



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET
3 OCTOBER 2006

Report of the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services

ITEM 15

Derby Pointer Panel – May 2006 survey results

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To consider May's Derby Pointer survey results and the service managers' improvement plans.
- 1.2 To note that the results and proposed service improvements will be reported to panel members in the next 'Panel News' newsletter, which will be sent out to panel members with the October 2006 survey.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The questionnaire was sent out on 17 May 2006 to 1,200 Derby Pointer Panel members. The response rate was 63%, which is a 15% increase on the November 2005 survey response rate of 48%. The number of panel members who completed their surveys online increased to 14% (105) for this survey, compared to 8% (39) last time.
- 2.2 The results reported here represent replies received from 752 respondents and should be taken as accurate to within a confidence interval of +/-2.6%. The topics covered in the survey were:
 - area panels
 - winter service
 - voting.
- 2.3 A full summary of the key results is shown at Appendix 2. The main issues are set out here.
 - 2.3.1 There has been a small decrease in the number of respondents who had heard about the area panel meetings. The results showed that 63% (469) respondents had heard of the meetings, compared to 64% (378) in 2003. A leaflet delivered to their home remains the top way that respondents found out about the meetings, 52% (242) now, compared to 80% (298) in 2003.
 - 2.3.2 The top reason why respondents don't attend area panel meetings has changed from 'time of the meetings is not convenient' 35% (89) in 2003, to 'don't know enough about them' 37% (258) in 2006. Local councillors, 67% (494) was the top option for who respondents would like to meet at area panel meetings.

- 2.3.3 There has been no change in the percentage of respondents who voted in the local elections. The results showed that 72% (538) said they voted in the local elections, compared to 72% (399) in 2003. The number of respondents who did not vote has also increased from 21% (119) in 2003 to 28% (206) now.
- 2.3.4 The top option that would most likely make respondents to vote in the next Council elections has changed from 'all-postal elections' 30% (162) in 2003 to 'vote at a polling station' 28% (138) now. The main concern that respondents had about postal voting was 'the risk of their vote being lost in the post', 54% (392), compared to 38% (257) in 2003.
- 2.3.5 Nearly two thirds, 63% (469) of respondents rated the Council's Winter Service as 'good' or 'very good'. A third of respondents, 31% (221) said they needed more information about which routes are salted.
- 2.3.6 Nearly half of respondents, 45% (328) said that they did not think there were enough salt bins around the city for people to use.
- 2.3.7 Overall, respondents felt that the Council should take no more than a day to make most routes passable if there was heavy snowfall, and that key routes should be passable within three hours.

For more information contact:	Elphia Miller 01332 256258 elphia.miller@derby.gov.uk
Background papers	November 2003 and March 2004 survey results May 2006 Derby Pointer survey results and service managers action plans A Citizen's Duty – voter inequality and the case for compulsory turnout, Institute for Public Policy Research, May 2006.
List of appendices	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Results summary Appendix 3 – Area Panels Action Plan Appendix 4 – Winter Service Action Plan Appendix 5 – May 2006 results tables

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 Each Derby pointer questionnaire costs around £8,078, which includes panel members being able to complete the surveys on-line.
- 1.2 Other financial implications for the survey will depend on the action plan produced as a result of the findings.

Legal

2. The Local Government Act 1999 requires the Council to consult its citizens on its general direction and on issues relating to specific services. The Council must also show how the results have been used to improve services.

Personnel

3. None.

Equalities impact

- 4.1 The improvements outlined in the service plans will benefit all communities in the city.
- 4.2 The Panel is maintained in a way that makes sure it is representative as possible of the Derby population.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 Area panels contribute to the Council's priority of – **improve the quality of life in Derby's neighbourhoods** by reducing inequalities between neighbourhoods and providing greater opportunities for people to participate in decisions about the area they live in.
- 5.2 Winter service contribute to the Council's priority of – **improve the quality of life in Derby's neighbourhoods** by making Derby cleaner and greener.
- 5.3 Voting contribute to the Council's priority of – **improve the quality of life in Derby's neighbourhoods** by reducing inequalities between neighbourhoods and providing greater opportunities for people to participate in decisions about the area they live in.

