

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - – 23RD NOVEMBER 2017

EXECUTIVE – 27TH NOVEMBER 2017

Report by the Chief Executive on the 2017 Wandsworth Residents' Survey
Results

SUMMARY

The results of the 2017 Residents' Survey show a positive picture overall, with headline measures on satisfaction with the Council and the local area remaining very strong. An overwhelming majority of those surveyed (92%) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live; this figure has increased by two percentage points since 2015. More than four in five residents (83%) are satisfied with the way the Council is running their local area and 79% agree the Council provides value for money. Although these results show a slight decline since the last survey in 2015, comparison against national data demonstrates that Wandsworth's performance on these measures is extremely high. The full Survey Results document is attached as an Appendix to this report.

The Director of Resources comments that the cost of the 2017 Survey was £36,750 and has been met from within existing approved revenue budgets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Finance and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to consider the topline results of the survey and support the recommendations in paragraph 2. If they approve any views, comments or recommendations on the report, these will be submitted to the Executive or the appropriate regulatory and other committees for their consideration.
2. The Executive is recommended to note the topline results of the 2017 Wandsworth Residents Survey and agree that the results be published on the Council's website.

INTRODUCTION

3. A biennial survey of residents' views is carried out on behalf of the Council in order to track public perceptions of the area, the Council and the services it provides. The information from the survey serves a number of purposes:
 - (a) to ensure the Council's priorities are informed by residents' views;
 - (b) to help measure the Council's success in delivering its corporate objectives; and
 - (c) to understand how successfully the Council is communicating and engaging with residents.
4. This is the seventh residents' survey, following on from the 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013, 2015 biennial surveys.

METHODOLOGY

5. The survey was carried out by an independent research agency via face-to-face interviews, conducted among 1,508 local residents aged 16+ in June/July 2017.
6. Quotas were set within each ward to obtain a representative spread and after the fieldwork the data was weighted by ward population and by age, gender and ethnicity and economic status. Respondents are therefore as representative as possible of the Borough as a whole and of each individual ward.
7. As far as possible the questions in the survey were kept the same as in previous years in order to track performance. However, new questions were also introduced to measure satisfaction in areas such as trust in the Council, acting on residents' concerns and air quality.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

8. Overall, the findings present a very positive picture. Results continue to show that the majority of residents have a very positive perception of the Borough as a place to live, and satisfaction with the Council across a range of key indicators continues to outstrip national comparators, as shown in the table below:

2017 Wandsworth Residents' Survey Results

Question	Wandsworth (%)	Change from 2015 (% points)	LGA national benchmark (%)
% satisfied with the local area	92%	+2%	80%
% who agree that people of different backgrounds get on well together	89%	+2%	n/a
% satisfied with the way Wandsworth Council is running things	83%	-4%	65%
% who trust Wandsworth Council	83%	n/a	59%
% who agree Wandsworth Council provides value for money	79%	-3%	47%
% who agree Wandsworth acts on the concerns of residents	78%	n/a	62%
% who feel the Council keeps residents informed about services & benefits it provides	71%	n/a	60%

9. Interviewing in this survey commenced immediately after a General Election where a reaction against austerity was one of the key parts of the narrative, subsequent to the Grenfell fire in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in June 2017.
10. The percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live has risen two percentage points since 2015 to 92% - this is the joint highest figure recorded (with 2013) since surveys began in 2005.
11. There is a 9-percentage point variation between the lowest satisfaction seen in ward cluster A (Queenstown, St Mary's Park and Latchmere) and D (Tooting, Graveney and Furzedown) at 88% and the highest in ward cluster F (East Putney and Thamesfield) at 97%.

12. Residents were also asked to say (in their own words) what they liked best and least about their local area. The three most common responses for each were as follows:

Like best:

Location/convenience	22%
Parks and open spaces	20%
Quiet and peaceful	15%

Like least:

Traffic congestion	11%
Litter	11%
Parking	10%

13. It is worth noting that 18% of residents did not state anything they dislike about their local area.
14. More than four in five residents (83%) are satisfied with the way Wandsworth Council is running their local area. This figure has dropped four percentage points since 2015. However, the proportion of residents who are very satisfied has remained unchanged at 25% and only 6% of residents express any level of dissatisfaction. The longer term data on this measure shows satisfaction levels have remained in excess of 83% but have been variable since 2011 (satisfaction was recorded at 87% in 2011, 84% in 2013, 87% 2015 and 83% in 2017). The Wandsworth score for this measure in 2017 is 18 percentage points above the national average which is the lowest level recorded since 2012.
15. In terms of spatial variations satisfaction regarding how Wandsworth Council is running the local area is significantly higher in Ward Cluster F (East Putney and Thamesfield - 93%), and significantly lower in Ward Cluster A (Queenstown, St Mary's Park and Latchmere) and D (Tooting, Graveney and Furzedown) - both 76%.
16. Alongside the high level of Council satisfaction expressed by Wandsworth residents, a strong level of trust in Wandsworth Council is evident. Over four in five residents (83%) say that they trust Wandsworth Council a great deal or a fair amount, against a national benchmark of just 59%.
17. Residents were also asked to provide their views on the extent to which Wandsworth Council provides value for money. Almost eight out of ten residents (79%) agree the Council provides value for money, down slightly from 82% in 2015. Only 5% of residents disagree that the Council provides value for money. The Wandsworth score for this measure is 32

percentage points above the national average, which itself is on a downwards trajectory.

