

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 19 JANUARY 2016

ANGUS CITIZEN SURVEY 2015

1. BACKGROUND

A citizen survey is undertaken on behalf of the Council every two years. The specific research objectives of the 2015 Citizen Survey were as follows.

- To establish the public's views on general and specific aspects of life in Angus, including:
- To establish levels of satisfaction with public services
- To establish the customer experience when contacting the Council
- To strengthen the evidence base that will support and inform the development of Angus' Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP).

A total of 1,500 interviews were carried out with a representative sample of Angus residents. The sample structure was designed to replicate the sampling methodology and structure utilised in the 2013, 2011 and 2009 surveys. This involved a disproportionate sampling methodology where:

- 249 interviews were completed in deprived areas of Angus; and
- 1,251 in the rest of Angus (with c.155 interviews completed in each of the eight wards within Angus).

2. KEY FINDINGS

- The best aspects of living in **the neighbourhood** have remained **consistent** since 2009 with the fact that the neighbourhood is quiet and peaceful and the neighbours being the top two reasons provided. Similarly, the majority of participants, as has been the case since 2009, believed that there has been no change in the neighbourhood.
- With regard to the **local area and services**, satisfaction has **remained consistently high**, maintaining satisfaction levels above 90% for all aspects and with 100% satisfaction in terms of the fire service, libraries and local schools. Satisfaction with the various local services has varied most significantly in terms of social housing (increased by 14% points), local youth facilities (+11% points) and local phone boxes (+8% points).
- When thinking about the **accessibility of local services**, again, the level of accessibility of universal services such as the fire service, police, refuse collection, street cleaning and local health services have remained consistently high with almost all participants stating they find it easy to access these. At the other end of the scale, accessibility of services falls, as may be expected, when

it comes to services such as employment and advice services and social care/ social work services. Compared to 2013, the biggest differences in accessibility can be seen with regards to community centres where the proportion of participants stating this was easy to access has decreased by 17% points, and street cleaning where this has seen an increase of 13% points.

- Satisfaction with the neighbourhood in terms of the **physical environment** has remained fairly consistent with the results reported previously with overall satisfaction above 90% for almost all aspects. Where satisfaction dipped below 90% this was with regards to the condition of roads, and pavements. The results to this question (for the questions that can be compared) have not varied significantly when compared to the results from 2013.
- **Quality of life** in both the neighbourhood and in Angus has remained consistently high, maintaining the levels reported in 2013.
- When asked about their **participation profile**, the levels of volunteering for 2015 (8%) was the lowest value to date compared to 10% in 2013, 23% in 2011 and 11% in 2009. Despite this, almost all participants who provided unpaid help stated it had been a positive experience (99%) which is more than was reported in 2013 (94%).
- Positively, participants were more likely to agree than disagree that they (48%) or others in their local community (59%) can **influence decisions** affecting their local area. However, the percentage of participants who agreed they themselves can influence decisions has decreased from 54% in 2013 to 48% in 2015.
- In relation to **health**, the proportion of participants who rated their health very good or fairly good was 77% which is marginally less than was reported in 2013 (81%).
- The **feeling of safety** in the neighbourhood has seen an increase from 91% of participants rating their neighbourhood a very or fairly safe place to live in 2013 compared to 99% in 2015. Despite this, the proportion of participants who felt safe in their home and in the neighbourhood during the day and at night has not changed significantly when compared to the 2013 results.
- The perception of the incidence of **crime** has not changed significantly since 2013, nor has the extent to which a fear of crime prevents participants taking part in everyday activities. Talking to people in the local area continues to be the biggest factor which influences resident opinion on crime levels.
- A new question was added to the 2015 survey on the topic of **neighbourhood concerns**. The biggest concerns for participants overall were dog fouling (19% stating they were very or fairly worried about this), followed by doorstep callers (17%) and people who have been using drugs (14%).

- In terms of **financial profile**, the vast majority of participants said they had a bank or building society account (98%) and home contents insurance (82%) and these have not changed significantly since 2013.
- With regards to **financial difficulties** such as the cost of domestic energy bills, food, rent and mortgage payments etc., just under 7 in 10 participants (68%) stated they had not experienced any financial difficulties within the last year, which is an increase on the 2013 survey where 57% had experienced financial difficulties.
- Participants were asked about their last **contact method** with the Council, 3% had contacted the Council to make a complaint (3% in 2013), 9% had contacted to seek information (10% in 2013) and 25% had contacted to request a service (18% in 2013). The proportion of participants who said they had never contacted the Council has decreased marginally from 68% in 2013 to 63% in 2015.
- **Satisfaction with contact** has decreased since 2013, in particular in relation to complaints where there has been a significant decrease in satisfaction from 60% in 2013 to 48% in 2015. Satisfaction with information requests has seen a marginal decrease from 90% in 2013 to 86% in 2015. Less than nine in ten participants (88%) said that they got what they needed when they last contacted the Council which is consistent with the 2013 results (86%).
- When asked to consider their **priorities for the Council**, the top priority for participants has changed from providing services which are value for money in 2013 (60%) to offering a good range of services in 2015 (45%).

3. CONCLUSION

One of the fundamental rationales for undertaking the citizen survey is to gather robust evidence at both an Angus wide level but also to understand any differences/inequities between wards and locality areas. Separate analysis has been undertaken this year to provide this information. This is available in the **information hub**.

The survey results give a wealth of information to inform the council and Angus citizens of the 2015 position, with clear comparison and narrative on the changing position from the previous survey in 2013. The full report can be found in the **information hub**.