



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET
29 JULY 2008

Report of the Director of Corporate and Adult
Services

ITEM 13

Derby Pointer Citizens' Panel – March 2008 survey results

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the key results of the March 2008 Pointer Panel survey and the proposed service improvements to be put in place.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To consider March 2008 Derby Pointer survey results and the service managers' improvement plans.
- 2.2 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 with the October/November 2008 survey.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The questionnaire was sent out on 12 March 2008 to 1,112 Derby Pointer Panel members. The response rate was 62% (684).
- 3.2 The results reported here represent replies received from 684 respondents and should be taken as accurate to within a confidence interval of +/-2.3%. The topics covered in the survey were:
- Current communications
 - The Council Magazine – Your Derby
 - Internet access and the Council's website
 - Perceptions about the Council
 - Derby Cityscape
 - Derby's Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 3.3 A full summary of the key results is shown at Appendix 2. The main issues are set out here:

- 3.3.1 'By telephone' is still the main method respondents use to contact the Council. Since 2005 there has been an increase in respondents who prefer to contact us through our website. This has increased from 5% (17) in 2005 to 19% (98) now.
- 3.3.2 Overall, respondents said they feel well informed about services and how to contact them, 66% (443). However, a large proportion of respondents 70% (444) did not feel well informed about Council priorities in their neighbourhood or planned service improvements for their local area.
- 3.3.3 Overall, 52% (352) of respondents remember receiving copies of the Council Magazine 'Your Derby' last year and 30% (205) did not. Respondents were most likely to suggest higher quality and better informed content as an improvement for the magazine.
- 3.3.4 Three quarters of respondents 73% (359) had visited the Council's website which was an improvement on the 2005 results of 49% (183).
- 3.3.5 Half of respondents 52% (185) said the Council website was easy to use and they found the information or services they were looking for. These findings have remained stable since 2005, 58% (94).
- 3.3.6 Customer Service elements of the service the Council provides were perceived to be good. For example, most respondents 81% (536) said the Council had staff who were friendly and polite.
- 3.3.7 A large proportion respondents felt the Council **did not** involve residents when making decisions 53% (353), listen to residents concerns 51% (340) put the needs of local people first 50% (334).
- 3.3.8 Since 2007, there has been no major increase in the proportion of respondents who feel that Derby Cityscape is helping to make a real difference to the city centre.
- 3.3.9 Overall, Derby's Sustainable Community Strategy proposed priorities for 'Strengthening Derby's Communities, Strengthening Derby's Economy and Sharing Wealth, Improving the Environment' received a high level of agreement from respondents.

**For more information
contact:**

Background papers:

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 - November 2005 and April 2007 Derby Pointer survey results
 - Ipsos MORI, Frontiers of Performance in Local Government IV – June 07
 - Communities and Local Government, Perceptions of Local Government
 In England – key findings from qualitative research October 2006.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Implications
 Appendix 2 – Key results
 Appendix 3 – Communications Action Plan
 Appendix 4 – Derby Cityscape Action Plan
 Appendix 5 – not included, please refer to this link
<http://derbynet/derbynet/doclibrary/docadmin/DLdisplay.asp?refnum=2204>

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 Each Panel 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

- 2.1 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

- 3.1 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 The results about Current communications, Your Derby, Internet access, Council's website and Perceptions about the Council contribute directly/in-directly to all 2008 – 2011 priorities and outcomes.
- 5.2 Derby's Sustainable Community Strategy results contribute to the Council's priority of **Making us proud of our neighbourhoods**.
- 5.3 Derby Cityscape results contribute to the Council's priority of **Creating a 21st Century city centre**.

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 Current communications

- 2.1 We asked panel members for their views about how the Council keeps them informed and how we could improve our communications process.
- 2.2 The results in Table 1 show that 'by telephone' remains the top preferred option for respondents to contact the Council. Since 2005 there has been an increase in respondents who prefer to contact the Council through its website from 5% (17) in 2005 to 19% (98) now. This trend also applies to 'by letter' which has increased from 9% (32) in 2005 to 17% (96) now.

