

GENERAL SURVEY FEEDBACK – LISTENING TO YOUR VIEWS

Thank you to everyone who completed the General Survey during September and October 2006.

All local authorities are required to carry out this survey every three years. The survey asked a series of questions on life in residents' local area and on satisfaction with council services.

Here are the main findings from the General Survey. From this you will be able to see the messages which have come back to us from South Holland residents.

Quality of Life

Three quarters of respondents are satisfied with their **local area as a place to live**.

The aspects listed more often than any other as most in need of improving in your local area are:

- activities for teenagers (41.1%)
- health services (36.1%)
- level of crime (32.7%)
- road and pavement repairs (31.1%).

The results show that the following types of **anti social behaviour** are seen as a problem in South Holland:

- parents not being made to take responsibility for the behaviour of their children (62.8%)
- teenagers hanging around on the street (57.4%)
- people not treating other people with respect and consideration (48.9%).

In relation to **community cohesion** less than half of respondents agreed with various community cohesion statements:

'this local area is a place where people from different racial or ethnic backgrounds get on well together'	38.4%
'this local area is a place where residents respect ethnic differences between people'	39.9%
'SHDC caters well for people from different racial or ethnic backgrounds'	46.3%

We are tackling these issues under SHDC corporate priorities and the 'health' and 'thriving and safe communities' themes of the Community Plan. Here are some of the things SHDC is doing:

- putting in a bid to the Lottery to fund two Community Integration Workers
- the Rural Action Zone (of which SHDC are a partner) are awaiting a report on Community Cohesion which will highlight the issues affecting South Holland. This report will contain recommendations for South Holland
- using a number of tools to tackle anti social behaviour where it involves SHDC tenants or their children: face to face discussions with parents; 'Acceptable Behaviour Contracts'; 'Possession Orders' to evict tenants whose anti social behaviour persists. Other tools are also being considered
- anti social behaviour procedures were reviewed in June 2007 (in response to customer comments/ complaints).

Council Services - Waste

Almost three quarters of respondents (73.7%) are satisfied that SHDC has kept open public land which it controls **clear of litter and refuse**. This is an improvement compared to 2003/04 results (66.9%).

Satisfaction is generally high for waste and recycling services:

- 'waste collection service overall' (85.5%)
- 'the provision of local recycling facilities overall' (80.9%)
- 'the service for the collection of recycling overall' (79.4%).

However almost a fifth of respondents are dissatisfied with some elements of these services:

- 'the collection of bulky household waste' (18.3%)
- 'the green box provided for items of recycling' (18.4%).

Satisfaction with waste and recycling services is high. This is good news for SHDC's corporate priority of 'care of villages and towns'.

Culture and Recreation

Satisfaction with each of the recreational services provided by SHDC has increased since 2003/04.

Satisfaction is between 60%-70% for each cultural/ recreational service:

- sport/leisure facilities and events (60.3%)
- Ayscoughfee Hall Museum (63.8%)
- the South Holland Centre (68.1%)
- parks and open spaces (69.5%).

Satisfaction increases for users of each recreational service to:

- 91.6% South Holland Centre
- 90.1% Ayscoughfee Hall Museum
- 80.8% parks and open spaces
- 72.9% sports/leisure facilities and events.

This suggests that the efforts and initiatives SHDC have made to improve leisure and cultural facilities have paid off. The SHDC corporate priority to improve leisure facilities targets the 'right' area for the future.

Housing and Planning

Satisfaction with Housing (26.8%) and Planning (28.6%) services is low amongst respondents overall (however this is a perception regardless of usage of the service). Satisfaction has decreased slightly for both services since 2003/04. Amongst users of these services satisfaction does increase (Housing 46.6%, Planning 52.5%) however dissatisfaction also increases (Housing 32.4%, Planning 29.4%).

The satisfaction scores for Housing and Planning services are being considered alongside results from the BVPI Planning Survey and BVPI Tenants Survey. These surveys suggest there are things that we can do to improve the service from the users point of view and improve satisfaction. Actions to tackle specific elements and in turn improve overall satisfaction can then be planned.

SHDC Information Provision

Respondents were asked how well informed they feel about various council activities.

Respondents are well informed about traditional council activities like 'how to pay bills to the Council' (88.9%) and 'how and where to register to vote' (87.7%).

However respondents are **not well informed** about other council activities, particularly:

- 'what the Council is doing to tackle anti-social behaviour in your local area' (63.8%)
- 'how you can get involved in local decision making' (49.8%)
- 'how well the Council is performing' (49.5%)
- 'whether the Council is delivering on its promises (49.5%)
- 'how to complain to the Council' (42.6%)
- 'what the Council spends its money on' (42.0%)
- 'what standard of service you should expect from the Council' (40.0%).

Less than half of respondents think that overall SHDC keeps residents very or fairly **well informed about the services and benefits** the Council provides (45.2%), consistent with 2003/04 results (46.6%).

Results suggest that we need to consider new or better ways to improve how residents are kept informed about Council services and performance.

Contacting SHDC

37.7% of respondents who made a complaint to SHDC in the last 12 months were satisfied with the **way in which their complaint was handled**, consistent with 2003/04 results (36.4%). Around half of respondents were dissatisfied (47.0%). When comparing complaint satisfaction with that of all district councils SHDC compares well – however we should not be complacent, satisfaction is still low.

On a more positive note around three quarters of respondents who contacted SHDC for reasons other than to complain are satisfied with: 'how helpful the staff were', 'how easy it was to find the right person to deal with' and 'how competent the staff were'. Satisfaction is lower for the 'final outcome' of the contact (63.0% satisfied, 20.2% dissatisfied).

Satisfaction with complaints handling is low nationally (an average 35%, 2006/07). However it should be possible to improve complaints handling. SHDC's complaints process is currently undergoing a complete review. The review will recommend we have systems in place to learn from the complaints we receive.

Local Decision Making

Results clearly show that there is work to do to improve local decision making. Less than a quarter of respondents are satisfied with the opportunities for participation in local decision making provided by the Council (22.7%) and more than half of respondents

(53.6%) disagree that that they can influence decisions affecting their local area.

Potentially three quarters of respondents would like to become more involved in the decisions SHDC makes that affect their local area.

Over the next year we will be web casting more events / meetings, enabling residents to become more involved in local decision making.

Council Performance and Overall Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to what extent various statements apply to SHDC. The statements seen as most likely to apply are 'my Council is working hard to make the area cleaner and greener' (67.8%) and 'my Council is making the local area a better place to live' (62.9%). **This is good news and shows that we are working well towards our corporate priorities of 'care of villages and towns' and 'improved leisure facilities'.**

The statements least likely to apply are: 'my Council is working to make the area safer' (40.5% does not apply very much / at all) and 'my Council provides good value for money' (39.3% does not apply). **This again highlights safety as an issue in the community and supports the work we are doing under the 'thriving and safe communities' themes of the Community Plan.**

More than half of respondents think the way SHDC runs things has stayed the same over

the last three years. Only 13.8% of respondents think things have got better and the same proportion (13.9%) think things have got worse over the last three years.

Taking everything into account just over half of respondents are **satisfied with the way SHDC runs things** (54.3%), 11.8% are dissatisfied.

Satisfaction is consistent with 2003/04 satisfaction. When comparing satisfaction against all district councils, SHDC is above average on overall satisfaction.

Once again a big thank-you to everyone who filled in a questionnaire and sent it back to us!

