

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	18 December 2008
Subject:	Scrutiny review: Place Survey challenge panel
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Tom Whiting, Assistant Chief Executive
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Paul Osborn, Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communication and Corporate Services
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Report considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Final report of challenge panel Appendix 2 – Reference from the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the findings and recommendations of a scrutiny challenge panel convened in September to consider additional questions for the borough's government-mandated Place Survey of local residents.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to note the report.

Reason: (For recommendation)

Although no formal decision is required, the recommendations having already been incorporated into the final draft of the Place Survey, it is considered best practice that Cabinet should be advised of business carried out by the scrutiny function.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

Obtaining the views and opinions of local people about council services is vital in making sure that the things the council does meet local needs. Previously, MORI were contracted to conduct a survey, called the Quality of Life Survey, every year. Questions were set by the council. However, from 2008 onwards, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) have required that all local authorities carry out a survey called the Place Survey, which contains a mix of questions must all authorities must ask and questions which can be chosen from a “question pool” by individual councils.

The purpose of this is to ensure that residents’ views can be easily compared across the entire country.

Very limited space is available for the council to add its own discretionary questions. Scrutiny councillors were approached in the summer for their thoughts on which questions could be chosen to constitute this portion of the survey. Councillors’ recommendations as to the selected questions were directly implemented by the officer involved prior to executive level agreement of the final document.

Options considered

Cabinet is being asked to note the report, which is being provided for information only.

Current situation

The Place Survey has now been issued, and responses are expected shortly. The findings are due to be made public in the New Year.

Financial Implications

The Place Survey is a government-mandated survey. Funding for its completion has already been approved by Cabinet and the budget for this has been set aside within the Chief Executive’s Department.

Performance Issues

There are no specific performance issues, other than those relating to resident satisfaction.

The Place Survey is an important new component of the CAA framework. However the additional questions that the Council elects to add in to the survey will not contribute to any assessment of the Council under CAA.

Risk Management Implications

As no decision is being requested at this meeting, there are no risk management implications.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Sheela Thakrar

Y

on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 14 November 2008.

Name: Stephen Dorrian

Y

on behalf of the
Monitoring Officer

Date: 14 November 2008

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Tom Whiting

Y

on behalf of the
Divisional Director
(Strategy and
Improvement)

Date: 11 November 2008

Section 5 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Ofordi Nabokei, Scrutiny Officer, 020 8420 9205

Background Papers: Place Survey, 2008