

	<p align="center">Performance and Finance Select Committee 11th April 2007</p> <p align="center">Report from the Director of Policy and Regeneration</p>
<p>For Information Wards Affected: ALL</p>	
<p align="center">2006/07 BVPI General Survey</p>	

1.0 Summary

The 2006/07 BVPI General Survey is aimed at gaining local residents perception of the range of Council services. The survey is administered by the independent research company Ipsos MORI. Headline results show positive increases in satisfaction for Brent Council particularly in service areas.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 To note the report

3.0 2006/07 BVPI General

3.1 Brent has improved overall satisfaction with the council to 52%, a 4% increase from 2003/04 survey results. This increase places us as the 9th most improved London Council and has led Brent to score higher than the national average (51%) for the first time (*refer to Attachment 1*). This bucks a nation wide trend of decreasing satisfaction levels.

4.0 Survey Collection

4.1 From a random sample of 5,000 households Brent achieved a total of 1,518 returned questionnaires, this equals a 30% unadjusted response rate. Brent's final response rate is 31% when incomplete responses and all non-effective addresses were removed from consideration. This is a 7% increase from 2003/04 response rates (24%), where we had

the lowest response rate of all of the London boroughs. Brent's response rate is also higher than the London average of approximately 27% and ranks Brent joint eleventh of all of the thirty-three London boroughs. MORI have informed us nationally response rates have dropped and this will be reviewed in a summer DCLG BVPI evaluation paper.

- 4.2 This significant improvement appears to be due to Brent undertaking hand collection of completed questionnaires. Brent was the only London council to conduct hand collections and as a result our second reminder stage achieved a response rate of 13% (515 responses), which was the highest in London for a second reminder.

Unadjusted Response Rate by Project Stage		
	Questionnaires returned (n)	Response rate (%)
Initial mailout	738	15%
First reminder	265	6%
Second reminder	515	13%
TOTAL	1,518	30%
<i>Source: Ipsos MORI</i>		

5.0 Results

Living in Brent

- 5.1 Three in five (59%) residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Differences can be seen at local level, however, whilst three in four Kilburn & Kensal residents are satisfied, only half of those who reside in Willesden, Wembley and Harlesden are content with their local area. Overall, whilst one in six Brent residents are dissatisfied, one in four residents are dissatisfied in Harlesden. Black residents are the most likely to be satisfied with their local area as a place to live (67%), then white (63%), and Asian (50%).
- 5.2 Encouragingly, given the diversity of population in the borough, most (79%) residents feel that Brent is a place where people from different backgrounds get along well together, this is marginally above the London average of 76% who agree.
- 5.3 In terms of quality of life, the top five issues for local residents in making somewhere a good place to live are:
- The level of crime, 65% (9% decrease from 03/04)
 - Clean streets, 51% (10% decrease from 03/04)
 - Health services, 43% (4% decrease from 03/04)
 - Public transport, 36% (2% decrease from 03/04)
 - Affordable decent housing, 32% (12% decrease from 03/04)

Whilst these top issues are consistent with previous years and with national trends, fewer people are highlighting them as important.

- 5.4 In terms of the things Residents feel most need improving, the top five are:
- The level of crime, 52% (6% decrease from 03/04)
 - The level of congestion, 37% (2% decrease from 03/04)
 - Clean streets, 36% (8% decrease from 03/04)
 - Roads and Pavement repairs, 36% (7% decrease from 03/04)
 - Activities for teenagers, 29% (9% increase from 03/04)

These are consistent with issues highlighted from previous years and with national trends, again fewer people are highlighting these things as important.

- 5.5 It is important to note the significant increase in people thinking activities for teenagers is an important priority for improvement. Black residents in particular are more likely to feel this way (44%). Considering only 4% of respondents were aged between 18 to 24, this increase may reflect increased concerns around anti-social behaviour and young people.

- 5.6 Questions regarding anti-social behaviour were asked in the survey for the first time. The biggest issues were:
- Parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children (64%)
 - Teenagers hanging around on the streets (56%)
 - Rubbish and litter lying around is a problem in their local area (56%)
 - People not treating other people with respect and consideration (53%)
 - People using or taking drugs (52%)

Participation

- 5.7 A third (32%) of Brent residents are satisfied with opportunities for participation in local decision-making provided by the Council, one in four (24%) are dissatisfied, and just under half (45%) are neutral. A similar pattern is recorded across London. Two in five (44%) of Brent residents agree that they can influence local decision-making, this is better than the London average of 39% who agree.

- 5.8 A third (35%) of residents in Brent would like to be more involved in decisions the council makes that affects the local area, this is in line with the London average. Residents aged 65 and over are least likely to want to be involved. Just one in eight Brent residents specifically say they do not want to be involved in local decision-making, this is compared to one in ten Londoners.

Half of residents in Brent, however, say it would depend on the issue.

Satisfaction with Local Services

5.9 Satisfaction with Brent continues to improve strongly compared to previous years, particularly with respect to local services. Out of the 13 BVPI satisfaction indicators measured in the general survey, Brent realised improvements in 10. Cleanliness, waste disposal and the bus service in particular significantly improved.

