

## **DERBY CITY COUNCIL**

### **REPORT ON THE REFLECTOR GROUP FOR THE JANUARY 2003 POINTER PANEL SURVEY**

Prepared by:

SMSR Ltd.  
78 Beverley Road  
Kingston-upon-Hull  
HU3 1YD

Tel: (01482) 211200  
Fax: (01482) 211201  
E-mail: [info@smsr.co.uk](mailto:info@smsr.co.uk)

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 During January and February 2003, Social and Market Strategic Research Ltd. (SMSR) undertook a consultation exercise with Derby City Council's Pointer Panel members.
- 1.2 This involved a postal questionnaire survey that focused on a variety of topics consisting of:
  - Quality of Life Indicators
  - Derby's Air Quality Action Plan
  - Development Control Services and Building Consultancy
  - Derby's Tourist Information Centres
  - Derby's Museums
- 1.3 Following analysis of the results of the postal survey, a reflector group was recruited with members of the Panel who had responded to the survey.
- 1.4 Unlike the previous reflector group, a series of meetings were held with the relevant officers prior to the reflector group, to ascertain which sections of the panel results they wished to focus on and if there were any additional areas they wished to have raised.
- 1.5 This report summarises the key points raised by the attendees to the group, together with SMSR's view as to their policy implications for the Council.

## 2.0 Sample

- 2.1 Each reflector group was recruited from members of the Pointer Panel who had responded to the Jan/February 2003 survey.
- 2.2 The group consisted of 8 people from various wards of Derby made up as shown:

<i>Ward</i>	<i>No. of people</i>
Mickleover	2
Darley Abbey	2
Derby Town	1
Spondon	2
Chellaston	1

- 2.3 The groups also consisted of a mix of genders and age groups as shown below:-

Male	4
Female	4
18-24	1
25-34	1
35-44	1
45-54	5
55-64	0
65+	0

### 3.0 Outcomes / Results

#### 1. Quality of Life Indicators

3.1 Derby City Council Officer: Alec Shelton

##### 1. *Main types of noise rated as a serious problem / problem*

<i>Road traffic</i>	<i>52%</i>
<i>Domestic alarms</i>	<i>37%</i>
<i>Noise in street</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Animals (eg dogs)</i>	<i>27%</i>
<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Road works</i>	<i>21%</i>

3.2 Problem Derby City noises noted by the group were:

- car alarms were an occasional noise hazard
- animals (next door neighbours' barking dogs)
- youths roaming around and playing football (their behaviour was an extreme problem as well)
- fireworks
- noise from aircraft from the East Midlands Airport.
- roadworks were also unacceptable, particularly on a Saturday as they start at 9 am and any going on at the weekend were unacceptable

3.3 One person was very surprised that neighbours and pubs were not higher.

- There are specific noises which citizens are aware of. There is a need to provide information on the Authorities responsibilities/strategies towards these

#### 2. *Neighbourhoods*

3.4 Panelists were asked how satisfied they were with their neighbourhood. The survey results showed that:

- 86% are very/fairly satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.
- Over the past two years:

64% said not changed much  
28% said had got worse  
6% said had got better

a) *Reasons for why their neighbourhood satisfaction has worsened:*

**1 Noise**

- One of the main causes of this was the fact that there are now more cars and therefore more traffic on the roads, in particular people don't walk their children to school as much any more and this creates a big problem in neighbourhoods in terms of congestion, noise, pollution etc.
- One person said that they felt that the general trend nowadays was for people to be noisy.
- One person mentioned that on Chellaston Road it was extremely noisy; there were young people with bad behaviour and also there was a lot of litter around as well.

**2 Behaviour**

- Another person commented that the reason their neighbourhood has changed was down to how young people behaved.

**3 Public Transport**

- Another person also said that the quality of life in their neighbourhood had reduced was solely down to the fact that there was no public transport to get access to services. However, another person commented that in Mickleover there was a bus every ten minutes but the problem was that nearly everyone had cars in Mickleover so there was probably a need to look at the priorities in terms of which areas have more cars compared to those that don't.
- It therefore seems that there are some areas that have more cars yet have better public transport. In most people's eyes that wasn't right and didn't make sense to them. Two people said they were happy to highlight on a map of Derby the areas where public transport was not very good at all.