Table 1: Top 'ranked 1' preferred options for contacting the Council

	March 2008		Nov 2005	
	%	n	%	n
a. in person – visit a Council office	14	81	30	115
b. by letter	17	96	9	32
c. by telephone	40	230	53	207
d. by email	16	84	13	39
e. through Council website	19	98	5	17

Base: variable for both 2005 and 2008

- 2.3 When asked how they currently get information about the Council, the results in Table 2 show that there has been a change in the top five methods respondents use to get information about the Council. Although 'Derby Evening Telegraph' is still the top method used, existing Council publications such as 'Your Derby' and 'Council leaflets/newsletter' are in the top five methods respondents use.

Table 2: Top five methods respondents currently use to get information about the Council

	March 2008		Nov 2005	
	%	n	%	n
Council leaflets/newsletter	59	400	65	322
Derby Evening Telegraph	63	429	55	544
Word of mouth	N/A	N/A	38	190
Derby Express	39	263	31	312
News/talk shows on Radio Derby	N/A	N/A	31	156
Television – East Midlands Today	58	395	N/A	N/A
Your Derby – Council Magazine	52	352	N/A	N/A

Base: variable for both 2005 and 2008

- 2.4 However, when asked how they would prefer to get information about the Council, the results in Table 3 show that although local media still feature in the top methods, existing Council communication, such as, Your Derby, Council leaflets and Council website are also the preferred methods

Table 3: Top five methods respondents prefer to get information about the Council

	March 2008		Nov 2005	
	%	n	%	n
Your Derby – Council magazine	55	335	N/A	N/A
Council leaflets/newsletter	51	313	65	289
Derby Evening Telegraph	45	274	43	376
Television – East Midlands Today	41	249	N/A	N/A
Council website	35	215	24	106
Derby Express	N/A	N/A	24	216
News/talk shows on Radio Derby	N/A	N/A	25	111

Base: variable for both 2005 and 2008

- 2.5 Generally, the main options that respondents thought would help to improve the way the Council tells them about its services and performance ‘A lot’ were:
- Council magazine – Your Derby increase the frequency to monthly instead of quarterly, 45% (273)
 - More information leaflets, 35% (213)
 - Local interactive digital TV Channel, 25% (121)
 - Improve the design and layout of information on the Council’s website, 25% (110)
 - Make the Council website more interactive, for example, with blogs, email/web alerts, 24% (107).

- 2.6 The results in Table 4 show that respondents felt well informed about services and how to contact them, 66% (443). However, they did not feel well informed about Council priorities in their neighbourhood, 70% (444) or planned service improvements for their local area, 71% (466).

Table 4: How informed respondents feel about ...

	March 2008				November 2005			
	Total Informed		Total limited info/don't tell us much		Total informed		Total limited info/don't tell us much	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
a. General information about services and how to contact them	66	443	33	220	58	282	41	194
b. How the Council spends its money	44	292	55	367	38	185	60	290
c. The Council's overall priorities	41	267	57	369	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
d. The Council priorities in your neighbourhood	29	184	70	444	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
e. Planned service improvements within the city	40	264	58	384	39	187	59	280
f. Planned service improvements in your local area	29	192	71	466	35	174	64	312
g. Local events and activities	46	301	53	352	41	198	56	269
h. How good the Council is at providing information about the services you use	44	291	55	362	43	206	56	273

Base: variable for both 2005 and 2008

- 2.8 Overall, respondents prefer to have their say about the Council service priorities and decisions through ...
- Voting at the local elections, 82% (550)
 - Postal surveys, 63% (426)
 - Online feedback – surveys or forms, 39% (263)
 - Talking to local councillor, 31% (208)
 - Consultation events, 26% (177).

3. Council Magazine – Your Derby

- 3.1 More than half of respondents 52% (352) remember receiving copies of the Your Derby magazine last year, compared to 30% (205) who did not.
- 3.2 On the whole, respondents tended to read the whole of the magazine, 33%(114), scan the magazine for articles that interest them, 33% (115) or have a quick look through the magazine, 32% (113) when they received it.

