REPORT TO:	East Lothian Council
MEETING DATE:	27 August 2019
BY:	Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)
SUBJECT:	2019 East Lothian Residents Survey

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To present a summary of the main findings of the 2019 East Lothian Residents Survey and to identify some of the planned and potential uses of the survey data.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Council notes the main findings of the 2019 Residents Survey presented in this report, as well as the availability of further data at both East Lothian wide and ward level.

2.2 That Council notes how the data generated by the Residents Survey is being used.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 East Lothian Council, on behalf of East Lothian Partnership, commissioned Research Resource to carry out the 2019 Residents Survey. Face to face interviews were carried out with a representative sample of 1,680 local residents during May and June 2019. Interviews were spread across the whole of East Lothian, with the number of interviews designed to provide robust data within each ward with a margin of error in the region of +\- 6%. At the East Lothian level the numbers interviewed ensured a robust and representative data set with a margin of error of +\- 2.37%.

3.2 In line with best practice in research, the survey data has been weighted to ensure it is representative of the East Lothian population on the basis of ward, age and gender. The percentages reported in the full survey report and this report are the weighted percentages.

3.3 Topics covered in the Survey included: Neighbourhood and Quality of Life; Community Safety; Health and Wellbeing; Perceptions of the Council / Public Services and Local Priorities. Many of the questions used were the same as were used in the previous Residents Survey that was carried out in March 2017 so that comparisons can be drawn out.

3.4 The questions included were designed to establish the public's views on general and specific aspects of life in East Lothian, but also to gather data to help inform the Council and Community Planning partners of public views and perceptions relating to key objectives set out in the East Lothian Plan, (our Local Outcome Improvement Plan) and the Council Plan. The ward level data will be very useful to Area Partnerships.

3.5 The Survey findings are also of potential use to individual Council services and partner organisations. Colleagues are encouraged to contact the Council's Policy team for further information and advice, but also to enable to team to capture details of how the data is being used.

3.6 A copy of the final report of the survey along with detailed summaries of the six ward results have been lodged in the Members Library (Ref: 111/19, August 2019 Bulletin). Some of the key findings are outlined below.

Neighbourhood and Quality of Life

3.7 Responses to how residents rate their neighbourhood as a place to live has remained consistent since 2017 (and since the 2011 survey). 98% of respondents rated their neighbourhood as 'very good' (74%) or 'fairly good' (24%).

3.8 Respondents also expressed very high levels of satisfaction with living in East Lothian, with 98% identifying that East Lothian was either a 'very good' (71%) or 'fairly good' (27%) place to live. These results were consistent with the 2017 East Lothian Residents Survey (72% 'very good' and 27% 'good'). More respondents felt that their neighbourhood has 'improved' (14%) than 'got a little/ much worse' (6%).

3.9 The proportion of respondents who said they feel they belong to their neighbourhood is consistent with the 2017 survey – 89% compared to 88% in 2017. However, there was a significant increase in the people who said they 'very strongly' feel they belong to their neighbourhood increased from 38% to 54%.

3.10 The survey included a question about perceptions of neighbourhood and personal resilience. Respondents agreed that they would offer help to people in their neighbourhood during an emergency (95%; 94% in 2017), they could rely on friends or relatives during times of loneliness (92%; 91% in 2017) and their neighbourhood is one where people from different backgrounds get on well together (92%; not asked in 2017).

3.11 Respondents were asked for their views on what most needs improved in their local area. A slightly higher proportion of respondents suggested improvements than in the 2017 survey; 15% said there was nothing in their neighbourhood they felt needed improving, and 23% said 'don't know';

compared to 37% and 5% in 2017. The issues that most respondents suggested need improving were:

- Road and pavement repairs – 26% (+10% from 2011 Survey)
- Shopping facilities – 16% (+6%)
- Jobs for local people – 15% (+8%)
- Traffic congestion – 13% (+8%)
- Health services – 13% (+2%)
- Affordable decent housing – 12% (+4%)

Perceptions of the Council and Public Services

3.12 Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements about the Council. There was a large increase in respondents who answered 'don't know' compared to 2017. Analysis has been carried out excluding the 'don't knows' (from both the 2017 and 2019 surveys) in order to get a clearer comparison. This analysis shows that agreement increased in six areas and fell in only one area:

- 84% agreed that 'My Council does the best if can with the money available' (83% in 2017)
- 80% agreed 'My Council provides high quality services' (75% in 2017)
- 80% agreed 'My Council is good at letting people know how it is performing' (70% in 2017)
- 79% agreed 'My local Council designs services around the needs of the people who use them' (76% in 2017)
- 77% agreed 'My Council is good at letting people know about the services it provides' (75% in 2017)
- 60% agreed 'My Council is good at listening to local people's views before it takes decisions' (47% in 2017)
- 66% agreed 'My Council is addressing the key issues affecting the quality of life in my neighbourhood' (67% in 2017)

3.13 The proportion of respondents who agreed they can influence decisions affecting their local area fell from 43% in 2017 to 35%. However, the proportion who said they would like to be more involved in the decisions affecting their local area stayed more or less the same as in 2017 – 18% compared to 19%.

3.14 The survey asked about people's satisfaction with a range of public services. The results show a reduction in satisfaction levels across many services when compared to the 2017 survey. However, the 2019 survey had a significantly higher level of 'don't know' responses than in 2017. When the figures are adjusted to exclude the 'don't knows' the 2019 survey showed higher levels of satisfaction than in 2017. There was an increase in satisfaction in eight of nine council services and an increase in satisfaction in most other public services. The percentages of those (who expressed a view; i.e. excluding the 'don't knows') saying they were 'very' or 'fairly satisfied' are detailed below (2017 figures in brackets). Further analysis of responses from people who responded that they 'have used/ had contact' with the services shows that satisfaction levels of people who have used services or had contact with services are even higher than those suggested below.

