

RESIDENTS SURVEY 2015

Policy and Performance Advisory Committee Meeting - 1 March 2015

Report of: Chief Executive

Status: For Consideration

Also considered by: Cabinet - 21 April 2016

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Council's promise to provide value for money

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Fleming

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Recommendation to Policy and Performance Advisory Committee:

To note the results of the 2015 Residents Survey

Recommendation to Cabinet:

To note the results of the 2015 Residents Survey

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that Members are aware of the views and opinions of residents as collected from the 2015 Residents Survey.

Introduction and Background

- 1 During October 2015 Lake Market Research Ltd, an independent research company, carried out a resident survey on behalf of the Council. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the level of satisfaction with the Council and its services, the effectiveness of the Council's communications activities and to establish where local people obtain information about the Council.
- 2 A number of the core questions were taken from the Local Government Associations (LGA) 'LG Inform' database, a tool which has been developed by the LGA as a data benchmarking service for local authorities.
- 3 The data was collected by way of a telephone survey of 201 Sevenoaks District residents. Collectively they formed a broadly representative sample of the District population.

- 4 Research took place from 24 October to 2 November 2015. Some telephone calls took place during evenings and at weekends to ensure the Council heard the views of a representative, cross-section of the District population. All the telephone numbers were randomly generated.
- 5 The research was conducted under the Code of Practice of the UK Market Research Society, which means that all of the answers residents gave remain strictly confidential and anonymous.

Residents Survey Results

- 6 Officers will provide a presentation for Members at the meeting of the Committee to set out in more detail the results of the Residents Survey. The views of residents in relation to satisfaction, trust and value for money are important measures for the Council and are summarised as:
 - Overall satisfaction with the way the council runs things remains exceptionally high at 79%. Nationally 67% of residents are satisfied with their local council.
 - 59% of residents believe the council provides value for money; this is a small increase from 2013 (58%) and again higher than the national benchmark of 51%.
 - Trust in the Council currently runs at 74%, considerably higher than the national benchmark of 58%.
- 7 Although there is some disappointment that the Council has seen some fall in ratings since the last survey in 2013, overall the outcome of the survey is positive for the Council, particularly when placed in the context of the continued reduction in available resources for local government and the general reform of public services that has taken place in recent years.
- 8 It has been a challenging time for local government to retain its reputation and the trust of its residents. However, when compared to recent national data published by the LGA the Council continues to be one of the strongest performers nationally for important measures such as overall satisfaction, trust and value for money.

Communications

- 9 An important element of the Resident Survey is to find out information about how residents wish to access our services, how they keep informed about what the Council does and how the Council can best communicate with them.
- 10 Overall, 70% of those surveyed feel the Council keeps residents well informed about services; this is a 1% fall from 2013 but once again higher than the national benchmark. In Shape continues to be the communication that was most seen by residents in the 6 months prior to the survey, as opposed to the Council website or other forms of social media. Overall

