
HOUSEHOLD SURVEY RESULTS 2015

Report by Chief Executive

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

17 December 2015

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report presents the results of the Scottish Borders Household Survey 2015. Key results from the perception-based survey are highlighted, alongside relevant performance information and links to Scottish Borders Council's Corporate Transformation programme.**
- 1.2 The Scottish Borders Household Survey 2015 (appended to this report) asked questions about a range of services provided by the Council and partner organisations. There was a response rate of 41% to the paper questionnaire (2,445 responses) and an additional 261 surveys were completed on line.
- 1.3 The Household Survey has been used since 2006 to gather customer perception/satisfaction on a range of Council Services and is one of the tools available to the Council for collecting such information. The Council also uses service specific customer surveys, engagement events and feedback mechanisms, such as our complaints process, to gather information on how well the Borders' community feels the Council is doing in meeting its needs. As a local authority we use a mix of both general and targeted methods to engage with the community, and gather views about how communities think we are performing. We know that some people are more likely to respond to these opportunities than others, but we aim to make the opportunities for people to have their say as easy to access as possible. This intelligence is used alongside a range of performance information which is presented to the Executive Committee on a quarterly basis.
- 1.4 The 2015 survey included the following themes which are covered in this report:
- Scottish Borders Council
 - Local decision making
 - Employment and training
 - Transportation
 - Household waste collection, recycling and waste services
 - Community safety
 - Health and wellbeing

- Internet access
- Borders environment

Respondents were also asked about:

- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Housing
- Accessibility
- Borders Sport and Leisure Trust

- 1.5 Since the 2013 Household survey, we, like all councils, have faced major financial challenges and have worked hard to maintain high quality services with less resources. Some services have had to change and be reshaped and this has undoubtedly had an impact on customer satisfaction levels.
- 1.6 However, residents are generally satisfied with the services provided to them; satisfaction levels with Scottish Borders Council remain high at 65% with the number rating the Council as 'Excellent' increasing. 84% of residents were satisfied with the cleanliness of the area in which they live and 92% feel that their neighbourhood is either a 'very good' or 'fairly good' place to live. However the proportion of residents who think their area is a very good place to live has continued to rise from 52% in 2009, 54% in 2010, 55% in 2013 to 58% in 2015. The vast majority of respondents continue to report that they feel safe when alone in their area during the day (97%).
- 1.7 Where customers tell the us, Scottish Borders Council, they are not satisfied or where our performance is not on target or where we want it to be, there are a range of ambitious projects have been developed under our 'Corporate Transformation' programme which allows us to respond effectively to the social, demographic and economic challenges facing us (www.scotborders.gov.uk/transformation); this work is referenced in the report.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Council agrees the Household Survey results for publication and distribution.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scottish Borders Council has undertaken a Household Survey in its current format since November 2006. Following the 2010 survey the decision was taken to move to a biennial survey, resulting in a biennial budget saving of approximately £16,000. Due to the Local Authority election in 2012 subsequent surveys were delayed until 2013 and 2015.
- 3.2 The Scottish Accounts Commission requires councils to publish a range of information relating to their activities in any financial year. This includes information on responsiveness to communities, of which the results of the household survey form a valuable part. Engaging with stakeholders and seeking their views on council services is also part of a focus on continuous improvement.

4 2015 HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

- 4.1 A random sample of 6,000 addresses was selected for Scottish Borders Council area from the Postcode Address File (PAF), to receive a copy of the self-completion survey. These were distributed in May 2015. An electronic version which was promoted by social media both by the Council and partner organisations. A total of 2,445 responses were received to the paper survey and 261 surveys were completed on line. This equates to a 41% response rate of those that received the survey.
- 4.2 Having the survey available online has increased the number of responses from those under 60 years of age. 66% of respondents to the online survey were aged under 60 yrs compared to 35% of respondents to the paper survey.
- 4.3 The detailed results of the survey are included in the attached report. The following reports are also available:
- Literal report (comments made)
 - Analysis of results by age
 - Analysis of results by disability
 - Analysis of results by gender
 - Analysis of results by housing tenure
- Top line reports are also available by Council ward.
- 4.4 The following partners took part in the Survey: Borders Sport & Leisure Trust, Transport Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and the four main social housing providers in the Borders. Their contribution to the cost, which was calculated on a pro rata basis of cost per page, was £4,239 (exc VAT) with the total cost being £15,329 (exc VAT).