- This demonstrates that the issues which citizens are concerned about are those that impact on them DIRECTLY – noise, transport etc.
- In areas where the Authority does not have direct control e.g. transport, there is a role for them to act in a mediating role, representing the citizen.
- Citizens are willing to assist the Authority in pin pointing problems.

### 3 **Quality of Life**

3.5 Panelists were asked how to state how important was Quality of Life on a 1-10 scale. The results were:

8, 9, 9, 8, 7, 9, 9, 9

3.6 It can be concluded from these results that QoL IS an important issue.

a) *Impact of Council on people's quality of life?*

3.7 Panelists were asked to give examples of areas where the Council could make a definite impact on their QoL. Examples included:

- 1 Ensuring Council Services are available at convenient times - e.g. you can't go a library on a Sunday.
- 2 Ensuring the City is 'Litter Free' - One person commented that litter was an immense bugbear. Another lady said that the Council annoys her; she said that the streets were disgusting and that she's ashamed of where she lives because it is so filthy.

3.8 Several members of the group questioned the role of the Council in this area:

- One person said that the Council couldn't help influence quality of life; it was basically what you made it.
- One person did say that, at the end of the day who else would you talk to other than the Council if you had issues.
- Another person said 'No', it was completely down to us and that we expect too much of the Council; each community needs to get together and help each other out.
- Another person agreed with those comments but they felt that the Council was a good mediator, particularly on the transport issue.

b) *Can residents exercise any influence in improving the quality of life in the area?*

3.9 Panelists' main concern expressed was the lack of response from the authorities, examples quoted were:

- One lady stated that she was invited to a meeting to discuss the bus service and that the actual Officer from the Company didn't even turn up for the meeting, so obviously that was not looked upon lightly.
- Another person commented that there is a lot of listening from the Council but there isn't much evidence of their actually doing anything.

- This also demonstrates that Quality of Life is important and again highlights the issues which citizens are concerned about are those that impact on them DIRECTLY – noise, transport etc.
  - As before, there are areas where the Authority does have a direct role and others where it has a mediating role e.g. transport.

#### **4. Main services**

- 3.10 Panelists had been asked to comment on the accessibility of local services. The panel results were:

*Main services rated as very/fairly easy to get to from home:*

- |                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| • Local shop               | 94% |
| • Chemists/pharmacy        | 90% |
| • Shopping centre/s market | 87% |
| • Post Office              | 87% |
| • Bus stop / train station | 87% |

- 3.11 It was noted that the bigger facilities seemed to be harder to access than the smaller ones, e.g. the local hospital is harder to get to than the local shop. It was suggested that this is because the private sector is more effective in delivery services. An example quoted by one person was that they used to use the Queen's Leisure facility but now they used a local private one because private companies have opened up more easily accessible leisure facilities.
- 3.12 One specific service noted was the accessibility of cash machines to the residents. One person said that this was a big issue for them as where they were it was very hard to get to the local cash machine and that they had to effectively go into Derby City centre in order to use a cash machine.

- Whilst it may be an over simplification, there is a widely held view that private sector facilities are usually more accessible than public sector ones.



## 2 Derby's Air Quality Action Plan

3.13 Derby City Council Officer: James Brown

3.14 Panelists had ranked actions in order of effectiveness in improving the air quality:

1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>reduce congestion through improved traffic management</i>	32%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>reduce vehicle emissions</i>	30%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>introducing planning conditions</i>	24%
4 <sup>th</sup>	<i>encourage cycling, walking or use of public transport</i>	29%

### a) Air Quality

3.15 Respondents were asked if Air Quality was a problem. Their views were mixed. The majority of people felt that it was a problem. One person said that it had got worse over the years with car fumes and chemical smells; another person commented on chemical smells, also, from the large chimneys. Also, another person commented on the actual black smoke that was coming from the chimneys in the area.

3.16 Another person said that years ago air quality was terrible whereas they felt that it was now getting better, in particular this was due to the fact that not many people used coal fires any more.

3.17 It was also commented that there are some localised spots where it is still bad. These weren't actually discussed in detail. Another person said, again, that there was a definite problem with the number of cars and the amount of fumes that were being emitted.

3.18 One person was surprised that one way of tackling air quality was by encouraging cycling, walking or by using public transport and they were very surprised that that didn't come higher than 4<sup>th</sup> in terms of effectiveness.