- 3.3 Overall, 84% (286) of respondents agreed the magazine was easy to read and had a good balance of news, feature stories, general information, 68% (227) and was good value for money, 72% (243).
- 3.4 On balance, Your Derby as a preferred source of information is seen as an effective communication tool to help keep residents informed about local issues and Council news. The main comments about how 'Your Derby' could be improved were:
- higher quality, better-informed content, 14% (17)
 - more balanced/less biased articles, 7% (8)
 - should include more specifically local/community information, 6% (7)
 - a better layout, 6% (7).

4. Internet access and the Council's website

- 4.1 The results in Table 5 show that there has been an increase in the number of respondents who have Internet access at home. In 2005, 59% (272) of respondents had Internet access compared to 72% (462) now.
- 4.2 There is an increase in the number of people who have visited the Council's website, from 49% (183) in 2005 to 73% (359) now.

Table 5: Internet access

	March 2008		November 2005	
	%	n	%	n
At home	72	462	59	272
At work	28	178	31	143
At the library	5	31	4	19
At school/college	1	9	1	5
At a community centre	<1	1	<1	2
At an internet café	1	7	2	8
Through a mobile phone	4	23	3	16
At friends'/relatives' house	3	17	6	29
Don't have Internet access	24	155	31	145
Base	646		464	

- 4.3 On the whole, respondents who had visited the Council's website said it was easy to use and found the information/services they were looking for, 52% (185). However, a sizeable proportion of users 49% (172) said it wasn't easy/difficult to use and the main suggestions for improving the website were:
- improve ease of navigation/links around site, 26% (48)
 - develop a clutter-free, attractive layout, 14% (27)
 - more comprehensive/up-to-date information, 14% (26)
 - make it as user-friendly/idiot proof as possible, 13% (24)
 - improve the search engine, 12% (23).

5. Perceptions about the Council

5.1 Respondents' perceptions about the Council were on the whole good, especially for our customer service elements, such as, how the Council's run and our staff. However, we need to improve the way we listen to and involve local people in the decisions we make.

5.2 Overall, the statements respondents thought applied to the Council ...

A great deal/to some extent:

- has staff who are friendly and polite, 81% (536)
- provides high quality services, 72% (472)
- is efficient and well run, 64% (427)
- is fair and caring, 57% (377)
- responds quickly when asked for help, 49% (328)
- works well with other agencies to provide services, 41% (271)
- is trustworthy, 57% (374)
- is making the local area a better place for people to live, 54% (364)

Not very much/not at all:

- is a modern and dynamic organisation, 49% (322)
- involves residents when making decisions, 53% (353)
- puts the needs of local people first, 50% (334)
- listens to the concerns of residents, 51% (340)
- is doing a better job now than a year ago, 42% (280)
- innovates and changes things to provide better services for local people, 46% (304)
- provides good value for money for the Council Tax I pay, 47% (314).

5.3 Recent research indicates there is a link between communications and residents' satisfaction with councils. Ipsos MORI in their June 2007 report 'Frontiers of Performance in Local Government IV: Place Shapers or Shaped Place' looked at public perceptions around the performance of local authorities, based on the Autumn 2006 BVPI General User Satisfaction Survey, undertaken by all English local authorities. The report stated ...

"That the correlation between overall satisfaction with local government is still stronger for communications than it is for involvement. Analysis carried out so far indicates that those authorities who consistently communicate their message are better regarded by residents than those where levels of information are perceived to be lower. Given that good communications are an initial and valuable step towards securing higher levels of participation, it can be argued that authorities with good service scores are well placed to motivate and engage with the public".

- 5.4 Similarly, the October 2006 Communities and Local Government ‘Perceptions of Local Government in England – key findings from qualitative research report from the 13 focus groups done in 13 council’s stated ...

“ that people who read local authority newsletters, generally found their tone ‘irritating’ and ‘self-congratulatory’ and the information was akin to ‘propaganda’. The types of information that would be welcomed included information on upcoming plans for consultation; ‘balance sheets’ of plans each year, and progress of work in those areas; simple financial breakdown to allow residents to make their own assessment of the value for money provided by the council.

