

**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Cabinet 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019**  
**Independent Resident Satisfaction Survey 2019**

<b>Accountable member:</b>	Cllr. Rowena Hay, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance
<b>Accountable officer:</b>	Darren Knight, Executive Director for People & Change Richard Gibson, Strategy & Engagement Manager
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All
<b>Key/Significant Decision:</b>	No
<b>Executive summary:</b>	<p>Residents' surveys are frequently carried out by local Councils in order to collect statistically robust views from a representative sample of residents.</p> <p>This year, an independent resident satisfaction survey was requested by the Cabinet member for Finance to provide the Council with a series of statistically reliable perception measures from a representative sample of the borough's population.</p> <p>The BMG Cheltenham Residents Survey 2019 provides a range of resident insight that can help inform current and future decision making, as well as providing a baseline against which future improvements can be measured.</p> <p>The report shows that overall 84% of Cheltenham residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This score is higher than the Local Government Association (LGA) benchmark (80%) and the BMG urban authority benchmark (80%).</p>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p>Cabinet considers the report and supports the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Cabinet acknowledge the 2019 Resident Satisfaction Survey results and the baseline they provide for the Council's Corporate Plan and Place Vision</li> <li>• The survey is repeated in three years' time to measure the impact of the Council's corporate plan on resident satisfaction levels</li> <li>• The results are used to inform Council service plans to address areas in need of performance improvement and/or further investigation</li> <li>• The results from the survey are communicated to the Council's partners that have lead responsibilities for areas where further improvement has been identified</li> </ul>

<b>Financial implications:</b>	<p>There are no Finance implications identified as a result of this report.</p> <p>Martin Yates  <b>Business Partner Accountant</b>  <a href="mailto:Martin.Yates@publicagroup.uk">Martin.Yates@publicagroup.uk</a></p>
<b>Legal implications:</b>	<p>There are no Legal implications identified as a result of this report.</p> <p>Sarah Freckleton  <b>Head of Legal</b>  <a href="mailto:legalservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk">legalservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>HR implications: (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>There are no HR implications identified as a result of this report.</p> <p>Corry Ravenscroft  <b>HR Business Partner</b>  <a href="mailto:Corry.ravenscroft@publicagroup.uk">Corry.ravenscroft@publicagroup.uk</a></p>
<b>Property/Asset Implications:</b>	<p>There are no property implications identified as a result of this report.</p> <p>Simon Hodges  <b>Senior Property Surveyor</b>  <a href="mailto:simon.hodges@cheltenham.gov.uk">simon.hodges@cheltenham.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Key risks:</b>	<p>There are no risks currently identified with this initiative.</p>
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications:</b>	<p>The survey results provide a series of baseline performance measures to underpin the Council's new corporate plan;  <a href="https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/19/corporate_priorities_and_performance/790/our_corporate_strategy">https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/19/corporate_priorities_and_performance/790/our_corporate_strategy</a></p>
<b>Environmental and climate change implications:</b>	<p>The survey results show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than four in five Cheltenham residents agree that the Council should play a role in tackling air quality issues (83%), enabling people to walk/ cycle more (82%) and enabling public transport use (81%)</li> <li>• Three quarters (75%) of residents agree that Cheltenham Borough Council should try to reduce vehicle emissions in the borough</li> </ul>

## 1. Background:

- 1.1 Residents' surveys are frequently carried out by local Councils in order to collect statistically robust views from a representative sample of residents. In 2019, the Cabinet Member for Finance requested an independent resident satisfaction survey to gain insights from a statistically representative sample of the borough's population.
- 1.2 The benefits of undertaking such a survey allows the Council to:
- Compare the views of residents to national data sets;
  - Explore priorities at a local level;
  - Set baselines/track perceptions of service quality;
  - Collect insight to inform strategy - e.g. channel shift and communications plans;
  - Collect data on new or emerging issues
  - Provide a set of baseline measures for the Council's Corporate Plan and Place Vision
- 1.3 Following a competitive procurement process, BMG Research (<https://www.bmgresearch.co.uk/bmg/about-us/>), were commissioned to undertake the survey on behalf of the Council. BMG Research are members of the Market Research Society and comply with industry standards for research, insight and analytics through membership of the Market Research Society; <https://www.mrs.org.uk/about>