Council services

- Parks, gardens and open spaces 98% (94%)
- Waste & recycling services 94% (91%)
- Libraries 93% (88%)
- Schools 92% (90%)
- Council House repairs service 90% (75%)
- Play areas 89% (80%)
- Support for frail/ older people 87% (85%)
- Street cleaning 86% (87%)
- Roads maintenance 69% (68%)

Other public services

- Fire Service 97% (93%)
- Dental services 96% (95%)
- Hospital outpatients 95% (90%)
- Hospital A&E 95% (88%)
- Police 94% (92%)
- Swimming pools / sports centres 94% (85%)
- GP services 87% (85%)
- Local bus service 79% (89%)

Local Priorities

3.15 The survey sought views on how the Council might do things differently to address the key challenges it faces. Respondents were asked whether they agreed with five options for how the Council could meet the growing demand for services while budgets continue to reduce. The vast majority were in agreement ('strongly agree' or 'agree') with all of the options listed (excluding 'don't knows in brackets):

- 'Focus on prevention and early intervention' 92% (99%)

- ‘Focus resources on areas of East Lothian where the need is greatest’ 82% (94%)
- ‘Deliver services in new ways, perhaps with community involvement’ 74% (95%)
- ‘Identify services which we should stop providing’ 59% (75%)
- ‘Reduce and manage the growing demand for some services’ 58% (74%)

3.16 Respondents were also asked to provide their views on some of the concepts and ideas that could form part of the proposed Community Charter. They were asked whether they ‘already do’ or ‘would do in the future’ some of the actions that might be included in the ‘Your Part’ of the Charter. The responses to this question will be useful in helping to inform the development of the Charter as they provide a baseline for actions which citizens are already committed to (e.g. recycling) and those which may require more promotion and active support (e.g. help a friend or family member get online to use online council services). The list below shows the percentage of respondents who said they ‘currently do’ the actions listed and the percentage who said the ‘would do’ them in the future is shown in brackets.

- Reduce, Reuse and Recycle 88% (8%)
- Look out for neighbours 77% (17%)
- Support local businesses by shopping locally 70% (14%)
- Use online council services 38% (30%)
- Help a friend or family get online 12% (43%)
- Do something to help your local community 14% (25%)
- Get involved in local initiatives or organisations 8% (19%)

Community Safety

3.17 The questions about community safety suggests that there has been a decrease in fear of crime and an increase in people feeling safe in their neighbourhood over the last two years.

3.18 The proportion of respondents who said they do not feel threatened by crime in their neighbourhood was 92% compared to 93% in 2017; but the proportion of respondents who said they do not feel threatened by crime ‘at all’ in their neighbourhood increased from 55% in 2017 to 62%.

3.19 94% proportion of respondents said they feel ‘very safe’ or ‘safe’ walking alone in their local neighbourhood after dark (up from 85% in 2017). There was a significant increase in those who said they feel ‘very safe’ from 51% in 2017 to 64% in 2019.

3.20 Respondents were asked how their confidence in the police being able to respond to crime being reported has changed in the last two years. 71% said they had about the same confidence as two years ago, 7% said they had less confidence and 6% said they had more confidence. The equivalent 2017 figures were 79% (the same), 7% (less confidence) and 3% (more confidence). The proportion of respondents who said ‘don’t know’ increased from 11% to 17%.

Health and Wellbeing

3.21 The survey asked respondents about their smoking and exercise habits. Just over three quarters (76%) of respondents said that they have never smoked or used to smoke and have now stopped, compared to 82% in 2017. The proportion of respondents who said they smoke and have no plan to give up has increased from 9% in 2017 to 17%. One in 10 respondents said they vape / use e-cigarettes.

3.22 Over half of respondents (54%) said they meet the recommended weekly guidelines for physical activity whilst just around a quarter (26%) said they do not. However, 21% said they do not know whether they meet the recommended weekly guidelines.

3.23 There has been a decline in the proportion of people who take part in vigorous exercise from 47% in 2017 to 41% in 2019. Gym activities (15%), organised sport (12%) and swimming (10%) are the most popular forms of exercise.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Some of the data generated by the 2019 East Lothian Residents Survey will be used to help inform the Top 50 Council Plan Indicators and the East Lothian Plan indicators (see Appendix 1). Some of the data generated by the survey will be used to inform the development of the Community Charter. The detailed results for each of the wards will be used by Areas Partnerships to inform the future review of their Local Plans.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial – The total cost of the survey has been met from the East Lothian Partnership budget.

6.2 Personnel – none.

6.3 Other – none.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 East Lothian Resident Survey 2019; Members' Library (Ref 111/19, August 2019 Bulletin):

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/16531/members_library_service

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Appendix 1: Resident Survey Data used in Top 50 Council Plan Indicators

Five of the Top 50 Council Plan indicators are derived from the Residents Survey. The results for these indicators are generally very positive.

	2017	**2019**	**+ / -**
% citizens who agree ‘the council is good at listening to people’s views before it makes decisions’ (excluding don’t knows)	47%	60%	+13%
% citizens who say their neighbourhood is a good place to live	98% (V. Good – 74% Good – 24%)	98% (V. Good – 73% Good – 25%)	No change
% citizens who say they can rely on a neighbour to help	91%	95%	+4%
% citizens who feel safe walking alone in the dark	85% (V. Safe – 51% Safe – 34%)	94% (V. Safe – 64% Safe – 30%)	+9%
% citizens who agree that ‘My council does the best it can with the money available’ (excluding don’t knows)	83%	84%	+1%