### b) Random test vehicle emissions

3.19 On the panel survey, 77% felt that this was a good idea and this was also discussed in the group.

3.20 One person commented that most of the complaints about vehicle pollution came from their own buses and they were questioned what would be put in place in order to ensure that buses met with emissions regulations. Another person mentioned that bus companies can delay replacing their stock with new buses as they have, as he put it, a lot of 'clout'. He therefore felt that trying to reduce emissions from buses and trying to make the private bus companies buy new vehicles would be a major problem as at the end of the day, the Council can't stop the bus service.

**c) Stop using Car**

- 3.21 One person said that during the week they had to use their car because that was what their job required. However, at weekends they are trying their best to use alternative methods of transport.

**d) Impact of Council Planning on Air quality**

- 3.22 2 Points raised by the respondents were:

- They were very concerned at a proposal that had been put forward by the Council to amend the existing ring road as they thought that this would actually increase the amount of traffic on the ring road and therefore increase the amount of pollution.
- One person queried why the Council are currently planning a multi-storey car park in the City centre as this must surely create more traffic and therefore more pollution.

- 3.23 That concluded this section of the Reflector group.

- Air quality is an important element of quality of life. Traffic is seen as the main cause. Some Authority decisions are seen as acting against the strategy. Overall, citizens welcome the Authority's initiative in this area.

### 3 Development Control Services and Building Consultancy

- 3.24 Stuart Todd, Derby City Council, representing the Development Control  
Mick Henman, Derby City Council, representing the Building Consultancy services

**a) Main purpose of Development Control:**

- 3.24 It was noted that:

- *Development Control deals with Planning applications in the City*
- *Building Consultancy deals with inspection of buildings and demolition to make sure that buildings meet Building Regulation standards.*

- 3.25 Panel results:

<i>no response</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>regulates &amp; controls building development</i>	<i>24%</i>
<i>don't know / no knowledge</i>	<i>24%</i>
<i>planning permission</i>	<i>10%</i>
<i>protect greenbelt</i>	<i>4%</i>

- 3.26 The respondents that knew were those that had directly or indirectly used the service.

- 3.27 They were asked if they wanted to put an extension on their house – which service? Responses were as follows:

- Two people said they would ask for Planning at the Council House.
- One person said they would ask for Building Regulations.
- One person said they would ask for Development Control.
- Another said that they would try both of the services until they actually got the right one.

- 3.28 A discussion was then held about the Building Consultancy services. The following points were made:

- One person felt that 'Consultancy' in the title was very confusing.
- One said that they would prefer just to ask for Building Regulations.
- One person said that the services were too general and covered too many areas.
- Another person said that they found that they were very helpful, except of course, when they were refused permission.

- There is confusion with the names of the two services – Development Control for Planning and the use of 'Consultancy' for Building Regulations

**b) Notification residents received about planning applications in their locality.**

- 3.29 One person asked how wide is the circulation of letters because, whilst they had received a notification about one of their neighbours applying for planning permission, they hadn't received any notification about a development that was only two streets away.
- 3.30 The general consensus in the group was that they all agreed that they wanted to be informed about new developments in the locality where they lived.
- 3.31 One person queried the effectiveness of the department as they noted that they had a neighbour who wanted to put a drive down and even though they had been refused planning permission, they went ahead.

- There is a need to review the procedures that determine the extent of planning application publicity – can it be improved?

**c) Leaflets.**

- 3.32 One person said that they do receive leaflets and were very happy with the information in them. The other seven members of the group said that they hadn't seen any information relating to any of these services.
- 3.33 Another person commented that the pamphlets they had received from them could have been plainer and felt that they were very technical and that they should be put in more layman terms.

- There is a need to review the language used in leaflets to ensure that whilst being technically correct, it is understandable to the layman. Maybe two sets are needed, one for the professional and one for the 'layman'.

**d) Building developments in the City.**

- 3.34 Respondents referred to the following development/control examples:
- One person said that there had been some disasters e.g. they felt that there was no demand for a multi-storey car park by the bus station, this and furthermore the car park is an absolute eye-sore.
  - Another person said that there were some pretty poor buildings.
  - Another said that they had opposed the building on green belt, particularly on football grounds.
  - One person noted there were a new set of traffic lights at Normanton they felt didn't work.
  - Another person commented on an Indian restaurant that had apparently set on fire and collapsed.
  - Derelict buildings in the Centre and those near the train station where all the windows had fallen out were noted and they thought that these buildings are currently unsafe and that the Council should do something about it.

- 3.35 Several stated that they wanted to be more involved and informed about any big developments that were going to go up, particularly in the City centre, so that everyone could have a say and hopefully influence a good decision.
- 3.36 Another person who had an extension built said that the service they received was good but they believe that there should be more guidelines in terms of designing extensions so that they could have a good clear idea of what is allowed and what isn't.
- 3.37 An issue that was a big point of discussion for the respondents was that of old buildings. Some felt that in other towns and cities, they endeavoured to preserve old buildings whereas, in Derby, they preferred to tear them down, in particular, the old Court building which a number of people in the group had commented on as being a particularly nice old building for the City. It had basically been left and has now gone derelict.

- Respondents were able to classify planning / control decisions into 'good/bad'
- There is concern about the Authority's responsibilities for Derelict buildings
- Likewise there is concern re the Authority's 'Conservation' policy

**e) Service supplied by Council or Private Company?**

- 3.38 Panel results were:

- 80% of people prefer to use the Council
- 4% wanting to use a private company
- 16% who didn't really know

- 3.39 The whole of the group agreed that the Council should provide the service rather than private companies as this could be open to abuse.

- There was total agreement that these services should be supplied by the public sector

**f) Disabled access in the City**

- 3.40 Views differed:

- One person said that disabled access was getting better.
- One person said that some buildings have brilliant access for disabled people whereas others are a complete nightmare and they also commented that the pavements in the City centre are terrible, particularly for wheelchairs.
- Another person said that the access, again, was very patchy; you could go into some restaurants but not in others.

- Overall, getting better, but still scope for improvement!

#### **4. Derby's Tourist Information Centre**

3.41 Janet Seale attended on behalf of the Tourist Information Centre.

3.42 Panel results:

32% never visited a TIC  
(26% more than a year ago: 42% within last year)

Main reasons for visiting included:

59% information on attractions/events in Derby  
40% information on attractions/events in Derbyshire  
28% information on attractions/events in another part of the country

##### **a) Use of the TIC in Derby.**

3.43 They all said that they knew where it is. 6 out of 8 people said that they used it and they were asked for what reasons they used it:

- 1 person said that they went in there for general information.
- 1 person said they went in there to find out how to get to the market.
- One person commented that if they wanted to know what is going on in the area, then they will go to the TIC.
- Another person said that they would use it, again, to find out information for tourists or friends before they arrive to the City.
- One person basically said that they felt there was nowhere else to look and that they felt that the TIC had everything which was why they used it.
- Two of the people said that they also look/go in there to find out which venues to go to.

- The TIC is used by many local people as a 'City Information Centre' – should that be reflected in its name?

##### **b) Awareness of location of the Tourist Information Centre in Derby.**

3.44 The following comments were made:

- One person said that they imagined that if you don't know Derby then you wouldn't know it was there.
- Another person said that it should be signposted better and that it needs signposting from the station as well.
- One person commented that it was a long way away from the train station which is quite apt due to the fact that it should really be used by tourists and obviously people getting off the train, they had a fair trek to find it

- Whilst its location is good, its signposting needs to be improved, including from the rail station

**c) TIC Staff**

3.45 All the people who had used the TIC in the group said that the staff were fine.

**d) The Building**

e)

3.46 However, all agreed that it was a dull building, with a dull interior and it needed modernising.

**e) Other Issues**

3.47 One person said that it needs promoting better.

3.48 The group noted was that they weren't aware that the TIC in Derby does actually cover and deal with all of the country (including Derbyshire) so that if they require information relating to another part of the country, then the TIC can actually help them with that. It was thought that it specifically relating to anything in Derby.

**Conclusion**

- They all agreed that they are doing a good job other than the need to improve:
  - Signposting
  - The buildings interior
  - Publicity about the scope of its activities

## 5. Derby's Museums

3.49 Attended by Anneke Bambery of Derby Council.

3.50 Panel results showed the frequency of visiting a Derby museum were:

34% had visited within the last year  
50% had more than a year ago  
16% never had

### a) *Current use of Derby Museums?*

3.51 The respondents stated the following:

- One person said that they did visit it once when their Dad was here.
- One person said that they would go with the children – they work with children.
- One person said that they had gone to see the boat only last week.
- One person said that they go to the art exhibition each Saturday morning.
- One person (Disabled) said 'No, they don't go because public transport is appalling and they can't get a bus there'.
- One person said they go there now and again to remind themselves of Joseph Wright of Derby
- One of the people who works with children hasn't been for about two years.
- Another person said that they don't go because it's usually closed when they are not at work, which is obviously the time when they can go.

- |                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As with the panel results, there is relatively high use of Museums by local Citizens</li></ul> |
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### b) *Museums publicity.*

3.52 The respondents stated the following:

- Two people said that very few people know about the Pickford's Museum.
- One person said that they must promote themselves better, preferably via paper or radio, even though the Officer commented that they do advertise quite a lot in the local papers but noted that if you're not looking for it, then you probably wouldn't see it.
- Two persons said that they had seen editorials in the local newspapers and one person said that they were actually on a mailing list and get leaflets quite often sent to their house.
- One person said that they needed to brighten up the Strand windows (a small old heritage house in the City centre). The three windows in that building are drab and they need brightening up as it doesn't pull people in like it should do.
- One person said they need to advertise what is new in the museum.



- 3.53 They all agreed to be e-mailed. One person also said that Pickfords at the moment is just a house which needs better signage and they believe that most people if they didn't know about, they would just walk past it and wouldn't even notice it.

- The Authority needs to look as to how it can improve the impact of its publicity.
- There is a need to focus on 'What's new'.
- Citizens will welcome the use of e-mail.
- The signage of Pickford's needs improving.

**c) What makes a museum special?**

- 3.54 The following comments were made:

- One person said it has to have something local, something special and focused on a specific theme that is relevant to that local area.
- One person said that what makes a museum special is one that replaces, replenishes and changes its exhibitions on a regular basis. They commented that they had been to the Pickfords House Museum; basically, they've gone in, they've seen it once and that there is no need to go back because it's constantly the same.
- One person said that the Dorchester County Museum was the best museum they had ever been to as it related to a Roman assault and the reason for this was that it focused on one big great thing and it did it really, really well.
- Another person said that Yorvik in York was the best one they've ever seen because they like archaeology and that had everything they needed to look at.
- Another person commented on the museum in Glasgow because it focused on the Highlands, you were seeing things that you normally wouldn't see and, most importantly, it changes once a month.
- One person mentioned Oxford museum; they also said it was high quality at Cirencester. It looked at the Romans and they just loved the way it had been done; it had been thought about, it was professional, a lot of money had been spent on it but it was worth it.
- Another person mentioned the Tramway museum in Glasgow. Again, they said it does everything and, in particular, another person commented on this, that is probably relevant to the Tramway museum: a lot of people want to take children to museums but, as we know, it is hard to keep children interested, therefore they need a noisy place; they want things to climb on, they want to be able to pull buttons. At the moment, they felt that the museums in Derby were simply 'Don't touch'.
- Another person commented that Carlisle museum was 'simply amazing'.
- The key word to the above comment was 'inter-action' in that they need inter-action.

- Another person said that they should have an inter-active tour via a web-site. It's no hassle, no transport, no kids. This person made the comment that they didn't like noise, they didn't like children and that if they were able to access a web-site whereby they could look round the museum by that, then that would be brilliant. (disabled person who can't get around by public transport).

- There are lots of ideas but they mainly revolve around changing exhibits, interaction and being family friendly. There needs to be a strong local theme – message – ask your visitors what they'd like!

**d) Leaflets**

- 3.55 3 out of 8 people said that they had seen leaflets about Derby Museums. A few people mentioned good places to distribute leaflets that probably hadn't been thought about: the church, was a good place to put leaflets and also a doctor's surgery, whilst people are sat waiting they may pick a leaflet up, start reading it, get interested and therefore go along to have a look.

- Citizens had useful suggestions as to how leaflet circulation could be improved

**Other suggestions re the Museums Service in Derby**

- 3.56 The following two suggestions were made:

- That Derby should have an industrial museum because, at the end of the day, the textile trade in Derby was very important to the area and that they feel that it was a textile town and they need to promote it. This was a suggestion by a number of the group as being a good theme relating to a museums exhibition.
- Another person commented on the fact that wildlife exhibitions that were being shown are pretty much on dead animals and they prefer to have something that is live, is moving and therefore keep it more interesting.