## 2. Survey Methodology:

- 2.1 A total of 5,500 postal addresses were randomly sampled across all Cheltenham wards. Residential addresses were randomly sampled using Royal Mail's Postal Address File (PAF), the most complete list of addresses that is available. This ensured all residents had an equal and fair chance of being selected for the survey. Within each ward addresses were sorted by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) before applying the random sampling.
- 2.2 This ensured that a proportional cross section of households was included in the sampling. Moreover, the number of addresses selected per ward was proportional to the size of the resident population. Taken together, this approach guaranteed that the 5,500 households who were invited to complete the survey were representative of the borough as a whole.
- 2.3 A postal methodology was commissioned on the basis that it provides a cost-efficient way of delivering large survey volumes (thus allowing analysis at area level within the borough), while being underpinned by random household selection. This random household selection gives the survey a wider reach and a more robust statistical underpinning relative to other consultation approaches such as online surveys promoted via the Council's own communication channels. Such an online approach would have risked much poorer geographical coverage in the survey responses.
- 2.4 The survey was conducted during July and August 2019. The initial mailing of 5,500 questionnaires was followed after three weeks by a second copy of the questionnaire being sent to non-responding households, to encourage completion of the survey. At the end of the fieldwork period 1,594 completed surveys had been received. This includes 234 sampled residents who completed the survey via the online option, rather than through the return of the paper survey. Therefore, the survey had a response rate of 29%, above the rate now typical in surveys of this type (20-25%).

## 3. Statistical Confidence:

- 3.1 Based on the population of Cheltenham aged 16+, the survey sample size of 1,594 has a confidence interval of +/-2.43 at a 95% level of confidence. This means that we can be 95% certain that the percentages reported from this sample are within 2.43 percentage points of the percentages that would be observed if the entire borough population was interviewed. Typically, +/-3% is considered an acceptable level of confidence on research of this type, so the +/- 2.43% for this sample is an improvement upon this.

**3.2** In order to correct for uneven response rates both geographically and demographically, weights were applied to the survey responses to ensure that they provide a representative data set. Given the purpose of this research was to identify variations in opinion at an area level, weights were applied by ward. Weights were also applied by age and gender at borough level. This weighting ensures that the data is representative of Cheltenham overall.

#### **4. Key Findings:**

**4.1** The full set of survey results, analysis and supporting context is included at Appendix 2 –‘BMG Cheltenham Residents Survey 2019’. Summarised below are a number of key findings drawn from the report:

**4.2** The report shows that overall 84% of Cheltenham residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This score is higher than the Local Government Association (LGA) benchmark (80%) and the BMG urban authority benchmark (80%)

**4.3** Before being asked about their satisfaction with their local area, residents were asked, “*what one change could Cheltenham Borough Council make that would make the largest difference to the quality of life for you/your family?*” This was asked in order to understand the most important factors impacting upon residents’ daily lives, which contextualises their overall satisfaction levels.

**4.4** Since the question was asked at the beginning of the survey, and was answered with an open text box, it provides unfiltered insights into residents’ experiences.

