

BEST VALUE USER SATISFACTION 2006/2007 - CONSULTATION

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Mike Ashbrook

LEAD OFFICER: Terry Chilcott

REPORT AUTHOR: Terry Chilcott

Summary: Considers this Council's response to the consultation document setting out the Government's proposals for the 2006/07 Best Value User Satisfaction Survey and invites views on the proposals set out in the consultation document.

Recommendation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That Members consider the responses and comments to the consultation document as laid out in the report.2. That Members consider any other comments they wish to make to the ODPM regarding the tri annual survey of user satisfaction
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Impact on delivering the Corporate Plan: The Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) targets are part of the Corporate Plan so information resulting from the user survey and associated actions are integral to delivering the Corporate Plan.

Impact on other statutory objectives (e.g. crime & disorder, LA21): BVPI's cover issues such as crime and disorder and the results of these surveys will enable us, and our partners, to put in place actions to meet the perceptions of our customers.

Financial and human resource implications:

Project & Risk Management: A PID has been developed as part of the Customer First project.

Key Decision Status

- **Financial:** N/A
- **Ward:** N/A

Other Ward Implications: None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Resident's satisfaction with all Councils in England is assessed by a tri-annual survey. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) require all Councils nationally to undertake these surveys every three years, the last one for Copeland being in the period 2003/4. The next survey therefore will be due in 2006.
- 1.2 The methodology behind the questionnaire is designed by the ODPM and is used by all local authorities in England and Wales. The last survey by Copeland was carried out by means of a postal questionnaire using a sample frame of 5,000 addresses issued by the ODPM and 2,500 questionnaires were sent out by post.

- 1.3 The results of these questionnaires are then analysed nationally by the ODPM allowing comparisons and trends to be determined. The survey is intended to measure the satisfaction of residents and service users with the quality of services delivered by their local authority and their satisfaction more generally with a range of quality of life issues in their local area. The first round of surveys took place in 2000/01.
- 1.4 User satisfaction surveys are an integral part of the local government performance framework. They play a vital role in understanding what people think about local services – what is working and what is not. They also provide valuable data about how views of local services change over time, including people's preferences and expectations. Crucially satisfaction surveys provide information that can help us to shape, deliver and improve local services around the needs and wishes of local people.
- 1.5 These surveys are one of the largest conducted in the country. In 2003/04 they involved over 500,000 responses.

2. BEST VALUE USER SATISFACTION 2006/07 - CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Recently the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) issued a consultation document setting out the Government's proposals for the 2006/07 Best Value User Satisfaction Survey. As part of the consultation process views are invited from stakeholders on these proposals and on the draft questionnaire.
- 2.2 Briefly the ODPM are proposing the following changes in the general survey:
 - i. Additional questions on quality of life issues, information provision, customer contact and care and local decision-making.
 - ii. Some alterations to the layout and structure of the questionnaire.

In addition, views are invited on the following issues:

- i. Whether County Councils should run joint surveys with the District Councils, which fall within their boundaries, rather than having separate surveys.
 - ii. The merits of a single research method for the Best Value User Satisfaction Survey and whether that should be a postal survey methodology.
 - iii. The use of stratified sampling and clustering.
 - iv. Comments on the use of re-weighting survey responses by districts inside the county's data.
 - v. Whether any of the existing questions should be removed.
- 2.3 A full copy of the Best Value User Satisfaction 2006/07 consultation document including the full draft general survey questionnaire has been lodged in the Members Room.
- 2.4 Attached at Appendix A is an extract of the proposed changes to the general survey and we are invited to comment on the new additional questions and give views of which if any of the existing questions should be deleted.
- 2.5 Attached at Appendix B is the response form for the survey consultation with possible comments and responses filled in that the Executive may wish to discuss, amend or endorse.

3. RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The consultation period runs to the 6 February 2006 and the Government will analyse and consider all responses submitted on the standard proforma received up to close of 6 February.
- 3.2 It is important that the Council prepares for the survey and it is suggested that it would be appropriate for a response to be submitted to the consultation document.
- 3.3 Any other comments Members wish to make about the tri annual survey could be included in the response to the ODPM.

List of Appendices

[Appendix A – Proposed changes to general survey](#)

[Appendix B – Response form for survey consultation](#)

List of Background Documents:

List of Consultees: