

Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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Public Opinion – how our residents see Central Bedfordshire and the Council

Advising Officers:

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Purpose of this report

1. To update Members on the current position on resident perceptions and to present new analysis of our research based on the socio economic characteristics of our communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider and provide feedback on the presentation of our resident survey data as analysed by socio economic characteristics of our communities.

Issues

Our approach to market research

1. Whilst the national mandate for all local authorities to regularly conduct residents' surveys was lifted in 2010, Central Bedfordshire Council has continued to regularly seek feedback from its customers.
2. Following baseline research in 2009, biennial surveys have been conducted with representative and statistically robust samples of residents.

3. The methodology for these surveys has been consistent (telephone surveys conducted) which has enabled the Council to understand residents' perceptions and whether these have changed over time.
4. In addition to the biennial research, tracker surveys are run more regularly to monitor opinion on some key indicators and with a smaller sample of customers.

Current position

5. The Council conducted its last large scale resident survey in September 2014 and the results were reported to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee last year.
6. The tracker survey conducted in September shows that there have been no statistically significant shifts in public opinion on our main indicators.

These include:

Overall satisfaction with the Council
Perception of value for money
The extent to which residents feel informed about the Council
The extent to which residents would speak highly about the Council.

Additional research

7. In addition to reviewing our survey results in broad terms, we have further examined how different elements of our community regard Central Bedfordshire as a place to live.
8. Specifically the marketing segmentation tool, Mosaic, has been used to analyse the perceptions of our residents according a range of social, demographic and economic factors.
9. At appendix one, a series of slides includes this research which will be presented at Committee.

Council Priorities

10. In November 2015 the Council confirmed its priorities as outlined in the Five Year Plan. Our market research work helps the Council to monitor its performance against all of its priorities and, as part of our commitment to be an efficient and responsive Council, it enables us to understand and respond to our customers' opinions and preferences.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

11. Our research is conducted in line with best practice by an independent and specialist research agency, Public Perspectives Ltd with further analysis conducted by the Council's in house Communications and Insight Team.

Financial Implications

12. The costs of our market research are met from within current budgets.

Equalities Implications

13. Public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The provision of high quality market research which is informed by accurate information about the profile of the respondents (including race, gender, disability etc.) enables us to analyse and monitor whether there are any inconsistencies or underlying issues of concern from an Equalities and Diversity perspective.

Conclusion

The Council has achieved significant improvements in how it is perceived as a service provider and as a local authority.

There remain issues of concern to residents, which feature to a lesser or greater extent depending on their circumstances. By understanding such issues, the Council is able to develop targeted responses that are most likely address and resolve them.

Appendices

Appendix One – Public Opinion – how our residents see Central Bedfordshire and the Council

Background Papers

1. The following background paper was taken into account;

Central Bedfordshire Council Resident Survey 2014
Central Bedfordshire Council Tracker Survey 2015