BVPI	Title	2000/1 (%)	2003/4 (%)	2006/7 (%)
BV3	Overall satisfaction	45	48	52
BV4	Satisfaction with complaint handling	28	29	29
BV89	Satisfaction with cleanliness	47	51	65
BV90A	Waste collection	74	72	81
BV90B	Waste recycling (local facilities)	54	51	56
BV90C	Waste disposal (local tips)	43	50	64
BV103	Satisfaction with transport information	45	50	61
BV104	Satisfaction with bus services	37	48	63
BV119A	Sports/leisure facilities	41	38	39
BV119B	Libraries	56	56	67
BV119C	Museums/galleries	30	25	21
BV119D	Theatres/concert halls	n/a	29	23
BV119E	Parks and open spaces	59	66	71

Source: Ipsos MORI

5.10 In terms, of our position in London, Brent success with its waste collection has led to a satisfaction score of 81% placing us in the top quartile of all London boroughs. Satisfaction with our transport information is also high and ranks us in the second quartile for London. Despite significant improvements, Brent is still ranked quite low compared to other London boroughs for the majority of indicators. This appears to be due to Brent starting from a low base plus significant increases in satisfaction across London

5.11 Areas where Brent did not realise improvements were satisfaction for museums and galleries (21%), and theatres and concert halls (23%). Satisfaction with these two indicators decreased from 2003/04 by 4% and 6% respectively, however, this is consistent with national and

London wide decreases in satisfaction for both these culture indicators. Council's which have done well with both these indicators are the more wealthy boroughs such as the Corporation of London, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster. These councils are performing better than Brent by 40-60%. Many councils struggle with these indicators with over half of London councils not reaching more than 30% satisfaction for museums and galleries and over a third for theatres and concert halls.

Affecting Satisfaction

- 5.12 Local authorities have made some strong advances in service satisfaction across the country, however, this has not filtered through to an improved overall satisfaction rating. Ipsos-MORI have done some analysis on this issue and indicate the following factors as having the most impact on overall satisfaction:
- value for money and efficiency;
 - information provision and effective communication;
 - media coverage
 - visible services (such as street cleaning); and
 - experiences of contact with staff.

Value for Money

- 5.13 The national trend is for residents to feel like they are not getting value for money and this is considered the main reason why significant increase in overall satisfaction have not been realised. In Brent less than half (44%) feel that the Council provides good value for money, over half (56%) disagree. However, Brent is performing significantly better than the outer London average where just 38% of residents feel their authority provides value. Inner London residents, however, are more likely to feel their authorities provide value (49%).
- 5.14 Interestingly residents who do not feel they are getting value for money are four times more likely than those who do feel they are getting value for money to be dissatisfied with opportunities for participation (35% and 9% are dissatisfied respectively).

Communication

- 5.15 National trend shows decreasing percentage of residents feeling that they are kept informed, figures have fallen from 51% to 42%. This is true in Brent where two in five (42%) residents feel that the authority is keeping them a drop of over 10% from previous figure (55%).
- 5.16 Ipsos MORI analysis of national results show there is a positive correlation between how well residents feel their authority is keeping them informed, and overall satisfaction with the authority. In Brent, three in four residents who feel well informed are satisfied with the Council, however, just a third of those who are not well informed feel satisfied. As such, it is extremely important to endeavour to keep residents informed as this is guaranteed to improve satisfaction ratings

somewhat further. This is especially important as residents are most likely to find out about Brent Council through information provided by the Council directly (42%).

- 5.17 To find out what strategies were behind improvements at other local authorities, we talked to some of the top improving local authorities: Tower hamlets, Hackney, Lewisham and Havering.

Rank	London Council	Improvement in General Satisfaction
1	Tower Hamlets	15%
2	Hackney	9%
3	Kensington and Chelsea	8%
4	Lewisham	8%
5	Havering	7%
6	Richmond	7%
7	Greenwich	6%
8	Wandsworth	5%
9	Brent	4%

- 5.18 The main strategy which these councils consistently employed was high profile communication campaigns to improve residents' perceptions of the council. These campaign usually had the title of 'Better Havering' or 'I Love Hackney' and were targeted towards developing civic pride in the borough, promoting improved services in visible services such as street cleaning, and getting residents more involved and encouraging feedback.

- 5.19 Tower Hamlets, the most improved London borough, did a communication campaign along these lines but with the added difference of specifically promoting the general survey. They did extensive communications around when the survey was taking place, what it was, and promoting how important it was to complete.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7.0 Legal Implications

- 7.1 None, directly arising from the report

8.0 Diversity Implications

Differences seen in the results due to ethnicity include:-

- BME residents more likely to be dissatisfied with Brent Council than White residents (21% and 16%).

- Asian residents are least likely to be satisfied with their local area as a place to live, just half (50%) are satisfied, where as 67% of Black residents and 63% White residents are satisfied.
- Black residents (82%) are more likely to agree that the Council is making the area a better place to live than either White (72%) or Asian (67%) residents.
- Black residents are more likely to feel activities for teenagers need improvement (44%) compared to overall (29%).
- Black residents are more likely to feel that they can influence local decisions (55% agree compared to just 40% of White residents).
- BME residents are more likely to be satisfied with the way the Council keeps the local area clean and tidy, its recycling and local tip facilities.

10.0 Conclusion

10.1 Brent Council is improving well, especially in terms of local services, however, there is still scope for improving our position compared to other local authorities. Future strategies for improvement may want to focus on communication and the media, and value for money. There may also be scope for some investigative work into what Brent residents say are the main factors which impact on their overall satisfaction with the council.

10.2 A final report from MORI is expected in March where further detail will be provided.

Background Papers

None

Contact Officers

Phil Newby
Director of Policy and Regeneration

Rebecca Fogarty
Policy and Performance Officer