Key Results

1 Results interpretation

- 1.1 'Base' where stated in the charts or tables, refers to the number of respondents to the question on which the statistics quoted are based. Numbers in brackets indicate the actual number of responses.
- 1.2 In some cases, %/n stated in the tables will add up to more than 100% or the number of respondents stated. This is because these results are for a 'multiple choice' question, which allowed respondents to tick more than one response.

2 Area panels

- 2.1 The council set up five area panels in December 2001. Each area panel covers 3 or 4 wards and is made up of local ward councillors. The area panel meetings provide an opportunity for residents to raise issues, give views and suggest improvements about services in their neighbourhood. We repeated some of the questions asked in November 2003 survey to see if people's views about area panels had changed.
- 2.2 The results in Table 1 show that there has not been a significant improvement in the number of respondents who had heard of the area panel meetings. The May 2006 results showed that 63% (469) respondents had heard of the meetings, compared to 64% (378) in 2003. Leaflet delivered to the home, remains the top way that residents found out about the meetings, 80% (298) said so in 2003, compared to 52% (242) now.

Table 1: % of respondents who had heard of the Council's Area Panel meetings

	May 2006		Nov 2003	
	%	n	%	n
Yes	63	469	64	378
No	37	274	35	208
Base	743		586	

- 2.4 Only 10% (49) respondents said they attended an area panel meeting, compared to 14% (53) in 2003. The top three reasons why respondents said they attended area panel meetings were:
- to find out what was going on in my area, 62% (28)
 - to ask a question in the public question time session, 47% (21)
 - to hear the response to a local issue raised at a previous meeting, 36% (16)

The top three reasons have changed slightly since 2003, in that the second reason given then was 'to find out more about area panels' 49% (26).

2.5 The results in Table 2 show that there has been a change, since 2003, in the top three reasons why people don't attend area panel meetings. In 2003 the top reasons were:

- lack of transport, 40% (102)
- meeting time not convenient, 35% (89)
- not interested, 28% (72).

However, in 2006 the top reasons were:

- don't know enough about the, 37% (258)
- too busy, 31% (216)
- meeting time not convenient, 21 (144).

Table 2: What stops respondents attending area panel meetings

	2006		2003	
	%	n	%	n
Been once, didn't meet my expectations	2	11	5	12
Can't get transport to the meeting	9	65	40	102
Don't know enough about them	37	258	27	69
Not interested	11	74	28	72
The time of the meetings is not convenient	21	144	35	89
Too busy	31	216	6	16
Don't think my views will be taken seriously	18	129	3	7
Other	10	73	18	47
Base: respondents	700		255	

2.6 The top five responses for people who respondents would like to meet at area panel meetings were ...

- Local councillors, 67% (494)
- Derbyshire Police officers, 58% (421)
- Transport and highways officers, 43% (318)
- Residents and local community groups, 41% (302)
- Health Service officers, 27% (195).

2.7 When asked how they would prefer to receive information about their local area panels. The results in Table 3 show that there has been no change in the top two preferences for 2003 and 2006, which remain 'area panel newsletter' and 'publicity leaflet delivered to their home'.

Table 3: how respondents would prefer to receive information about area panels

	2006		2003	
	%	n	%	n
Publicity leaflet delivered to your house every year	38	280	40	240
Receive area panel minutes, agendas, reports by post	25	186	18	109
Receive an Area Panel newsletter	56	419	61	361
Council website – www.derby.gov.uk	14	107	11	63
Posters displayed in community venues	12	89	21	125
By e-mail	19	143	1	7
Articles in the local press	28	209	1	5
Text messages sent to mobile phone	3	20	N/A	N/A
I'm not interested in receiving information	7	53	N/A	N/A
Other	1	5	3	15
Base: respondents	743		592	

- 2.8 Plans outlining the actions proposed to address issues raised by the area panel results are shown at Appendix 3

3. Winter service

- 3.1 The Council has a duty to ensure that vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians can safely use highways, which include carriageways, footways and cycle routes. In winter when there is a risk of frost, ice or snow the Council treats some routes with salt to reduce the risk of accidents and ensure that highway users can still move about relatively freely and safely. .
- 3.2 The results in Table 4 show that nearly two thirds of respondents, 64% (470) rated the Council's Winter Service as 'good' or 'very good'.

