is effective information about council services. Councils whose residents feel well informed about services are the most popular and vice versa."¹ This correlation is commonly quoted by many researchers, including Ipsos Mori.

¹ *The key drivers of resident satisfaction with council*, Local Government Association, November 2008, p2.

14. The publication also identifies that there is almost no correlation between overall satisfaction with the council and residents' satisfaction with a combination of individual council services (e.g. waste collection, sports and leisure facilities, parks and open spaces, museums and galleries) or between overall satisfaction with the council and council tax levels and rises.
15. The results of the Place Survey will be circulated and disseminated within Waverley to feed into planning and target setting for services where appropriate, for example as part of the Communications Service Plan. It is suggested that targets for the indicators which help Waverley measure its Corporate Plan priorities should be considered when the Executive considers the 2008/09 end of year performance report at its meeting in July.
16. The Waverley Strategic Partnership plays an important role in ensuring the various public bodies and key community organisations work together to deliver outcomes of Waverley's residents. The Place Survey results include views and perceptions relating to public services across Waverley. Therefore it is recommended that the Waverley Strategic Partnership be requested to review the results of the survey at its next meeting on 30 April 2009, and to build any appropriate actions into its future work programme.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive

1. notes the results of the 2008 Place Survey for Waverley, attached at Annexe 1, and uses this information to help inform target setting against these indicators for future years; and
2. requests that the Waverley Strategic Partnership consider the results of the Place Survey in relation to the Sustainable Community Strategy objectives and the Local Area Agreement targets and identifies any future actions necessary.

Background Papers (DCEx)

The key drivers of resident satisfaction with council, Local Government Association, November 2008

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