

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	21 st April 2009
Subject:	Place Survey Results
Responsible Officer:	Tom Whiting, Assistant Chief executive
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Results Schedule

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the results of the Place Survey and draws attention to the most significant outcomes.

Recommendations:

The Committee are recommended to note the results of the Place Survey agree to receive a report in approximately six months on action that has been taken to address issues relating to perceptions of public services in Harrow working to promote the interests of local residents, acting on the concerns of local residents and enabling people to influence decisions in their local areas.

Section 2 – Report

The Place Survey was in the field between 17th October and 19th December 2009. 3,600 questionnaires were sent to addresses drawn at random from the Post Office Address File (PAF) but excluding any addresses that had received the Quality of Life Survey in 2008. This report sets out the results of the survey.

Unlike the Quality of Life Survey, the Place Survey did not include a top up mailing to the wards with the greatest density of Black and Minority Ethnic residents. The Place Survey followed a Government template with the exception of 5 additional questions chosen locally. 1277 questionnaires were returned with enough data to be included in the survey results (35.5%).

Although the Place Survey follows a series of Quality of Life Surveys and also the BVPI surveys conducted in 2006/7 and 2003/4, the results cannot be directly compared with any previous survey. This is because the sample sizes, the methodology, the format of the surveys and the times of the year at which they were conducted differ. In addition, some of the questions have changed, sometimes quite subtly, which would make comparisons invalid. Where possible, however, data from previous surveys has been included with the results to give context but conclusions over time cannot be drawn from this contextual data.

The Topline Results are attached. The most significant features of these results are described below:

- Of the things that are rated as being in need of improvement locally, road and pavement repairs were the top priority in both the Quality of Life (QoL) survey (2008) and in the Place Survey (PS) (question 2); while traffic congestion has climbed from 4th in the QoL survey to 2nd in the PS
- local public services have a net +36 percentage points rating for working to make the area safer; local public services have a net +24 percentage points rating for working to make the area cleaner and greener and a net +36 percentage points rating for treating people fairly. However, local public services have a net -30 percentage points rating for promoting the interests of local residents and a net -18 percentage points rating for acting on the concerns of local residents.
- The Metropolitan Police have a net +38 percentage points satisfaction rating; the London Fire Brigade have a net +48 percentage points satisfaction rating; local GPs have a net +60 percentage points rating; the local hospital has a net +22 percentage points satisfaction rating and the local dentists have a net +44 percentage points satisfaction rating.
- Council services have the following net percentage points satisfaction ratings:

Keeping public land free from litter and refuse	+14
Refuse collection	+42
Doorstep recycling	+46

Local tips/household waste recycling centres	+54
Local transport information	+43
Local bus services	+55
Sports and leisure facilities	+6
Parks and open spaces	40
Museum /galleries	-6
Theatres/concert halls	-15

- The Council has a net -16 percentage points rating for providing value for money but a net +9 percentage points satisfaction rating;

- The following issues have been given the net well informed scores indicated

How and where to vote	+80
How your council tax is spent	-8
How you can get involved in local decision-making	-53
What standards of service you should expect	-33
How well public services are performing	-51
How to complain about local public services	-37
What to do in the event of a large-scale emergency	-55
Overall about local public services	-37

- A net -35% feel that they can influence decisions in their local area but a net +23% would like to be more involved in the decisions that affect their local area.

- Half of the respondents volunteered in the last year (on a new and much more liberal interpretation of volunteering).

- Net +54 agree that in their local area, people from different backgrounds get on well together. This is a significantly different question than that in the QoL survey which gives an option of “neither/nor agree or disagree” and in which a net +33 agreed with the proposition with 22% undecided.

- The following community safety issues had net scores for not being a big problem as shown

Noisy neighbours or loud parties	+72
Teenagers hanging around on the streets	+10
Rubbish and litter lying around	-1
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage	+22
People using or dealing drugs	+30
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	+34
Abandoned or burnt out cars	+76

- A net +75% feel safe when outside in their local area during the day but net -2% feel safe outside after dark

- A net +6% agree that the police and other local services are successful in dealing with community safety issues in their area whereas a net -1% feel that the police and other local services seek their views about community safety issues

Comparative data for Inner and Outer London has just been released and a verbal report on Harrow's relative standard will be given when this has been considered.

The Place Survey also contained some additional non-universal questions designed to continue to add to our existing data sets. These questions

- provided an idea of the extent to which people's lives were affected by the fear of crime – this distribution will only be really useful when compared with the answers to the same question in future years.
- produced a net -18 percentage points score for those agreeing that the Council kept residents well informed.
- produced a net +27 percentage points score in favour of the proposition that people locally are willing to help their neighbours.
- produced the following net scores in answer to the question of whether the service listed below had improved over the last three years

Keeping public land free from litter and refuse	+1
Collection of household waste	+18
Local recycling facilities	+39
Doorstep collection of items for recycling	+26
Local tips/household waste recycling centres	+21
Local transport information	+6
Local bus services	+9
Sport and leisure facilities	-13
Libraries	+8
Museums/galleries	-10
Theatres/concert halls	-13
Parks and open spaces	+1

- produced the following net scores in relation to awareness of activities undertaken by the Fire Brigade

Respond quickly to 999 calls	+39
Carry out safety visits in homes most likely to have a fire	+11
Fit smoke alarms for people most likely to have a fire	+14
Talk to children about the dangers of fire	+33
Work with children and young people including those who deliberately start fires	+13

Financial Implications

There are no costs associated with this report

Performance Issues

Not applicable

Risk Implications

Not applicable

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not applicable

Section 4 – Contact details and Background Papers

Mike Howes, Service manager, Policy and Partnerships,
020 8420 9637