

Report to: **Overview Committee**

Date of Meeting: 15 November 2018

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None

Agenda item: 9

Subject: **Viewpoint Survey 2018**

Purpose of report: To communicate the findings of the latest Viewpoint Survey.

Recommendation: **For Members of Overview to make recommendations in relation to the survey results.**

Reason for recommendation: In pursuit of continuous improvement.

Officer: Karen Jenkins Strategic Lead for Organisational Development and Transformation

Financial implications: There are no direct financial implications relating to the recommendations made in the report.

Legal implications: There are no legal implications requiring comment.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk

Links to background information: • n/a

Link to Council Plan: Improving to be an outstanding Council.



Viewpoint Survey 2018

1 Introduction

East Devon District Council's Viewpoint Survey represents an opportunity for the Council to gain the views of its residents about a range of council services. The survey, which was also sent out in this format in 2013, 2014 and 2016 was sent out to 3000 randomly selected residents across the district.

Appendix one outlines further details of the methodology used.

The report incorporates residents' comments where the comment has been made by 10 or more respondents.

From a statistical point of view, for a change from previous years to be meaningful, it is considered that there must have been a change of at least plus or minus 5%. If the change is less than plus or minus 5% there has been no meaningful change.

Due to the number of respondents (over 400) and the fact that people receiving a copy were randomly selected from the whole population of East Devon, the results of this survey can be extrapolated to be representative of the district.

2 General results

We are extremely grateful to the 607 residents who responded to this survey. This compares to 772 in 2016 and 774 in 2014. Each Council service area will use the results of this survey to support the Service Planning process for 2019/20.

- 91% were satisfied with their local areas as a place to live.
- 65% are satisfied overall with the way EDDC runs things – 14% were dissatisfied.* This compares to 66% who were satisfied in 2016.
- 77% feel that East Devon District Council keeps them informed about the services it provides - 23% do not. This compares to 74% in 2016.
- 65% feel that the Council provides value for money – 10% disagreed. This compares with 67% in 2016.
- 60% responded that the Council acts on what residents' say – 44% disagreed. This compares with 56% in 2016.
- 51% responded that the Council acts quickly – 14% disagreed. This compares with 51% in 2016.
- 44% would speak positively about the Council – 17% would not. This compares with 42% in 2016.

Paragraph 2.1 outlines comments made by residents in relation to the above.

Like other recent surveys, the Viewpoint Survey reinforces the fact most people would prefer to contact us by phone or through our website rather than visit our offices. 80% of people who have used our website in the last 6 months were satisfied with it, this compares to 84% in 2016, no significant change.

*Where scores do not add up to 100% this is because people did not express a view either way.

2.1 Comments relating to general results

In relation to the above results, where residents responded negatively we asked them to provide comment.

- When asked why they were dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live, the most common reason given (2% of respondents, 13 people) was due to Devon County Council maintenance of roads, pavements, kerbsides and gutters. As a District Council, East Devon does not have specific control over these issues.

When asked for suggestions on how we can generate income to fill the funding gap the most common suggestions were:

- Get second homes to pay full council tax, or more than full council tax (20 people, 3%).

- Rebel against national government austerity / lobby MPs (16 people, 3%).
- More fines and enforcement of fines (15 people, 2%).
- Put up council tax (15 people, 2%).
- Employ less staff, particularly middle management (13 people, 2%).
- Encourage the public / voluntary and community groups to help look after the environment (11 people, 2%).
- Hold more public events to raise funds (11 people, 2%).

We asked residents to give us examples on where they think we do not act on what residents say. 72 respondents (12% of all respondents) said regeneration, planning and development issues were the reason they feel we don't act on what residents say. Including:

- 6% (36 people) said that the Council should listen to residents and town/parish councils on planning matters.
- 6% (37) gave the example of Exmouth seafront.
- 15 respondents (2%) commented that some residents don't want to see EDDC move from Knowle.
- 14 people (2%) commented that issues have taken too long to resolve.
- When asked why they were dissatisfied with the Council overall, 19 respondents (3%) stated it was because the council didn't listen to local residents and what they said, mainly over planning matters.
- 2% of respondents (10 people) stated that the website isn't user friendly, they couldn't find what they wanted easily.

3 Collecting your waste

- 83% satisfaction with the black wheelie bin or gull sack collection. This compares to 88% in 2016.
- 90% satisfaction with green box recycling collection, a significant rise of 5% more residents than in 2016.
- 88% satisfaction with the green sack recycling collection.
- 88% satisfaction with the small grey food caddy and 91% satisfaction with the large blue food caddy.
- 79% were satisfied with the green waste wheelie bin collection.

3.1 Comments relating to collecting your waste

These three comments are similar to previous years:

- 11% (66) wanted a more regular black wheelie bin collection, most mentioned fortnightly.

