

## **Appendix 3 MORI Residents survey – Improvement activity**

### **Background**

Since 1995 Sunderland City Council has commissioned an annual survey to monitor residents' satisfaction with and perceptions of the council and the services it provides. The latest survey was conducted in Autumn 2008 and comprised 1260 interviews with residents across the city in addition to a 'booster' sample of residents from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. Cabinet received a copy of the findings from the 2008 survey on 11 March 2009.

It is increasingly important that the council understands the needs and requirements of its communities, and in particular the most marginalised and vulnerable groups to ensure that policies and services are designed to meet them. The Annual Residents' Survey is an important starting point in developing this understanding since it enables the council to measure satisfaction with the council, council services and local area and monitor trends over time. It also provides the opportunity to conduct more detailed analysis of how perspectives vary amongst different groups of the population, for example by geographical area, age, gender, disability and ethnicity.

It is crucial that the council actively uses this information to help inform this understanding and in future engagement, service planning and improvement. It was therefore agreed that the key issues arising from the 2008 survey should be identified and for the council to consider how to respond to them.

It should however be recognised that there is still a need for directorates to consider the wider results in more detail and across subgroups, looking at not only areas where improvement is needed but also where progress has been made and in relation to interventions in the previous year.

The 2008 survey presents a largely positive set of results although there are some issues to consider in order to improve performance further. This report outlines the key issues and the existing and planned interventions that are designed to respond to them. The sections are organised by key themes although some actions may cut across more than one theme.

### **Safer Communities**

#### **Key issues**

Despite improvements since 2007, a high proportion of residents continue to feel unsafe in the city centre after dark (41%) or don't go out at night (24%). BME residents continue to feel less safe walking alone in the city centre at night and women also feel less safe. Those aged 55+ and with a disability are less likely to go out. That said, residents generally perceive Sunderland as a safe place to be with 81% saying they generally feel safe in Sunderland as a whole and only 17% feeling unsafe. In addition there are no differences in perceptions of general safety between white and BME residents this year, whereas BME residents tended to feel less safe than others in Sunderland 2007.

Over half of residents do not feel informed about the council's efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour. Residents in Coalfield and Washington feel less informed.

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### **Existing and planned developments**

A range of developments are taking place in the city centre to improve feelings of safety at night. This includes the taxi marshalling scheme, the best bar none scheme, pubwatch and the polycarbonate glasses pilot.

In terms of addressing the fear of crime needs of particular groups, the relevant IAGs were approached in order to hold some focus group work with them around fear of crime but they did not take up the offer to be involved with the exception of the disability IAG (and on the whole, this group had good levels of feelings of safety). The Safer Communities Team are now working with Corporate Communications on the development of a marketing and communications plan for 2009-10 and this will include how best to develop messages to target these groups to help improve feelings of safety.

The development of the ARCH system and the work of the Diversity and Inclusion Team and the Neighbourhood Policing Teams should also continue to improve perceptions of the BME community around hate crime being tackled quickly and effectively in the city.

The Development and Regeneration directorate is rolling out the provision of CCTV cameras to improve coverage across Sunderland. This programme will be completed in 2009.

### **Housing**

#### **Key issues**

Half of all respondents identified an issue with their accommodation, the most common being that it needs some repair/improvement and is too expensive to heat. Respondents aged 25-34 are somewhat more likely to have an issue with their accommodation. This issue confirms the intelligence from the Housing market Assessment.

#### **Existing and planned developments**

The council is able to provide advice and information regarding repairs / improvements to housing for owner-occupiers, and may be able to help individuals access financial support (eg grants or loans) to carry out essential work. This includes insulation measures (cavity wall and loft insulation) at a subsidised price to reduce heating bills through the Council home energy efficiency scheme.

People who are particularly vulnerable, on low income or in receipt of certain qualifying benefits may be eligible for free of charge support through the Home Improvement Agency, the Council insulation scheme and the national Warm Front scheme. The Warm Front scheme is particularly useful in providing heating systems and boiler repairs as well as other energy saving support.

### **Volunteering**

#### **Key issues**

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Levels of volunteering have fallen since 2007 with 70% of residents having never taken part in formal volunteering, although this is still an improvement since 2005. Volunteering is lowest in the North, amongst social class C2,DE, over 65s and those with a disability.

### **Existing and planned developments**

During 2009/2010 agreement will be secured within the council and across the Sunderland Partnership to key actions and lead officer arrangements for implementation of the Sunderland Partnership Community Development Plan (CDP) priorities. Appropriate performance management arrangements will be established including a highlight system to promote effective delivery. Six monthly reports on progress will be provided to EMT and the Sunderland Partnership Board.

The CDP will help to increase community capacity to engage with the Sunderland Strategy Priorities, promote active citizenship and support communities in identifying and meeting their needs to close the inequalities gap. This will help meet the targets associated with new national performance indicators NI 6 – participation in regular volunteering and NI 7 – Environment for a thriving third sector.

Support will be provided to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) through development of an Integrated Bureau of Support to increase the skills and knowledge available within the VCS and to provide more effective and coordinated support aimed at increasing the number of residents volunteering in the city. A refresh of the Sunderland Compact arrangements will be undertaken in 2009/2010 to embed them across the organisations of the Sunderland Partnership and the VCS to develop better relationships between the VCS and the wider Sunderland Partnership which should lead to improved service delivery for the citizens of Sunderland.

The Council and Volunteer Centre Sunderland are launching a 'Volunteering Toolkit for Organisations' at the end of March 09. The toolkit will give good practice guidelines on working with volunteers, information on volunteering and routes to progression. This information will be provided in a booklet format with CD Rom. This work has arisen from the joint work with the VCS to develop the Sunderland Compact - Volunteering Code of Practice.

The Council intends to commission research to accurately understand the levels of participation in volunteering across Sunderland, as local information from Volunteer Centre Sunderland suggests a different picture to the survey results.

### **Further research/analysis**

When directorates are considering this year's results in more detail they may identify areas where further work is required to better understand perceptions.

The information from the survey will be used together with a range of other consultation information and intelligence at a local level to help inform the local area plans.

BME residents who took part in the survey and indicated that they would like to take part in further research will be invited to a workshop in order to explore further the issues raised in the survey. This may include for example recycling and safety in the city centre.

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The findings, analysed by each of the six equality strands (gender, faith, disability, age, ethnicity and sexuality) will be provided to the relevant IAGs for further consideration and action planning.

### **Future surveys**

The council will continue to review the scope of the survey and consider how it can be developed in future years.

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### **Social Class Definitions**

**A** Professionals such as doctors, surgeons, solicitors or dentists; chartered people like architects; fully qualified people with a large degree of responsibility such as senior editors, senior civil servants, town clerks, senior business executives and managers, and high ranking grades of the Services.

**B** People with very responsible jobs such as university lecturers, hospital matrons, heads of local government departments, middle management in business, qualified scientists, bank managers, police inspectors, and upper grades of the Services.

**C1** All others doing non-manual jobs; nurses, technicians, pharmacists, salesmen, publicans, people in clerical positions, police sergeants/constables, and middle ranks of the Services.

**C2** Skilled manual workers/craftsmen who have served apprenticeships; foremen, manual workers with special qualifications such as long distance lorry drivers, security officers, and lower grades of Services.

**D** Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, including labourers and mates of occupations in the C2 grade and people serving apprenticeships; machine minders, farm labourers, bus and railway conductors, laboratory assistants, postmen, door-to-door and van salesmen.

**E** Those on lowest levels of subsistence including pensioners, casual workers, and others with minimum levels of income.