There is a desire for more written information, provided that it is ‘an honest account’, and perhaps in a different format or media, for example, a section in the local paper or free paper. But alongside this, civil servants and elected officials need to be far more available and accessible to the public, ‘out and about’ more in their communities. For some, face-to-face contact is the key to building up trust, interest and dialogue.

Councils need to be seen to be listening to residents’ views, and then, crucially, be seen to act on the views obtained. Where residents feel that consultation has been lip service, their trust in and satisfaction with their council is significantly affected”.

- 5.5 There is scope for the Council to improve the way it communicates with local residents, through existing methods such as ‘Your Derby’, leaflets, website, local press and through these methods provide more targeted local information to make sure residents are not just informed about developments across the city but in their local area aswell.
- 5.6 Plans outlining the proposed actions to address the issues raised are shown at Appendix 3.

6. Derby’s Sustainable Community Strategy – Our 2020 Vision

- 6.1 Derby City Partnership is an alliance of local public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations working together to improve the quality of life for people in Derby. The 2020 vision sets out the social, Economic and environmental aims for Derby, based on the city’s needs. Every three years new strategy priorities have to be identified that will move the DCP towards achieving the 2020 vision.
- 6.2 The new strategy must be in place by April 2009 and we wanted panel members views on the proposed strategy priorities and any others that should be included.
- 6.3 The three aspects of life in Derby respondents said were very good/good were:
- parks/access to the countryside, 27% (186)
 - transport links/location, 26% (175)
 - shopping/eateries, 21% (141).

- 6.4 Overall, the results in Table 6 show that more than 50 percent of respondents agreed with the proposed priorities for ‘ Strengthening Derby’s Communities’

Table 6: Priority 1- Strengthening Derby’s Communities

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
a. improving opportunities and life experiences for people living in Derby’s deprived neighbourhoods	21	136	41	274	30	199	6	41	2	12
b. encouraging people to take part in high quality and accessible cultural activities in the city centre and neighbourhoods	15	98	44	290	31	206	9	57	2	12
c. making Derby a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	24	157	45	300	23	150	7	46	2	13
d. helping people to feel that they belong and play an active part in their community	23	151	46	306	24	157	6	43	1	8
e. raising ambition, aspiration and achievement for individuals, communities and for the city	23	155	44	289	26	175	6	38	1	6
f. reducing incidence and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour among adults and young people	56	375	24	159	8	56	9	59	3	18
g. reducing the number of people who die before their 75 th birthday particularly in neighbourhoods where there is a lot of ill health	32	214	33	215	29	192	5	34	1	6
h. improving opportunities for people of all age groups and from all neighbourhoods to improve their physical and mental health	35	232	38	253	20	130	7	44	1	5
i. supporting vulnerable people	39	257	37	245	17	113	7	44	1	8
j. reducing incidence of domestic violence	36	237	34	223	25	167	5	33	1	5
k. reducing alcohol and drug misuse	48	322	26	173	14	97	9	57	3	20

Base varies for each priority

- 6.5 The three priorities respondents said were ‘most important’ for ‘Strengthening Derby’s Communities’ were:
- reducing incidence and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour among adults and young people, 73% (462)
 - reducing alcohol and drug misuse, 44% (281)
 - making Derby a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, 26% (162).
- 6.6 Other priorities that respondents said should be included for ‘Strengthening Derby’s Communities’ were:
- ensure a clean, well maintained environment, 25% (74)
 - reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, 17% (51)
 - greater recreational/cultural provision, 9% (27)
 - do more to encourage social cohesion, 7% (20).
- 6.7 Overall, the results in Table 7 show that more than 80 percent of respondents agreed with the priorities for ‘ Strengthening Derby’s Economy and Sharing Wealth’