Satisfaction with services

18. Respondents were given a list of local services and asked to rate the extent to which they feel are good or poor. The most positive ratings were given to parks (89% say that they are good), refuse collection (77%), recycling services (76%) and street cleaning (69%). The service areas that residents most commonly describe as poor in 2017 are pavement maintenance (22%) and road maintenance (20%) along with services, facilities and support for teenagers (21%).

Service	% Good	% Poor
Parks	89%	4%
Refuse collection	77%	12%
Recycling services	76%	12%
Street cleaning	69%	16%
Library services	64%	6%
Council run sport and leisure centres	59%	10%
Road maintenance	57%	20%
Pavement maintenance	55%	22%
Services, facilities and support for young children	45%	14%
Planning decisions	41%	14%
Services, facilities and support for teenagers	30%	21%

19. With the exception of planning applications decisions, all of these local services were included in the 2015 Residents Survey. Comparing results from the two datasets shows that the proportion of residents rating each service as 'good' has declined, compared to 2015. All declines are statistically significant, excluding the decline related to parks (89%, down from 90% in 2015).
20. However, comparing the results to the 2013 survey responses shows a more positive picture, with ratings of five services going up or staying the same, and five going down. Over the longer term therefore, satisfaction

with services follows a smoother trajectory. The full Residents Survey results report highlights which ward clusters are more likely to rate a service as 'poor', giving service areas a fuller picture of geographical differences in satisfaction.

Community cohesion

21. 89% of residents agree that their neighbourhood is a place where people of different backgrounds get on well together. This is an increase on the 87% recorded in 2015. However, the proportion giving the most positive response of 'strongly agree' has dipped from 26% to 20% in the last two years.

Crime and crime prevention

22. Three in five residents (59%) feel that Wandsworth is a safer place overall than it was two years ago and more residents agree (49%) than disagree (19%) that there is less trouble generally. More residents disagree than agree that specific problems such as drunken and rowdy behaviour, graffiti and gangs of youths have increased over the last two years. However, more residents disagree than agree that there are more PCSO's and police around than two years ago.
23. In terms of concern about being a victim of crime, residents are more worried about all types of crime than they were two years ago. Burglary is the crime about which the highest proportion (38%) of residents are worried.
24. Almost four in five residents (79%) feel safe in the local area after dark. This result has declined by five percentage points since the last survey two years ago but is in line with the national benchmark of 78%.
25. The proportion of residents rating the police as good at dealing with crime in their area stands at 77%, in line with past measures. However, those rating the Council as good at dealing with crime has declined six percentage points to 67% in 2017. This proportion is the lowest it has been since recording began in 2007.

Transport and the environment

Environmental issues

26. Results on environmental issues are largely positive, with a greater share of residents agreeing that improvements have occurred compared with the share who disagree, for all statements relating to the local environment. The most positive views relate to how parks and open spaces are looked after, with three in five residents (60%) agreeing this has improved compared with a year ago. Other positively rated statements relate to the

2017 Wandsworth Residents' Survey Results

improvement of neighbourhoods and town centres (both have 55% agreement that things have improved compared to a year ago). However, despite these positive results, just 36% of respondents agree that the Council is doing more about the environment.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	% Agree	% Disagree
Parks and open spaces are better looked after	60%	8%
My neighbourhood is improving	55%	10%
Town centres are improving	55%	10%
Regeneration of Nine Elms is good news for Wandsworth	48%	8%
Streets are cleaner and there is less litter	46%	22%
The Council is doing more about the environment	36%	15%

27. New questions on air quality were added to the survey for 2017. Residents were asked to rate the air quality both in their neighbourhood and also within Wandsworth borough as a whole.
28. At a Borough level, 49% of residents feel that air quality is good, while 29% feel it is poor. When answering specifically about their neighbourhood, 54% of residents indicate that their air quality is good. This result is in line with national data - 56% of UK residents described the air quality in their neighbourhood as good or very good.