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 Since the council started carrying out household surveys, all councils and public sector bodies have faced major financial challenges. Scottish Borders Council has estimated that the cost of continuing current levels of service provision will increase by £27.8m over the next five years. With limited likelihood of securing additional resources and with an almost certain increase in demand for services, many services have had to change to cope with these increased pressures whilst striving to maintain high quality services to the public.

5.2 The results of the 2015 survey, relating to the views of those responding about living in the Scottish Border and on Council services only, are now presented within this section, including trend analysis where possible. The results have also been presented within the context of current information on council performance, key achievements over the last 2½ years, and significantly, the current programmes of work we have in place to ensure that we continue to provide high quality services that meet customer need; this is our Corporate Transformation programme.

5.3 Scottish Borders Council

5.3a 65% of respondents said that they would rate Scottish Borders Council as 'excellent' or 'good'. This has decreased since 2013 when 69% said they would rate the Council as 'excellent' or 'good', although those rating the council as 'excellent' has increased from 3.1% to 4.4%.

5.3b We value feedback from our customers and takes steps to improve our services on an ongoing basis. Our customer facing arrangements are also being reviewed as part of the Corporate Transformation programme, through our 'Customer First' programme. The programme will help us to present a single, consistent view of Council services to the customer, putting them at the heart of what we do and simplifying the way in which they can get information and services.

5.3c Our current ICT programme will also influence what we are able to deliver digitally into the future, as will re-designing our internal processes to deal with customers more efficiently.

5.4 Satisfaction with participation opportunities provided by the Council

5.4a 40% of respondents were satisfied with the opportunities for participating in the local decision making process, this has decreased since 2013 (46%) but shows an increase when compared to 2010 (35%) and is comparable to 2009 (41%). Satisfaction generally increases with age although there are no significant differences in responses depending on gender or disability.

5.4b Through the transformation programme we are taking forward a 'Localities' pilot in the Cheviot area aimed at improved co-ordination and delivery of services, and using Area Forums more effectively.

5.4c A strategic approach to 'co-production' is also being developed. This means that people who use services are equally involved, alongside professionals, in the planning and delivery of services. We have taken this approach already in some areas but seek to co-produce more of our services in the future.

5.5 Participation in Council run consultations

5.5a 13% of respondents said they had taken part in a council consultation which is less than in 2013 (17%) and 2010 (18%). Participation in consultations was highest in Tweeddale (18%) and lowest in Berwickshire (12%).

5.5b Those aged between 35–59 were more likely to have taken part in a consultation while residents that said they had a disability were

significantly less likely. There was no difference by gender.

- 5.5c 16 consultations were available on the Council website between January 2014 and June 2015, including the Proposed Byelaws Prohibiting the Consumption of Alcohol in Designated Public Places and Local Autism Plan. Following the introduction of a corporate toolkit to support community engagement work, officers are developing proposals for a more joined up planned approach to undertaking engagement activity, including consultations. The Council's 2015 budget consultation makes use of the new Dialogue tool to engage and consult with the Borders community in a new and exciting way.

5.6 Employment and training

- 5.6a This was a new question that asked respondents to rank, by importance, various actions in connection with improving employment opportunities in the Borders with the following results:

1st: Bringing jobs to the area

2nd: Getting more young people into work

3rd: Creating more apprenticeships

4th: Getting more adults into work

5th: Assistance with starting up your own business

- 5.6b Respondents were then asked to select barriers, if any, that they faced when getting a job or securing a better job. The two main barriers were the lack of relevant job opportunities and lack of jobs with decent pay. Females said they were more likely to face barriers in terms of lack of job opportunities with decent pay than males, while 43% of males said they faced no barriers compared to 35% of females. Respondents with a disability (21%) were less likely to say that a lack of relevant job opportunities were barrier facing them getting a job or securing a better job compared to those without (28%).

- 5.6c Since 2013, the Council has been proactively promoting work opportunities across a range of services and has implemented a Work Opportunities Policy to provide a range of supported work opportunities across the organisation. 28 Modern Apprentices were employed with the Council during 2014/15.

- 5.6d Our services have actively promoted equality of opportunity within their employment practices and make good use of flexible working practices, for childcare needs and work place adjustments, to enable staff to continue in or access employment. Nationally, we report on the percentage of women in the 5% highest paid jobs and this has increased from 41% in 2013/14 to 43% in 2014/15.

5.7 Transportation

- 5.7a 44% of respondents said that they used local bus services; this is consistent with results for 2013 and 2010. Respondents living in Tweeddale East were most likely (60%) while those living in Mid Berwickshire least likely to use the local bus service (32%). Respondents aged over 60 were most likely to use the bus service.