Table 4: How respondents rated the Council's Winter Service

	May 2006	
	%	n
Very good	8	57
Good	56	413
Neither good/poor	28	203
Poor	6	46
Very poor	2	15
Base	734	

- 3.3 However, 31% (221) of respondents said they needed more information about which routes were salted and their preferred method for getting this information was through a newspaper, 29% (84) or Council leaflet or newsletter, 26% (75). Only 12% (86) of respondents thought there were enough salt bins around the city for people to use, 45% (328) thought there wasn't and 43% (308) did not know.

- 3.4 Respondents were asked, if there was heavy snowfall, how long they thought it should take the Council to make passable, with care, main and secondary carriageways. Overall, respondents felt that the Council should take no more than one day to make most routes passable and ...
- Two thirds of respondents, 67% (467) thought 'footways leading to emergency facilities' should be made passable within one hour
 - The majority of respondents, 87% (622) thought that 'main carriageways including main bus routes' should take no longer than three hours to be made passable.
- 3.5 The most common suggestions for improving the Winter Service included improving response/coverage from gritters, 11% (29) and the gritting of pavement and cycle routes, 11% (28).
- 3.5 Plans outlining the proposed actions to address the issues raised by the winter service results are shown at Appendix 4.

4 Voting

- 4.1 Low voter turnout is a concern at the national and local level. The Electoral Commission, an independent body, set up by the Government has over the years used various advertising campaigns to promote public confidence and involvement in the democratic process. However, voter turnout is still a ongoing problem and a recent report by The Institute for Public Policy Research, IPPR – A Citizen's Duty, voter inequality and the case for compulsory turnout, May 2006, highlighted that ...

'Local election turnout is more variable, with much higher turnouts when local elections are held alongside general elections. Overall, the trend is downwards. Between 1990 and 1999 the average number of voters turning out to vote at each election represented 36 percent of the registered electorate. Between 1973 and 1978 the figure was 43 percent (ODPM, 2002). Despite the recent upturn, however, participation in local elections in the UK rarely exceeds 40 percent'.

- 4.2 Table 5 reflects the view of the IPPR, which shows the average turnout in the Council's May 2006 local elections was 35.7%.

Table 5: May 2006 local election turnout

Abbey, 26.7%	Allestree, 46.3%	Alvaston, 31.9%
Arboretum, 35.4%	Blagreaves, 45%	Boulton, 33.6%
Chaddesden, 33.8%	Chellaston, 37.3%	Darley, 41.2%
Derwent, 17.5%	Littleover, 43.8%	Mackworth, 29.4%
Mickleover, 45.9%	Normanton, 31.6%	Oakwood, 31%
Sinfin, 24.6%	Spondon, 39.9%	

- 4.3 The results in Table 6 shows there has been no increase in the percentage of respondents who said they voted in the local Council elections, and as in 2004 the main way they voted was at a Polling Station. There was an increase in the number of respondents who used a postal vote, from 13% (51) in 2004 to 23% (168) now.

Table 6: % of respondents who voted in Council elections

	May 2006		Feb 2004	
	%	n	%	n
Yes	72	538	72	399
No	28	206	21	119
Can't remember	0	2	6.7	37
Base	746		555	

- 4.4 Table 7 shows that the reason people don't vote is varied but one of the main reasons is an ongoing perception that 'none of the candidates represent their views'.

Table 7: Why respondents did not vote in May 2006 Council elections

	2006		2004	
	%	n	%	n
You were too busy to go to the Polling Station	23	46	29	40
You were physically unable to get to the Polling Station	10	19	14	19
You did not know the election was on	3	6	N/A	N/A
You forgot the election was on	14	27	15	21
You did not think that your vote was important	9	18	11	15
You have no interest in local elections	12	23	21	29
None of the candidates seemed to represent your views	28	56	26	37
Not on the electoral register	4	8	N/A	N/A
Other	23	45	19	26
Base: respondents	200		140	

- 4.5 When asked what would make them most likely to vote at the next Council election, the three options for 2006 were ...

