

Briefing Note

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Title: Environmental Services
Customer Satisfaction Survey

Date: April 2019

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Job Title: Head of Environmental Services

**Intended
Audience:**

Internal

Partner organisation

Public

Confidential

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the results of the Environmental Services Customer Satisfaction Survey undertaken September/October 2018. Copies of the full results are available upon request.

2 Background

- 2.1 Environmental Services has conducted regular, annual online satisfaction surveys utilising SurveyMonkey™ since 2014. Previously, a postal survey conducted by BMG research was commissioned to conduct the survey using the City Speak citizen's panel.

2.2 Highlights

The 2018 survey contained a series of questions that reflected either directly or indirectly on the City's progress within several themes. The survey results are organised around the themes of overall quality of community, city services, appearance and environment. Remaining consistent over the years, the survey questions ascertain whether customers believe services are improving.

- 2.3 Members of the citizen's panel were again requested via email to complete the online SurveyMonkey™. Residents and visitors to the city were also encouraged to complete the online survey promoted on the website and Facebook 'Wolverhampton Today'.

Altogether 139 people completed the survey. This is considered a small sample size based on our city population of 250,000 and gives us a confidence interval of 8.3. The confidence interval projects that if everyone in Wolverhampton had completed the survey the actual result would not vary by more than 8.3% i.e. a score of 65% could vary between 57.3% and 73.3%.

- 2.4 With 420 people completing the survey in the previous year the results had a confidence interval of 4.28. Therefore, the confidence level variation needs to be considered when comparing this year with last year's results i.e. only a large variation between satisfaction levels over the last two years should be considered a concern.
- 2.5 The questions within the survey have remained consistent so that results and feedback can be bench marked with previous years. It should be noted that questions relating to Highway maintenance (including winter gritting), Street Lighting, Transport and Parking Services are now under the management of John Roseblade, Head of City Transport.
- 2.6 Satisfaction levels are gauged for the services mentioned overall and for each of the individual service areas.
- 2.7 Respondents selecting 'no opinion' when answering questions have been disregarded.

3 Overall Quality

- 3.1 When asked various questions regarding litter bin provision and 72% of respondents responded positively, with 80% satisfied with emptying. This compares with 72% and 83% respectively in 2017.
- 3.2 The survey revealed that 66% of respondents were satisfied with the street cleansing service overall, 3% less than 2017.
- 3.3 81% of respondents believed grass cutting was acceptable, compared with 84% the previous year.
- 3.4 55% were satisfied with the removal of fly posting and 68% believed fly tipping was removed quickly. This compares with 73% and 66% respectively in 2017.
- 3.5 Of the respondents that had used the pest control service 57% were happy with the service they received. This compares with 79% satisfaction in 2017.
- 3.6 While just 40% of all respondents were happy with the condition of the adopted highway, 75% responded positively about winter gritting, down 11% from 2017.
- 3.7 Further questions regarding street lighting revealed that 13% responded negatively compared with 8% in 2017 however 30% of respondents indicated that street lighting had improved in the last two years.
- 3.8 Concerning car parking 28% indicated that good quality & security is important with 38% also stating that value for money is of importance to them.
- 3.9 88% of respondents indicated that school crossing held some level of importance to them (90%, 2017), with 72% indicating the same with Shopmobility – a 10% reduction on the last survey.

- 3.10 When asked about the provision of green space and play areas 78% (down from 85%) were satisfied with their local area, with 74% (down from 83%) happy with the city as a whole.
- 3.11 55% of respondents had visited a cemetery in the last year with 84% (down from 93% 2017) satisfied.
- 3.12 Over 89% of respondents believed transport for special schools, adult learning disabilities and elderly day care was important with just 52% supporting the free market city centre bus.
- 3.13 72% of respondents revealed they were happy with Environmental Services overall, down 5% on the previous year.
- 3.14 40% of respondents had contacted the council regarding these services in the preceding 12 months to report an issue.
- 3.15 96% of respondents regard Environmental Services as important to their quality of life.
- 3.16 When asked about views on reducing litter, the top three answers remain:
- Better enforcement
 - Education initiatives, and
 - More litter bins
- 3.17 Our customers told us that the top three most important issues to them remain:
- Maintained parks and recreational areas
 - Collection of litter from green areas, and
 - Regularly cut grassed areas.
- 3.18 86% (93% 2017) think hanging baskets and other floral displays are good.
- 3.19 Concerning the city environment 66% (71% 2017) believed Wolverhampton is a place where wild life can exist and prosper with 78% (74% 2017) of respondents stating they would like to see more nature friendly zones (areas where the grass can grow long and is cut back just once a year). However, 61% perceived there to be a rat problem in Wolverhampton with the majority of the 71 comments received blaming this on people dropping litter, in particular from fast food outlets.
- 3.20 When asked about salting the highway network only 2% thought we should spend less on salt with 52% saying the council should continue with its current approach.
- 3.21 68% of respondents state they use council car parks and 19% said they had dealt with a civil enforcement officer. Of those with an opinion:
- 30% agreed the CEO was polite.
 - 24% agreed they were helpful.