- 5.7b Those who did use the bus service were asked for their opinions on the local bus service:

- 81% were satisfied with the local bus service which is comparable to satisfaction levels in 2013 and 2010.
 - 84% were satisfied with the quality of the service provided, comparable to responses in 2013.
 - 77% were satisfied with local bus service information which is the same as in 2013 but reflects an improvement on 2010 when it was 69%.
- 5.7c Satisfaction in all areas increases with age. Those with a disability were more likely to be dissatisfied with local bus information than those without. There was no difference by gender.
- 5.7d A Sustainable Transport Programme is currently underway with the aim of implementing a better, simpler, more accessible and cost effective model of transport service provision, through a multi-agency approach. Substantial progress has been made to date that will contribute to savings and efficiencies, reduced carbon footprint, strengthened partnership working and a sustainable overarching approach to the provision of transport in the Scottish Borders that meets the needs of the community.

5.8 Satisfaction with household waste collection

- 5.8a Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with waste collection, recycling and waste services. This question was asked to determine satisfaction levels over time and to focus where future changes in service provision may be best focused.
- 5.8b Satisfaction with kerbside waste and recycling services has decreased from 90% in 2013 to 79% in 2015, with those living in the Berwickshire area most likely to be satisfied with the service (83%). Residents over the age of 75 were most likely to be satisfied (90%); women were more likely to be satisfied with the services than men (82% and 76% respectively).
- 5.8c Satisfaction with the service offered at the Community Recycling Centres has decreased from 79% in 2013 to 71% in 2015 with residents in Tweeddale least satisfied (66%). Those with a disability were less likely to be satisfied with the Community Recycling Centre (63%) than those without (73%).
- 5.8d Satisfaction with Council communications, guidance and information received from the Council about waste and recycling services has decreased from 68% in 2013 to 58% in 2015.
- 5.8e Satisfaction with the recycling bring sites (e.g. bottle banks) that are situated across the Borders has decreased from 78% in 2013 to 65% in 2015, during this time there has been no change in the number of sites provided. Satisfaction was significantly higher for those aged 60-74 (71%) and 75+ (70%) than those under 45 years of age (55%).
- 5.8f In relation to Waste Services, since April 2013 we have:
- Developed a variety of waste and recycling facilities and services so communities can work with us to meet recycling targets (including upgrades to facilities and a new Community Recycling

Centre in Kelso);

- Installed ninety seven 'recycling on the go' facilities across the Borders to make recycling out with the home as easy as possible for residents and visitors to the area;
- Installed landfill gas management systems at the Council's closed landfill sites, with environmental benefits;
- Generated and exported around 0.6 to 0.7 Mega Watts of green electricity via the landfill gas management system;
- Introduced the new weekly food waste collection service, in line with the requirements of the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

5.8g Over the same period, recycling rates within our Community Recycling Centres have steadily increased however, but the annual household recycling rate has fallen in line with projections, given the removal of the garden waste service. However, it is important to note that the Council has saved £450,000 per annum (net of anticipated increased landfill costs) through the removal of the garden waste service.

5.8 h As part of the Council's Corporate Transformation programme work is being undertaken with the aim of achieving a sustainable, fit for purpose approach to waste management for the Scottish Borders. This will be achieved by creating efficiency savings, reducing expenditure, as well as providing additional income through the implementation of a strategy that is financially and environmentally sustainable.

5.9 Community Safety

5.9a Respondents were asked if there were any places in their local area where they felt unsafe. 13% said there were such areas, this is consistent with the responses given in 2013 but an improvement on 2010 when 20% said there were areas where they felt unsafe.

5.9b Respondents were asked to indicate, from a list of options, what issues they felt were common, or not, in their area. The top five neighbourhood problems indicated were:

- Parking problems – 43% (stating very/fairly common)
- Rubbish and litter lying around - 37%
- Dangerous driving or speeding – 37%
- Unwanted callers at the door – 22%
- People using or dealing drugs – 20%

These results are comparable with 2013 but show changes compared to 2010 when 46% reported they felt dangerous driving or speeding and 30% felt that rubbish and litter lying around were common.

5.9c When asked to report feelings of safety when alone in their home at night (97%), walking alone in their area during the day (97%) and walking alone in their area after dark (79%) the results were consistent with 2013 and 2010. Respondents with a disability were more unlikely to feel safe walking alone in their area after dark (66%) than those without a disability (83%). Similarly females were less likely to feel safe in this situation than males (73% and 87%). Those who were aged 75 and over were also significantly less likely to feel safe walking alone in their local area after dark (72%) than those aged under 75 (82%).

