

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 12 September 2017

BY: Depute Chief Executive - Partnerships and Community Services

SUBJECT: East Lothian Residents Survey 2017

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present a summary of the main findings of the 2017 East Lothian Residents Survey and to identify some of the planned and potential uses of the survey data.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet welcomes the positive results from the 2017 Residents Survey and notes the main findings of the Survey presented in this report, as well as the availability of further data at both East Lothian wide and ward level.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 East Lothian Council, on behalf of East Lothian Partnership, commissioned Research Resource to carry out the 2017 Residents Survey. Face to face interviews were carried out with a representative sample of 1,565 local residents during March 2017. Interviews were spread across the whole of East Lothian, with the number of interviews designed to provide robust data within each ward (margin of error between 5.90% and 6.08%), At East Lothian level the numbers interviewed ensured a robust and representative data set (+\ - 2.45% margin of error).
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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 development of the East Lothian Plan, Council Plan and Locality Plans.

- 3.4 There is also potential for further use of the Survey findings by individual Council services and partner organisations to support the planning and delivery of services. Colleagues are encouraged to contact the Council's Policy Team for further information and advice, but also to enable the Team to capture details of how the data is being used.
- 3.5 A copy of the final report and individual reports for each ward are now available on the Council website. Some of the key findings are outlined below.

Neighbourhood and Quality of Life

- 3.6 Respondents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with living in East Lothian, with 99% agreeing that East Lothian is either a 'very good' (72%) or 'fairly good' (27%) place to live. These results are consistent with the last East Lothian Residents Survey carried out in 2011 (98%).
- 3.7 The majority of respondents (88%) felt very or fairly strongly that they belong to their immediate neighbourhood.
- 3.8 Respondents were shown a list of factors that might help make somewhere a good place to live and asked to identify which they felt were most important - the top choices were:
- Health services: 61% (+27% from 2011 Survey)
 - Affordable decent house: 47% (+4%)
 - Primary and secondary schools: 47% (+12%)
 - The level of crime: 44% (-6%)
 - Affordable decent housing: 43% (+4%)
 - Jobs for local people: 40% (+3%)
- 3.9 A follow up question, using the same list, asked what most needed improved in respondents' local areas. Significantly fewer respondents suggested improvements than in the 2011 Survey, with 37% saying there was nothing in their neighbourhood they felt needed improving (compared to 28% in 2011). The top responses were:
- Road and pavement repairs: 16% (-15% from 2011 Survey)
 - Health services: 11% (+6%)
 - Shopping facilities: 10% (same as 2011 Survey)
 - Activities for teenagers: 8% (-18%)

Community Safety

- 3.10 The majority of respondents (55%) said they did not feel threatened by crime 'at all' in their neighbourhood, a further 38% said they did not feel threatened 'very much'. This was a slight change from 2011 when 67% said they didn't feel threatened at all and 30% said they did not feel threatened very much.
- 3.11 81% of respondents felt crime had stayed about the same in their local neighbourhood in the last 2 years, 9% felt it had increased and 1% felt it had decreased. The percentage who thought crime had increased was significantly lower than the Scottish average of 20%.¹
- 3.12 Interestingly, when asked the same question about the crime rate for the whole of East Lothian, respondents were more inclined to think crime had increased (17%).
- 3.13 79% said their level of confidence in the Police being able to respond to crime being reported had 'stayed the same' in the last 2 years, 3% felt more confident, 7% were less confident and 11% were unsure.

Health and Wellbeing

- 3.14 When asked to rate their general health, 52% reported that their health was 'very good', 30% said it was good and 12% rated it as fair. The proportion of East Lothian respondents rating their health as very good was significantly higher than the Scottish average of 34%.²
- 3.15 When asked about their support networks, 94% agreed or strongly agreed that in an emergency, such as a flood, they would offer help to people in the neighbourhood who might not be able to cope so well. 93% said that if their home was empty they could count on family or friends to keep an eye on it.

Perceptions of the Council and Public Services

- 3.16 The survey asked about people's satisfaction with a range of public services – the percentages of those (who expressed a view) saying they were 'very' or 'fairly satisfied' are detailed below:
- Parks, gardens, open spaces: 94%
 - Local schools: 90%
 - Waste & recycling services: 90%
 - Libraries: 87%
 - Local bus service: 87%
 - Street cleaning: 87%
 - Support for frail / older people to remain in their own home: 85%

¹ Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2014/15

² 2015 Scottish Surveys Core Questions

- Swimming pools / sports centres: 85%
- Children's play areas: 80%
- Council house repairs: 75%
- Roads maintenance: 69%
- Dental services: 95%
- Fire Service: 93%
- Police: 92%
- Hospital Outpatients Services: 90%
- Hospital A&E Services: 90%
- GP Services: 88%

3.17 Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements about the Council. From the table below changes in perceptions since the 2011 Residents Survey can be noted, with a particularly positive change in the percentage of people agreeing they can influence local decisions.

	% strongly agree / tend to agree	
	2017	2011
My local Council does the best it can with the money available	79%	77%
My Council provides high quality services	72%	79%
My local Council designs services around the needs of the people who use them	70%	73%
My Council is good at letting people know how well it is performing	62%	69%
My Council is good at listening to local people's views before it makes decisions	38%	44%
I can influence decisions affecting my local area	38%	16%
I would like to be more involved in the decisions my Council makes that affect my local area	19%	10%
My local Council is good at letting people know how well it is performing	68%	n/a
My local Council is addressing the key issues affecting the quality of life in my local neighbourhood	61%	n/a

Council Priorities

3.18 Respondents were asked to rate the priorities in the 2012-17 Council Plan, over 70% of respondents rated these as 'very important'

- Growing our Economy: 70%
- Growing our Communities: 72%
- Growing our People: 77%
- Reducing Inequalities: 74%

3.19 The survey included a list of some of the ways in which the Council could meet the growing demand for services while budgets continue to reduce. The vast majority were in agreement / strong agreement with all of the options listed:

- 'Focus on prevention and early intervention – taking action as soon as possible to tackle social problems before they become more difficult to turn around' (69% strongly agreed, 28% agreed)
- 'Focus resources on areas of East Lothian where the need is greatest (58% strongly agreed, 37% agreed)
- Identify those services which we should stop providing (52% strongly agree, 35% agree)
- Deliver services in new ways, perhaps with more community involvement (52% strongly agree, 35% agree)
- Reduce and manage the growing demand for some services (49% strongly agree, 35% agree)

3.20 Respondents were shown a list of characteristics and asked which most closely matched their hopes for East Lothian in the future, the most popular choices were – Prosperous (59%), Community Minded (51%), Fair (45%), Welcoming (42%). When asked to pick just one of the options as their top priority, the most popular were Community Minded (31%), Prosperous (29%) and Fair (13%).

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Data generated by the 2017 East Lothian Residents Survey will be used to help inform the development of the Council Plan, the East Lothian Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality 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 was £15,000, this was met from the East Lothian Partnership budget
- 6.2 Personnel - none
- 6.3 Other – none

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 [East Lothian Partnership Residents Survey 2017 Report and Ward level reports](#)

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