

Resident Satisfaction Questions: LGA Consultation

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This report provides an update on work the Research and Information Team is doing to develop a set of questions and accompanying guidance that the sector can use to collect some broadly comparable data on resident satisfaction.

Recommendation

The Improvement Board to note the work, and the consultation with the sector that is currently underway at www.local.gov.uk/about-lginform.

Action

The Research and Information Team will take this work forward in the light of the Board's views on the issues raised in the consultation, and on the plans for this work stream in general.

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Background

1. When the Place Survey was abolished, with it went any comparable information about resident satisfaction (and other resident perceptions). With the development of LG Inform, the lack of up to date resident satisfaction information was identified as a key gap by councils, the consultants working with us at the time, and by senior management in the LGA. This is on the basis that understanding resident or customer views is a key element of assessing the effectiveness of an authority, alongside cost and performance information. Furthermore, understanding resident satisfaction and being able to make informed comparisons can strengthen local accountability and be a key part of the sector's approach to managing its own performance.
2. Although there is no appetite to reinvent the Place Survey, we commissioned some research from Ipsos MORI to look at whether a set of questions might be developed that councils can use locally in their own residents surveys, which would be of a good enough quality for comparisons between them to be made.
3. Ipsos MORI have conducted reviews of questions still being used by the sector, of research literature about what works, conducted interviews with leaders and chief executives about their expectations and views of such questions, and tested a series of questions with members of the public.
4. On the basis of this, the Research and Information Team is recommending a set of questions and associated guidance on how to use them. The aim is **not** to introduce a new sector survey: but simply to recommend a set of questions that can be used on a voluntary basis by local authorities that, if they follow the guidance, will produce results that will be broadly comparable.

Consultation

5. We are now consulting councils on that suggested set of questions for residents' surveys, and the associated guidance. The guidance includes requirements for elements such as where in the questionnaire the questions are included, the order of questions, and the method (postal, online, telephone or face to face) that is used to conduct the survey. In order for the data to be comparable across a range of different surveys in different authorities, it will be a requirement that the guidance is followed – this may require councils to compromise on the questions

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they are asking and how they have done this before. But it will be essential this guidance is followed if we want the data to be of a good enough quality for comparison. Authorities can of course continue what they've been doing; it will simply preclude them from using LG Inform to make comparisons.

6. The consultation has been published alongside a more detailed report of the work Ipsos MORI did, so people can see how we arrived at our recommendations. The closing date of the consultation is **Thursday 19 April**.
7. The intention is that, once agreed by the majority of the sector, these questions will be used on a voluntary basis by authorities in their own local surveys and, providing the authority followed the guidance about asking the questions, the results could then be used by the sector for benchmarking.

London Councils

8. Part of the research that supports this work was funded by London Councils, as the set includes some questions on perceptions of crime and cohesion that they identified would be of particular interest to their members – and other metropolitan authorities agreed would also be useful to them. This consultation is therefore jointly badged by the LGA and London Councils.

Next steps

9. Assuming there is broad support for our proposal, we then would publish the final questions and guidance so that authorities can start using them, with a view to inputting their results into LG Inform in the autumn (when our ability to collect local data will come on stream).