5.9 d The Safer Communities Team within Scottish Borders Council examines

a range of performance information on a regular basis and reports to the joint Police, Fire and Safer Communities Board, as well as the Council's Executive Committee. Cumulatively, rates of both crime and antisocial behaviour are now lower than they were at the same time in 2013 and 2014.

- Groups 1-5 recorded crimes and offences: there were 57 fewer offences recorded up to the end of September 2015 than in the same time period in 2014 which equates to a 3.6% decrease
- Antisocial behaviour: there were 258 fewer recorded incidents up to the end of September 2015 than in the same time period in 2014 which equates to a 9% decrease.

5.10 Health and Wellbeing

- 5.10a Questions included in the survey were aimed at increasing the understanding of current work of the multi-agency Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP), and informing potential work for the future.
- 5.10b 5% of respondents said that they or a family member had at some point had concerns about how much alcohol they consume, this is down from 8% in 2013. The highest proportion was in 16-34 year olds with 9% responding 'yes' to this question.
- 5.10c 68% of respondents were of the opinion that the number of places to purchase alcohol in their local area is about right, 14% stated there were too many places and 2% said there were too few places. Respondents in Teviot were significantly more likely to have said there were too many places to buy alcohol (23%).
- 5.10d Half of respondents said they consume alcohol at home rather than at licensed premises or before going out to a licensed premise (50%), 28% said they did not do this. Where respondents did drink alcohol at home, they were asked about the main factors that have influenced them to do this. The most common reasons were due to a changing lifestyle (45%), convenience (45%), the cost of going out for a drink (42%) and drink driving regulations (40%).
- 5.10e Statistics show that the proportion of non-drinkers in the Scottish Borders is 21% (data from Scottish Borders Household Survey 2015) compared to the Scottish level of 15%.
- 5.10 f The ADP have deployed an Alcohol Development Officer to undertake community engagement. This officer is involved in joint work with the Licensing Standards Officer to increase understanding of licensing in the community. The 2014 – 15 Alcohol Profile developed by the Local Licensing Forum is in development.

5.11 Internet access

- 5.11a 16% of respondents said they did not use the internet or email compared to 23% in 2013. There is a significant increase in the number of respondents accessing the internet using their own mobile device, 72% compared to 46% in 2013. There is also an increase in the number using a library or other Council facility to access the internet at 3.8% (1.5% in 2013).

- 5.11b Access to the internet is directly correlated to age with 100% of respondents aged under 35 stating they have access compared to 49% of respondents aged 75+.
- 5.11c Digital Connectivity is a key programme within our Corporate Transformation programme, and the Council has already invested £4.2m in next generation broadband for the Borders, with an additional £4.2m committed for 2016/17, aimed at achieving 94% coverage. As part of the Programme, we will continue to lobby for superfast broadband throughout the region, both in town and rural areas. With partners, we are already piloting superfast satellite broadband to 1,000 customers in so called 'white postcode areas' i.e. areas with only basic broadband.

5.12 Borders environment

- 5.12a Satisfaction with the cleanliness of the area in which people live has increased from 81% in 2013 although is still lower than in 2010 (89%). Keep Scotland Beautiful measures street cleanliness on an annual basis. In 2014/15 the Scottish Borders scored 95.5% which is consistent with the previous three years.
- 5.12b Satisfaction with the speed of repair to local damaged roads has increased slightly (22%) since 2013 (19%) but is still lower than in 2010 when 33% were satisfied. Scottish Borders Council is aware that investment in the road network is required, £0.7M additional expenditure was approved in 2014/15 and an additional £1M in 2015/16 with a further £1M per annum to be invested from 2019/20 onwards. This will significantly reduce the rate of decline of our roads.
- 5.12c Satisfaction with the maintenance of public toilets is consistent with 2013 at 43%. 33% of respondents responded that the 'don't know' which could indicate that they don't use public toilets.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

The financial cost to Scottish Borders Council of undertaking the 2015 Household Survey was £11,090 exc VAT.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

Carrying out a survey of this type is essential in order to monitor customer satisfaction in a rigorous way. It is important that the Council feeds back and responds promptly to the outcomes or respondents may feel that they have not been listened to. It is therefore vital that there are direct actions arising from the information received through the survey.

6.3 Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required for this proposal.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no anticipated economic, social or environmental effects from publishing the results of the Household Survey.

6.5 **Carbon Management**

There are no known effects on carbon emissions

6.6 **Rural Proofing**

n/a

6.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted in addition to the Council's Corporate Management Team and Corporate Communications Team and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

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Background Papers: Household Survey 2015

Previous Minute Reference: none

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Clare Malster can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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