- If you could vote at a Polling Station, 28% (138)
- If you could vote electronically – by e-mail or Internet, 23% (115)
- If it was an all postal election, 17% (85)

These top options are the same as in 2004, except the ranking was ...

- If it was an all postal election, 30% (162)
- If you could vote at a Polling Station, 21% (115)
- If you could vote electronically – by e-mail or Internet, 17% (95).

4.4 Table 8 shows that the main concern that respondents had about postal voting was the risk of the vote being lost in the post. There was an increase in the number of respondents who had no concerns about postal voting, 2% (12) said this in 2004, compared to 29% (213) now.

Table 8: Concerns about postal voting

	2006		2004	
	%	n	%	n
The confidentiality of the voting process	40	293	22	152
The risk of someone stealing and using your vote	48	351	21	144
The risk of your vote being lost in the post	54	392	38	257
There may not be as much publicity with an all postal election	N/A	N/A	12	82
I have no concerns about postal voting	29	213	2	12
Other	7	54	5	37
Base: respondents	728		684	

4.6 Steve Dunning, Assistant Director – Democratic Services comments about the voting survey results were ...

‘The main aim of including voting questions in this survey was to test voters’ attitudes and how they have changed since the previous survey. This will inform our future activities and responses to Government initiatives. However, it is very difficult to produce any meaningful improvement plan for the voting section of the survey, so one has not been included.

The reason for this is that the Council, through the Returning Officer, has, in most cases, little or no discretion in how it delivers the election management service. Procedures are heavily regulated by primary and secondary legislation. Voting intentions are also influenced significantly by factors outside the Council’s control, for example the image and actions of the Government and political parties, and the attitude of the media.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 has brought in a whole new raft of legal requirements which are currently being assessed. One of these is a new duty to encourage participation in the electoral process, for which additional funds will be made available. We will develop initiatives to capitalise on this extra money, but our experience in Derby is that it is very difficult to measure the impact of publicity campaigns on turnout’.

DERBY POINTER RESULTS – SERVICE ACTION PLAN

Unit head: Andy Thomas

Service: Area Panels – Stronger and Safer communities Unit

Key issue identified	Improvement/proposed action	Person responsible	Target date
Nearly two thirds, 63% (469) of respondents had heard about Area Panel meetings. While this is an encouraging level of awareness, this figure has not changed since 2003, when it was 64% (378).	Awareness levels have remained encouragingly high. However, levels have not increased and it may be that informing residents by leaflets and posters have reached all they will reach and more emphasis should be given to other methods. To review current practice and develop an effective communication and media plan including area panel publicity. This could include distributing additional leaflets and posters to community meeting places throughout the year, developing new links with the media and producing an area panel annual report.	Vickie Butler, Colin Avison, Sarah Dosunmu, Richard Smail	February 2007
52% (242) of respondents who had heard of area panels, did so as a result of receiving the area panel leaflet, which had been delivered 7 months earlier. While in 2003 the figure was 80% (298), the leaflet had been delivered 2 months before the survey.	Delivery of an area panel leaflet to every household in 2005 was a successful way of raising awareness. To produce a communication plan that includes ways to produce and distribute information about area panels directly to all households in 2007. To consider other methods than the leaflet including joint newsletters, neighbourhood forums and other methods of community engagement.	Vickie Butler, Colin Avison, Sarah Dosunmu, Richard Smail	February 2007