- 5% (29) commented that refuse collectors needed to take more care of receptacles, putting them back carefully where they were placed for collection.
- 5% (29) said that the collection lorries and refuse collectors shouldn't drop litter all over the roads.

These comments did not feature in previous years:

- 4% (24) wanted the new green waste collections to be cheaper or free.
- 2% (14) stated that the green recycling sack isn't a good design. Reasons given included that it doesn't fasten properly, that it smells, and gets blown around.
- 2% (13) wanted us to collect more plastics for recycling, most mentioned plastic film.

4 Keeping East Devon an outstanding place

- 53% were satisfied with our off street car parks, 21% were dissatisfied. This is 6% more than were dissatisfied in 2016.
- 45% were satisfied with planning services. 24% were dissatisfied. This is 6% more than were dissatisfied than in 2016.
- 75% are satisfied with parks, public gardens, play areas and open spaces. This compares to 78% in 2016.
- 85% satisfaction with beaches and foreshores within East Devon, 8% were dissatisfied.
- 71% think that litter and rubbish 'isn't a very big problem' or 'isn't a problem at all'.
- 68% consider that the Council is making good progress towards our aims of using East Devon's natural landscape and countryside to encourage visitors and tourists. This is the same as in 2016.
- 47% consider that the Council is making good progress towards our aim of increasing job opportunities in the west of the district by encouraging businesses to base themselves near the new town of Cranbrook. This compares to 49% in 2016.
- 54% consider that the Council is making good progress towards our aim of making towns better places to live through regeneration. This compares to 53% in 2016.

4.1 Comments relating to keeping East Devon an outstanding place

- 7% (43) said they would like to see more/ cheaper car parking in off street car parks which would encourage more visitors and increase use of local businesses.
- 3% of respondents (17) asked for more off street car parking spaces.
- 2% (14) said that planning and development needs to take more notice of local people and Town and Parish Councils.
- 4% (25) wanted to see more litter bins.
- 3% (20) said that the collection lorries and refuse collectors shouldn't drop litter all over the roads.
- 2% of residents said that:
 - litter bins and dog poo bins needed emptying more often (15 people).

- the streets should be cleaned more often (13 people).
 - there should be more enforcement of fines for littering (13 people).
- 3% (16) said that parks, public gardens, play areas and open spaces aren't looked after anymore.
 - 2% said that play areas need refurbishing, or more equipment (11).
 - When asked why they were dissatisfied with parks, public gardens, play areas and open spaces 14 residents (3%) complained about Devon County Council's services over which we have no control.
 - 3% (20 people) said that there are too many empty shops in towns.
 - 2% (13) said that there are major transport issues in towns that need sorting out.
 - 2% (12) said that Exmouth's seafront shouldn't be regenerated as is currently planned.
 - 2% (11) said that there should be more quality shops rather than charity shops and cafes.
 - 2% commented (10 people) that the Council should not just focus on Cranbrook regarding jobs as other towns need jobs too.
 - 14 (2%) commented that there should not be building in rural areas/ANOB/greenfields.

5 Well-being and safety

- 50% are satisfied with Housing and Council Tax benefit. This compares to 47% in 2016.
- 50% are satisfied with Housing advice and housing services. This compares to 46% in 2016.
- 91% consider that they are able to trust food hygiene when eating out. This compares to 87% in 2016.

5.1 Comments relating to well-being and safety

There were no comments made by 10 or more people that related to the wellbeing and safety questions.

Appendix one

Methodology

Our Viewpoint Survey was sent out in the post to 3,000 randomly selected households from throughout the District. These households were selected completely at random from the Land and Property Gazetteer database, which is the most comprehensive and up to date list of addresses.

The questionnaire was sent out in the post; respondents receiving one in the post were given the option to complete it online if they wish. All completed paper copies went straight to SNAP Surveys Ltd for them to turn the paper based responses into a computer spreadsheet, this data was then sent onto us.

Results

The results have been weighted (according to best practice) by SNAP Surveys Ltd for Ward and age. This is a technique used to get accurate levels of representation for certain groups in the District. Data for under-represented age groups and Wards was weighted to make the sample a better representation of the actual population. For instance, if the population is known to be 50:50 male to female but the sample has 48:52 then weighting is used to adjust the sample data to represent the true population. In this case it would be done by giving each male in the sample a weight of 50/48 and each female a weight of 50/52.

NOTE: None of the comments given by respondents are weighted like the quantitative (numerical) statistics are. They are reflecting the comments of the actual age groups and Ward profiles that initially responded to the questionnaire. Where the % of all respondents is shown in the categorisation of comments this is not representative of the actual age groups or Wards within East Devon, purely the % of respondents to this survey.