

COVER REPORT: PLACE SURVEY SCRUTINY REVIEW

Director/Head of

Department:

Report Author: Peter Farmer, Chair of the Joint Scrutiny Committee

Recommendation:

The final report contains 8 recommendations for members to respond to and note. Specifically members are asked to consider recommendations 1.1 to 1.5 to see whether these would be usefully applied to their local authority.

1. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Copeland Borough Council Members will be aware that the Place Survey is undertaken in all counties across England every 2 years. The survey will be repeated from September 2010 onwards.
- 3.2 The 2008 Place Survey in Cumbria showed higher levels of dissatisfaction for local authorities than in previous years and higher than other public sector services, including Fire and Rescue Service, Police and local NHS services.
- 3.3 A national trend that emerged from the 2008 Place Survey was the strong relationship between information on services and higher public satisfaction. Communication and information on services are key factors in how the public rates a service overall.
- 3.4 The task group met officers from two authorities that had scored the highest and lowest for the following two service areas:
 - refuse collection;
 - street cleanliness.

Despite the differences in public perception between the two districts, members found common themes in the focus groups that were held in those areas, particularly in relation to refuse collection. Members also found examples of innovative and good practice in each area.

- 3.5 Initially, bus services was to be included in the review, but members determined that they could better influence the other two service areas for which local authorities were directly responsible.

2. ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Chair and Members of the Copeland Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee are asked to consider the final report of the Place Survey Scrutiny Review, undertaken by a task group drawn from the Cumbria Joint Scrutiny Committee.

3. CORPORATE PLAN

Not applicable.

4. BENCHMARKING

Not applicable.

5. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

- 5.1 Although there are no plans to consult the public on the contents of this final report, the public were involved in the review itself, with the focus group activity shown in Section 4 of the final report (pages 18-21).

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 While the Place Survey is a useful barometer of public perception on local services, analysis of responses points to a greater overall satisfaction from individuals who live in more affluent areas of the county.
- 6.2 The core message from the Place Survey review is that local authorities across Cumbria should not underestimate the importance of engaging, involving and informing the wider public in any service review, re-configuration or change. The public's experience as service users can provide local authorities with a unique insight into how services are viewed.
- 6.3 How a service is rated by local people can be very different to the performance scores collated by local authorities on their services. Members felt this was important in highlighting a key question of what is measured by performance indicators, both nationally and locally.

- 6.4 A key outcome for the Joint Scrutiny Committee has been to consider how the public are involved in scrutiny review work. This review has led to a more consistent approach in engaging the public and has helped to identify the best ways of doing this.

List of Appendices

Cumbria Joint Scrutiny Committee – ‘A Scrutiny Review on the Cumbria Place Survey’ Final Report

List of Background Documents:

None listed.

List of Consultees:

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	None
Impact on Sustainability	None
Impact on Rural Proofing	None
Health and Safety Implications	None
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	None
Children and Young Persons Implications	None
Human Rights Act Implications	None