



Report of the West Leeds Area Manager

Date: 22 June 2006

Subject: Annual Council Survey

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the Gap

Council Function

Delegated Executive Function available for Call In

Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report

Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the findings from the Annual Council Survey with comparative data for the West wedge and the city as a whole. The Survey was carried out in 2005 and is the most comprehensive survey that the council has undertaken in terms of its sample size, and in terms of respondents accurately reflecting the age, gender, geographical spread and ethnicity of the population.

Key findings are provided for quality of life factors, budget setting and priorities, service delivery and information provision.

Members are asked to note the findings from the Annual Council Survey.

1.0 **Purpose Of This Report**

1.1 This report provides members with a summary of the findings from the Annual Council Survey carried out in 2005.

2.0 **Background Information**

2.1 This survey was undertaken to amalgamate some of the broader satisfaction surveys carried out on an ad hoc basis by departments. This information will provide an annual picture of services and an accurate basis for identifying service improvements. This is the first annual survey so it is difficult to identify specific trends, however comparative data from subsequent surveys will provide an indication of any particular trends in future years.

2.2 The survey was carried out by QA Research in York with face to face interviews sub-contracted to Swift Research. In total 2014 responses were received, a small number of responses were declared void due to significant amounts of missing data, but overall, about 2000 responses were used to inform each result.

2.3 The report is divided into two sections. The first section provides an overview of the key annual survey findings and the second section provides more in depth information relating to the area breakdown.

2.4 There are a range of factors to be considered when reviewing the annual survey results. As this is the first time that such a survey has been undertaken by the council, it is difficult to benchmark the results and it will only be with further results that trends will emerge. However, some limited benchmarking can be made with other councils and core cities.

2.5 This is the most comprehensive survey that the council has undertaken in terms of its sample size, but particularly in terms of respondents accurately reflecting the age, gender, geographical spread and ethnicity of the population. This has ensured that the results are truly representative and have involved respondents that the council wouldn't usually or regularly engage with.

2.6 The content, tone and style of the survey has been focused on how the council and services can be improved and not sought to gain praise, as such, for how it runs things. Therefore, the results are focused on which services can be improved, what respondents are concerned about and how the council can do better.

2.7 In addition, the timing of the survey may have also influenced some responses, as during September and October 2005, the city was coming to terms with the link between the London bombers and the area.

3.0 **Main Issues**

3.1 Key findings from the survey providing data for the West Wedge, and the city are included below:

3.2 **Quality of Life Factors**

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked a number of questions about their quality of life and what factors were most important to them.

3.2.1 The top five 'most important' were;

	West	Citywide
Low level of crime	44%	47%
Low level of anti-social behaviour	36%	32%
Health services	33%	32%
Shopping facilities	29%	33%
Parks and open spaces	28%	23%

Although the above factors are rated as the most important factors by respondents, only two (low level of crime and low level of anti-social behaviour) are rated among the top five when asked which were most in need of improvement. This suggests that although respondents are aware that certain factors are important to them personally, they accept that there are other issues that need to be tackled first.

3.2.2 The top five factors which are seen to be in need of improvement are:

	West	Citywide
Roads and pavements	45%	34%
Anti-social behaviour	38%	34%
Activities for teenagers	28%	28%
Level of crime	26%	27%
Level of traffic congestion	20%	22%

Overall, residents in the West wedge were generally satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live 71% fairly or very satisfied, (compared to 74% citywide). Nearly three quarters of respondents felt that they belonged to their neighbourhood, with stronger positive views held by those over 45. Also 60% (71%)* of respondents felt that their neighbourhood had not got worse over the last 12 months, and 13% (11%) felt it had got better. In terms of whether respondents felt that local people worked together to improve their neighbourhood, opinion was split – 40% agreeing and 49% disagreeing.

3.2.3 Respondents were also asked to rate a number of statements regarding potential problems that they might face in terms of whether it was a big problem or not at all a problem. Of the statements, the top three rated as a problem (a very big problem or a fairly big problem) were;

	West	Citywide
Teenagers hanging around on the streets	50%	39%
Rubbish and litter lying around	45%	39%
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	37%	32%

* figures in brackets denote citywide data

3.2.4 Conversely, the statements that people felt were not a big problem (not a very big problem or not a problem at all) were;

	West	Citywide
People sleeping rough	87%	90%
Abandoned or burnt out cars	85%	87%
People attacked or abused because of their skin colour or ethnic origin	71%	86%

3.3 Budget setting and priorities

3.3.1 When asked where respondents wish to see the council giving priority in terms of budget setting, they highlighted the following as areas;

	West	Citywide
Road and pavement repairs	42%	32%
Levels of anti-social behaviour	39%	38%
Activities for teenagers	34%	33%
Health Services	22%	16%
Affordable decent housing	21%	24%
Levels of traffic congestion	21%	17%

3.3.2 The theme of these responses appears to be a desire for the council to act on issues that have the potential to cause a lot of stress to residents in their everyday lives. There is a trend within the results between the importance of an issue to quality of life and the desire for it to be invested in. These results were fed into the 2006/7 budgetary considerations.

3.3. The table at Appendix A illustrates the correlation between services seen to be in need of improvement, and services which should be the highest budget priorities.

3.4 Service delivery

3.4.1 Residents were asked about a range of service issues, including frequency of use and overall satisfaction. It was not possible to ask about all services delivered by the council, therefore, this question focused only on environmental services and cultural and leisure facilities, (as agreed by the annual survey management board).

3.4.2 Facilities used most often:

	West	City
Parks and open spaces	64%	61%
Sports/leisure services and events	41%	35%
Libraries	32%	33%

3.4.3 Respondents were asked to rate services (if they used it) in terms of satisfaction. The top five were:

	West	City
Collection of general household rubbish	72%	74%
Parks and open spaces	66%	64%
Collection of items for recycling	59%	58%
Local recycling facilities	55%	61%
Libraries	51%	60%

At the bottom of the list, of those services listed, was keeping public open space clear of litter and rubbish. However, although 37% were dissatisfied, 47% were satisfied and 13% had no particular view.

3.5 Information provision and access to services

3.5.1 When they asked how well informed the council keeps residents about its services, views were split with around half, 48% (47%)* saying that they are either very or fairly well informed and 47% (46%) saying that they only have a limited amount of information, or know nothing at all about what the council does.

3.5.2 Articles in the local newspaper, 48%, (49%), council newsletters, 43% (42%), and the local media, TV and radio, 30% (35%) are cited as the most popular sources of information on council services.

3.5.3 However the council website is ranked higher by residents in terms of future preferences as sources of information, particularly amongst younger respondents. Of those respondents who have used the council website 79% (77%) said that it was fairly or very easy to find the information they were looking for.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

4.1 The results of the survey were fed into the 2006/7 budgetary considerations.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

5.1 None

6.0 Conclusions

This is the first annual survey which provides a comprehensive overview of the views of local residents. The results focus on which services can be improved, what respondents are concerned about and what the council can do better. Results from this survey were fed into the 2006/7 budgetary considerations.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 That the Area Committee note the findings of the Annual Survey.

* figures in brackets denote citywide data