Table 7: Priority 2 - Strengthening Derby’s Economy and Sharing Wealth

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
a. making the city centre more attractive to investors and visitors	46	308	41	277	7	49	4	27	1	7
b. stimulating enterprise and innovation	36	234	49	323	13	83	3	17	<1	2
c. promoting learning and achievement to make sure people from all neighbourhoods have the best opportunities	38	249	47	309	14	92	2	11	<1	3
d. making sure people’s skills match the jobs that are on offer	34	222	50	326	14	93	2	16	<1	1
e. helping people into jobs, particularly in areas where there is high unemployment	43	284	44	293	11	71	2	14	<1	2
f. reducing the numbers of children living in poverty	53	354	33	217	11	74	3	17	<1	3

Base varies for each priority

- 6.8 The three priorities respondents said were ‘most important’ for ‘Strengthening Derby’s Economy and Sharing Wealth’ were:
- making the city centre more attractive to investors and visitors, 55% (354)
 - reducing the number of children living in poverty, 53% (337)
 - helping people into jobs, particularly where there is high unemployment, 51% (326).
- 6.9 Other priorities respondents said should be included for ‘Strengthening Derby’s Economy and Sharing Wealth’ were:
- making the city more attractive to investors and visitors, 16% (40)
 - ensure Council’s primary concern is the support of regular working Derby citizens, not wasting resources on other schemes, 10% (24)
 - improve public transport, especially bus station, 9% (22)
- 6.10 Overall, the results in Table 8 show that more than 80 percent of respondents agreed with the priorities for ‘Improving the Environment’.

Table 8: Priority 3 - Improving the Environment

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
a. reducing the impact of climate change and flooding	40	265	42	279	14	92	2	15	2	11
b. protecting Derby’s cultural heritage and green spaces	66	437	29	192	4	29	1	7	0	0
c. celebrating the river and realising its potential	47	314	33	223	16	108	3	18	1	4
d. improving the built environment	30	199	49	318	18	115	3	20	<1	3
e. providing adequate and affordable housing	40	263	40	267	15	99	4	25	1	8
f. improving road safety	49	328	38	252	10	69	2	11	1	6
g. improving access to the city	44	295	38	252	13	88	4	24	1	7

Base varies for each priority

- 6.11 The three priorities respondents said were ‘most important’ for ‘Improving the Environment’ were:
- protecting Derby’s cultural heritage and green spaces, 66% (423)
 - reducing the impact of climate change and flooding, 41% (266)
 - providing adequate and affordable housing, 40% (259).

- 6.12 Other priorities respondents said should be included for 'Improving the Environment' were:
- improving public transport, 13% (45)
 - reduce litter, make environment generally cleaner and tidier, 12% (42)
 - improve recycling/refuse collections, 9% (31).
- 6.13 Helen Osler, Director, Derby City Partnership stated the results showed that all current Derby City Partnership priorities are supported by respondents and additional suggestions for priorities for the new Sustainable Community Strategy were identified. This feedback will help Derby City Partnership to shape its priorities for the Sustainable Community Strategy 2009 - 11.

7 Derby Cityscape

- 7.1 Derby Cityscape is a not-for-profit regeneration company, working closely with the Derby City Council, responsible for both encouraging the refurbishment of existing buildings and new developments in Derby's city centre. Derby Cityscape is funded by partners Derby City Council, East Midlands Development Agency and English Partnerships.
- 7.2 We repeated some of the questions asked in the April 2007 survey to see if people's perceptions of Derby Cityscape had changed.
- 7.3 The results in Table 9 show that there has been no major increase in the percentage of respondents who agreed that Derby Cityscape is helping to make a real difference to the city centre. In 2007 56% (378) of respondents agreed they were making a difference, compared to 51% (309) now.

Table 9: % respondents who agreed Derby Cityscape is making a difference to the city centre

	March 2008		April 2007	
	%	n	%	n
Strongly agree	11	66	10	69
Agree	40	243	46	309
Neither agree nor disagree	29	176	30	200
Disagree	13	81	9	62
Strongly disagree	7	42	4	29
Base	608		669	

- 7.4 There was no major change in the percentage of respondents who had heard of Derby Cityscape. In 2007 68% (512) of respondents had heard of Derby Cityscape, compared to 77% (514) now.
- 7.5 Plans outlining the proposed actions to address the issues raised are shown at Appendix 4.