- 25% agreed they were tactful.
- 27% agreed they were fair and consistent.

4.0 Areas for improvement and development

Environmental Services endeavour to develop services each year and this has been demonstrated by our continued compliance with the Customer Service Excellence accreditation which stipulates continual improvement.

This survey reinforces the importance of the Environmental Services and the need to continue to provide standards acceptable to the public and provide value for money during difficult financial circumstances.

5.0 Concluding observations

- 5.1 The number completing the survey was disappointing. Engaging with the public via the SurveyMonkey™ proved less productive than the previous year even though it was promoted on the same channels (web site, social media, e-mails, customer services). Guidance from Corporate Communications will be sought next year to address this issue.
- 5.2 Environmental Services provide highly valued public services. During a time of severe financial constraints, the service has continued to remain customer focused, but satisfaction levels have decreased over the last 12 months. However, the confidence level variation needs to be considered when comparing this year with last year's results i.e. only a noticeable variation between satisfaction levels over the last two years should be considered a concern.
- 5.3 The six areas showing a noticeable reduction in satisfaction were pest control, fly tipping, hanging baskets, play provision, cemeteries and highway maintenance/winter gritting. However the following should be noted: -
- Pest Control. Charges were introduced in 2018 for resident's on maximum housing/council tax benefit. Previously the service was provided free of charge. Those on maximum housing/council tax benefit now qualify for a 50% reduction in the cost of the treatment for rats, mice, cockroaches, fleas and bedbugs.
 - Fly tipping. The team remove 99% of reported fly tipping on the highway/parks & green open spaces within 5 working days. If fly tipping is not reported by residents it will remain there longer. It should also be noted that fly tipping on private land is the responsibility of the land owner to remove and can be detrimental to the ambience of the street; and Wolverhampton Homes are responsible for removing fly tipping on land that they maintain. The council is committed to tackling fly tipping and is targeting hot spot locations for enforcement action.
 - Hanging baskets. The hanging basket displays have been reduced due to budget constraints
 - Play provision. Natural play areas have been removed from locations across the city having reached their natural longevity and now beyond economical repair. Some of the measures to compensate their removal are yet to be

actioned. New play areas and refurbishment of traditional play areas are being undertaken using builder developer's money/106 funds.

- Cemetery. Satisfaction levels are still very high. Reasons were not sought for those expressing dissatisfaction. This will be introduced on the next survey so that we can understand what could be done better.
- Highway maintenance/winter gritting. Pot hole repair and winter gritting are two contentious areas for road users. The winter of 2017/18 had significant snow fall compared to the previous year and the service area was proactive in promoting the number and effectiveness of the winter gritting/snow clearance operations having deployed snow ploughs for the first time in many years. Snow Wolves volunteers were effective across the city, but other residents have unrealistic expectations of what the council should do (i.e. expectation to clear snow from all streets).

6.0 Financial Implications

The annual SurveyMonkey™ is not a direct cost to the service area. This Authority pays an annual membership fee £380 to SurveyMonkey™ to enable an unlimited number of surveys to be conducted across the authority using this on-line platform. It is a valuable tool that enables services across the whole council to gather customer feedback to identify satisfaction levels and inform the council on service delivery and savings proposals.

7.0 Environmental implications

The report has direct implications gauging reaction to the city's maintenance.

8.0 Equalities implications

This report has direct equal opportunity implications as it refers to environmental maintenance, affecting all sections of the community.