**4.5** The themes that came through in resident’s answers were grouped together and quantified. The top three most common themes are shown in the below figure:

- Improve quality of roads/pavements (22%);
- Improve traffic management control (14%);and,
- Improve parking availability (11%)

**4.6** All respondents were given the opportunity within the survey to select up to three priority issues for Cheltenham Borough Council to focus upon. From these, the priorities that were most commonly selected were:

- Providing more affordable housing (32%);
- Tackling homelessness (30%); and,
- Promoting walking, cycling and public transport (29%)

**4.7** The results show that 18% of residents are dissatisfied with the way the Council runs things (13% are fairly dissatisfied and 5% very dissatisfied). Among the remainder, almost twice as many are satisfied (55%) than are neutral (23%). The relatively high proportion of neutral respondents found on this indicator should be the target for the Council in its efforts to improve satisfaction further. To put these results into context, the BMG urban authority benchmark for satisfaction with the way Councils are run is 59%. Therefore, the views Cheltenham residents hold in relation to their Borough Council are broadly in line with this benchmark at 55%.

**4.8** The Council’s provision of parks and opens spaces is a relative strength, with 84% satisfied with the Council in this respect.

**4.9** Seven in ten residents are satisfied with the household collections of domestic waste (79%) and recyclables (72%). There is scope to improve satisfaction with these services further given that the remainder more commonly are dissatisfied rather than neutral.

**4.10** The most common reasons for individuals for moving away from the borough were economic, with

45% suggesting that job opportunities and career progression best explained these moves out of the borough

**4.11** The full report provides a range of valuable insight that can be used to inform future decision making and priority setting as well as a baseline for the Council's Corporate Plan. It is worth highlighting that the Council has already started to take action to address issues highlighted within the report findings with examples including:

- Providing more affordable: the Council has announced up to £100m of funding for Cheltenham Borough Homes to increase the supply of affordable housing
- Job Opportunities: 45% of respondents suggesting that job opportunities and career progression best explained these moves out of the borough so the Council is looking to increase future job opportunities by working towards making Cheltenham the Cyber Capital of the UK in West Cheltenham and by supporting other initiatives such as Workshop Cheltenham
- Promoting walking, cycling and public transport: bus travel is up 4% against a national decline of 2% as a consequence of the Council's Cheltenham Transport Plan
- Street Cleanliness: The results show six in ten residents (61%) are satisfied with the cleanliness of the streets in their local area. The survey results will be used to ensure that future programmes of work deliver the same standards in the west of Cheltenham where residents, according to this recent survey, were less satisfied with street cleansing standards. As part of a review of street cleansing this year, the Council has recently invested in new mechanical street sweepers for Ubico to use which will improve standards of cleanliness across the borough. Those areas of town with higher densities of parked cars on roads are more difficult to keep clean. The Council and its service delivery partner, Ubico, will continue to work with the Highways Authority, the public and social housing providers/landlords to improve street cleansing within available resources.
- Tackling homelessness: The district Councils within Gloucestershire have been successful in acquiring over £2m from various funding bids to support rough sleeping initiatives. CBC are using this to firm up pathways into independent living by enhancing the provision of Assertive Outreach Services, providing Somewhere Safe to Stay hubs, and employing Navigators and other support and accommodation services to help some of our most vulnerable residents receive the help they need to get them back onto a more stable footing. The Council has increased its investment in the Housing Options Service, following increased funding from MHCLG. This investment has helped the council place even greater focus on delivering strong homelessness prevention outcomes. For instance, in 2018/19 we prevented 230 households from becoming homelessness, compared with 145 households for the previous year.

## **5. How this links to the Place Vision & Corporate Plan:**

**5.1** The survey results provide a number of baseline performance measures from which future improvements can be measured against.

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<b>Appendices:</b>	1: Risk Assessment 2: BMG 2019 Cheltenham Resident Satisfaction Survey
<b>Background information:</b>	Corporate Plan 2019/2023 <a href="https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/19/corporate_priorities_and_performance/790/our_corporate_strategy">https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/19/corporate_priorities_and_performance/790/our_corporate_strategy</a>

Risk Management

The risk			Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
There are no risks currently identified with this initiative							1.			
							1.			
<b>Explanatory notes</b> <b>Impact</b> – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical) <b>Likelihood</b> – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability) <b>Control</b> - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close										