DERBY POINTER RESULTS – SERVICE ACTION PLAN

Unit head: Andy Thomas

Service: Area Panels – Stronger and Safer communities Unit

Key issue identified	Improvement/proposed action	Person responsible	Target date
Newspaper articles was the second best way, after leaflets, for people to hear about area panels – 26% (122)	To include in the communication and media plan proposals to develop links with Derby Evening Telegraph to promote meetings and report on successes.	Colin Avison, Sarah Dosunmu, Richard Smail	November 2006
Posters or leaflets in community buildings, 14% (66) also contributed to raising awareness about area panels. This was 25%(65) in 2003.	More community venues will be sent supplies of the leaflets and posters in 2006. Additional copies will also be sent out again during early 2007.	Colin Avison, Sarah Dosunmu, Richard Smail	September 2006 to February 2007
62% of respondents who had been to a meeting said their main reason was to find out what was going on in their local area and in 2003 it was 49%. There has been an increase from 24% in 2003, to 47% in those wanting to ask a question in public question time and an increase from 5% in 2003 to 22% in those who were presenting a petition.	<p>This indicates that residents consider Area Panels as an effective way to offer opinions and priorities.</p> <p>The development of Neighbourhood Forums in many parts of the city will provide an additional framework for more residents to find out what is happening in their locality to ask questions and engage with service providers.</p>	Neighbourhood Teams	April 2007

DERBY POINTER RESULTS – SERVICE ACTION PLAN

Unit head: Andy Thomas

Service: Area Panels – Stronger and Safer communities Unit

Key issue identified	Improvement/proposed action	Person responsible	Target date
<p>Respondents aged between 34 and 54, who have transport and are not too busy are the most likely to attend area panel meetings.</p> <p>Residents under 24 and over 55 with no transport or who were disabled are the least likely to attend.</p>	<p>The distance residents have to travel to attend meetings is a major barrier to attendance.</p> <p>Neighbourhood forums will create a local framework that is meaningful to residents and provide an alternative to residents who have not been able to attend Area Panel meetings.</p> <p>To include more information about accessibility of venues and transport links as part of the information about area panel meetings with the communication plan. To research and develop a Community Engagement Strategy to identify demands.</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Teams</p> <p>Colin Avison. Sarah Dosunmu, Richard Smail</p> <p>Community Safety Partnership</p>	<p>April 2007</p> <p>July 2007</p>
<p>The main reasons in 2006 for not attending area panel meetings is 'not knowing enough about them', 37% (258) or being '<i>too busy</i>', 31% (216) or inconvenient meeting time, 21% (144). In 2003 the main reasons were – 'could not get to the meetings', 40%(102) , 'inconvenient meeting times, 35% (89) and 'don't know enough about them, 27% (69).</p>	<p>The fixed dates and times for Area Panel meetings will mean that meetings will always be inconvenient for some residents. However, there has been a significant reduction in the number finding the 'times' inconvenient.</p> <p>To produce a communication plan to promote the purpose and role of Area Panels to enable residents to understand and use them for their benefit.</p> <p>To develop the website information, produce a new 'Introduction to Area Panels leaflet', review the Area Panel Good Practice Guide and the facilitation of area panels.</p>	<p>Vickie Butler, Colin Avison, Sarah Dosunmu, Richard Smail</p>	<p>February 2007</p>

DERBY POINTER RESULTS – SERVICE ACTION PLAN

Unit head: Andy Thomas

Service: Area Panels – Stronger and Safer communities Unit

Key issue identified	Improvement/proposed action	Person responsible	Target date
When attending meetings respondents would most like to meet Local Councillors - 67% (494) , Derbyshire Police Officers - 58% (421), Transport/Highways Officers - 43% (318), Other residents - 41% (302) and Health Service officers - 27% (195).	<p>Councillor attendance at area panel meetings is very high and with the Police attendance at nearly 100% the meetings are already responding to these preferences.</p> <p>To review ways that the meetings can be more partnership focussed. To develop Neighbourhood Forums to provide an additional framework for residents to meet councillors and other public sector representatives.</p>	Colin Avison, Sarah Dosunmu, Richard Smail Neighbourhood Teams	April 2007
Respondents were most likely to say they would like to receive information about area panels through Area Panel Newsletter - 56% (419). Other methods were annual leaflet - 38% (280), articles in the press - 28% (209), agendas by post -25% (186) and by e-mail - 19% (143). Other than the request for email these responses were the same as 2003.	<p>A simple area panel newsletter/bulletin is currently produced for each meeting with a minimal circulation.</p> <p>To develop the circulation list for the bulletin.</p> <p>To consider linking the distribution of information about area working to the regular Community Safety Partnership newsletter and any citywide newsletter produced by the Council.</p> <p>To increase the distribution of information and feedback by e-mail.</p>	Vickie Butler, Colin Avison, Sarah Dosunmu, Richard Smail	July 2007