Transport issues

29. In 2017, more than half of residents (55%) disagree that there is less traffic congestion in the area, with this proportion having increased four percentage points since 2015. Despite this, half of residents (49%) still agree that transport services are improving. Views on public transport are more positive, with 50% agreeing that the bus service has improved, 43% saying the same about rail services and more specifically 50% suggesting that railway stations have improved.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	% Agree	% Disagree
It is safer and more pleasurable to walk	51%	9%
The bus service has improved	50%	12%
Railway stations have improved	50%	12%
Transport services are improving	49%	12%
Rail services have improved	43%	18%
Conflicts and the risk of collision between cyclists and pedestrians are an increasing problem	37%	14%
It is safer and more pleasurable to cycle	32%	12%
Parking costs represent good value for money	26%	29%
Car clubs in the borough are now a worthwhile option	18%	8%
There is less traffic congestion in the local area	17%	55%

Budgets

30. Just over half of residents (56%) had an awareness that the Council has had to make significant savings over the past year, but one in five (20%) were not aware of this.
31. The proportion of residents who feel the Council is doing a good job so far in dealing with reducing their spending is 48%. This is down from 55% in 2015, but is above the 43% seen in 2013. The proportion of residents who agree Wandsworth Council is doing a good job far exceeds the proportion who disagree, although the 'disagree' proportion has risen from 7% to 12%.
32. A majority of residents continue to trust the Council to reduce their spending effectively (54%) although this is below the figure for 2015 (59%). There has been a pronounced drop in agreement that spending by the Council can be reduced without cutting service quality. While 52% of residents agreed this could be the case in 2015, only 37% do so in 2017. There has also been a 12% increase in disagreement that spending can be reduced while retaining delivery standards. As mentioned above, the interviewing in this study commenced immediately after the Parliamentary General Election in June 2017 where a reaction against austerity was one

of the key parts of the narrative, and in the midst of the fallout of the Grenfell disaster.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	% Agree	% Disagree
I am aware that the Council has had to make significant savings over the past few years	56%	20%
I trust the council to reduce their spending effectively	54%	15%
The council is doing a good job so far in dealing with reducing their spending	48%	12%
Spending could be reduced by the council without cutting service quality	37%	29%
I am concerned about the effect of Council savings on myself and my family in the future	34%	20%

33. Three-quarters of residents (76%) feel that keeping Council Tax low is essential for residents. While still a clear majority, this proportion is 10 percentage points lower than in 2015. Disagreement that low Council Tax is essential has more than doubled from 5% to 12%.
34. There has been a nine percentage point drop in the number of residents who agree that they do not care if it is the Council or another organisation that carries out local services as long as they are of a good standard (now 63%). The consequences of the Grenfell Tower coverage may be relevant given the criticism of Kensington and Chelsea's housing management through a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) and the criticism of outsourced delivery structures.
35. With regards to the Shared Staffing Arrangement (SSA) between Wandsworth and Richmond Councils, it is clear that many residents remain unaware or unaffected by the changes over the last year. When asked if the arrangement is working well, the vast majority of residents (around 70%) either gave a neutral response (42%) or answered 'don't know' (28%), suggesting that residents have not noticed any change since the establishment of the SSA. Among the remainder, five times as many residents are positive (25%) than negative (5%) about the arrangement.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	% Agree	% Disagree
Keeping Council Tax low is essential for residents	76%	12%
I do not care if it is the Council or another organisation that carries out local services, as long as they are of a good standard	63%	22%
I think the Council's shared staffing arrangement with Richmond Council is working well	25%	5%

Access to information

36. Seven in ten (71%) Wandsworth residents feel they are kept informed about the services and benefits the Council provides. This is above the 2015 figure (68%) and the national comparator (60%).
37. When asked where they find information about the Council, residents most commonly list Brightside magazine (44%) and the Council website (37%), followed by word of mouth (22%).
38. In terms of internet usage, more than 9 in 10 residents (93%) have access to the internet and most access it via smartphone (90%) or laptop/desktop (89%).

Contact with the Council

39. Levels of contact with the Council have declined overall and this is the general direction of travel across the last three surveys. The most notable decline relates to residents seeking information about local council services. However, contact for necessary transactional purposes, such as paying Council Tax, has declined the least. Of those residents who have contacted the Council in the last year, the proportion of residents using the phone (41%) remains marginally above the proportion who made contact via the website (35%). In terms of satisfaction, three quarters (75%) are satisfied with the way their last query was handled.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

40. The Director of Resources comments that the cost of the 2017 survey was £36,750 and has been met from within existing approved revenue budgets.

The Town Hall,
Wandsworth,
SW18 2PU.

PAUL MARTIN
Chief Executive

15th November 2017

Background papers

The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:-

1. Wandsworth Residents' Survey Results Final 2017

All reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees, regulatory and other committees, the Executive and the full Council can be viewed on the Council's website (www.wandsworth.gov.uk/moderngov) unless the report was published before May 2001, in which case the Democratic Services Officer (Graham Collins , 020 8871 6021; email graham.collins@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk) can supply it if required.