DERBY POINTER RESULTS – SERVICE ACTION PLAN

Unit head: Andy Thomas

Service: Area Panels – Stronger and Safer communities Unit

Key issue identified	Improvement/proposed action	Person responsible	Target date
When asked about how they would like to give their views about local services respondents gave a wide range of preferred ways. No one method was preferred, with between 18% and 29% support for nine different ways. These were email -29%, writing to the Council -29%, ringing the Council - 28%, area panels - 28%, neighbourhood meeting - 26%, through the website - 25%, to a local Councillor - 24%, visit a Council officer and attend a Councillor surgery - 18%	<p>The current Area Panel leaflet has included new information about the variety of ways residents can give their views. The role of Councillors may not be fully understood or put to best use by their communities. Respondents do not associate giving their views on local services with local councillors and currently prefer to contact Council staff directly by e-mail, telephone or letter. E-mail has become the single most popular way of giving views.</p> <p>To develop a communication plan to include promotion of the variety of contact routes including telephone, Derby Direct, e-mail and postal details are in all literature connected with Area and Neighbourhood working.</p>	Vickie Butler, Colin Avison, Sarah Dosunmu, Richard Smail	July 2007

DERBY POINTER RESULTS – SERVICE ACTION PLAN

Unit head: John Hansed

Service: Streetcare – Winter Service

Key issue identified	Improvement/proposed action	Target date/person responsible	Resource implications
A third of respondents (31%/221) said that they needed more information on which routes are salted within Derby.	<p>It is intended to leaflet the majority of properties in the city with an advisory leaflet, in October.</p> <p>In addition the information about the winter service will be updated on the Council's website</p> <p>Enquiries will be made to see if information about changes to the gritting routes can be included in local media.</p>	John Hansed	October 2006
Nearly half of respondents (45%/328) said that they did not think there were enough salt bins around the city for people to use, while a similar proportion did not know either way.	The revised Winter Service Plan, which was approved by Cabinet on 5 September 2006, contains a new objective set of criteria to judge whether a grit bin is justified, following a public request. Although this, of itself, may not lead to more grit bins being issued there will be more confidence that those issued are in locations of established need.	John Hansed	September 2006
The most likely suggestions for changes to the Winter Services included improving response/coverage from gritters (11%/29) and the gritting of pavement and cycle routes (11%/28). However most respondents had no comment to make on the subject.	<p>The revised Winter Service Plan contains additional pre gritting of several more roads to ensure that all bus routes are included.</p> <p>In addition it includes now for the pre gritting of many of the busiest footways in the city centre. Currently there are no special provisions to pre grit cycleways but this will be kept under review.</p>	John Hansed	September 2006

DERBY POINTER RESULTS – SERVICE ACTION PLAN

Unit head: John Hansed

Service: Streetcare – Winter Service

Key survey results/issue identified	Improvement/proposed action – if applicable, also explain whether its resulted in change in policy	Target date/person responsible	Resource implications
Overall, respondents felt that the Council should take no more than a day to make most routes passable if there was heavy snowfall, and that key routes should be passable within three hours	<p>The revised Winter Service Plan sets fixed time requirements for pre-gritting of roads when frost or snow is forecast. It does not set target times for snow clearance. This is because the time would be dependent wholly on the degree of snowfall experienced and how prolonged falls may be.</p> <p>However for the levels of snowfall normally experienced in the city it is anticipated that the times listed by respondents to the Pointer would be met on the Priority 1 Category routes i.e. the carriageways on the main distributor roads in the city.</p>	John Hansed	September 2006