

Report Title: General Satisfaction Survey 2005 – Preliminary findings

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Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Chief Executive with the results from the 2005 general satisfaction survey and in particular to inform the corporate planning framework procedure that is taking place over the next few weeks.
2. The results outlined below have not yet been weighted to ensure that they are representative of the population as a whole. Early indications are that weighting may be required for age but not for gender or ethnic group. As such any conclusions drawn from these results should have this health warning attached to them.
3. A copy of the raw results has been attached at appendix 1.

Background

4. 3980 surveys were sent out on the 20th January 2005. 1123 were returned, resulting in a response rate of 28.2%. Potential respondents were drawn from the Council Tax register on a random basis. No reminder runs were undertaken; instead the survey had an incentive attached to it to encourage people to respond.
5. The survey was structured around the Council's vision and priorities and was designed to provide baselines for some of these, so that progress towards improving service provision in these areas could be measured.

Results

The Council's vision and priorities

6. There is strong support for the priorities the Council has adopted. 808 respondents (88.3%) agreed with them.
7. 965 respondents (91.7%) supported the Council's vision "To ensure that the residents of South Kesteven are proud of their district and their Council"

8. 770 respondents (77.0%) were proud of their local community. A lower number – 442 (48.3%) were proud of their Council.

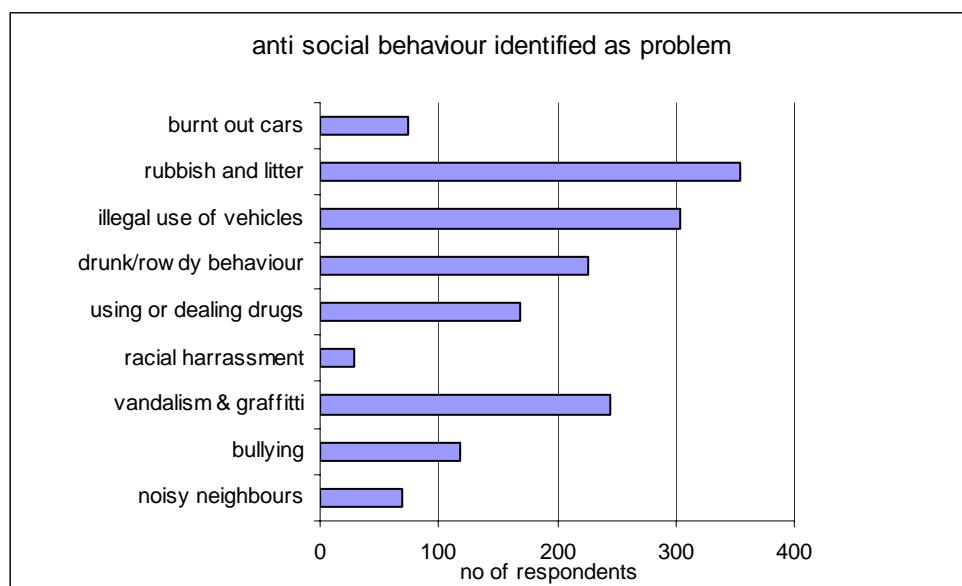
Anti-social behaviour

9. 313 respondents thought that anti-social behaviour was a significant problem in their neighbourhood. It will be interesting to cross tabulate these responses against postcode area to see if there are any particular “hot spots” and this will be done when weighting has been applied.

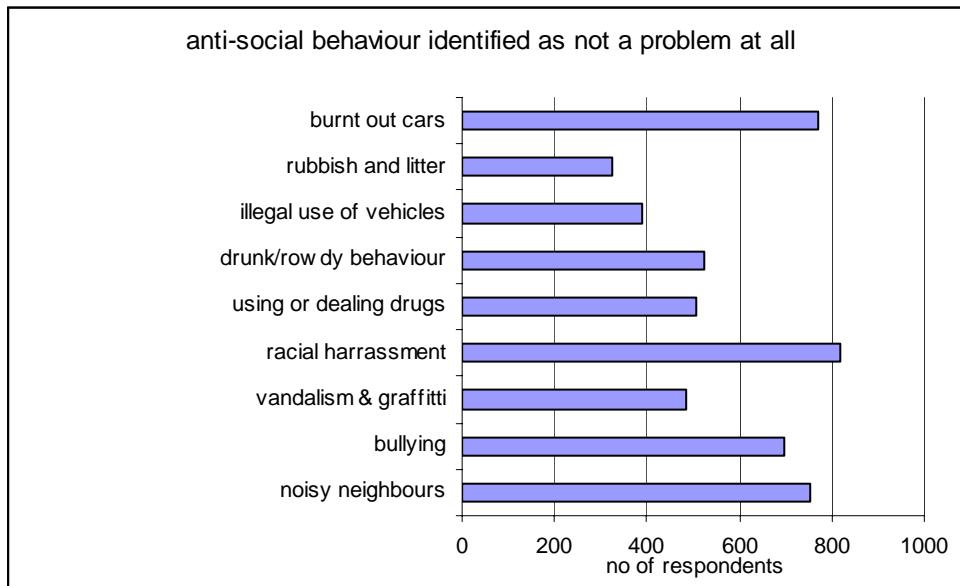
10. Respondents were then asked to state how much of a problem various different types of anti social behaviour were, in their neighbourhood. Those classifying:

- Noisy neighbours
- Bullying
- Vandalism and graffiti
- Racial harassment
- Dealing or using drugs
- Drunk or rowdy behaviour
- Illegal use of vehicles
- Rubbish and litter
- Abandoned or burnt out cars

as a very big or fairly significant problem are illustrated below.



11. Those who thought they were not a problem at all are also illustrated in graphical form overleaf.



12. This is interesting as it shows in graphical format, the ratios between the types of antisocial behaviour identified as “a problem” and “not a problem”.

13. Interestingly, 451 respondents (41.7%) stated that they had had direct experience of some kind of anti-social behaviour in the last year.

14. The vast majority of respondents (91.1%) thought anti-social behaviour was more of a problem in the town centre and at night rather than during the day.

15. When asked to state whether they thought anti-social behaviour had got better or worse or stayed the same in the last 3 years, nearly half thought it had got worse. A quarter of respondents thought that it had stayed the same, with the remainder answering “don’t know”.

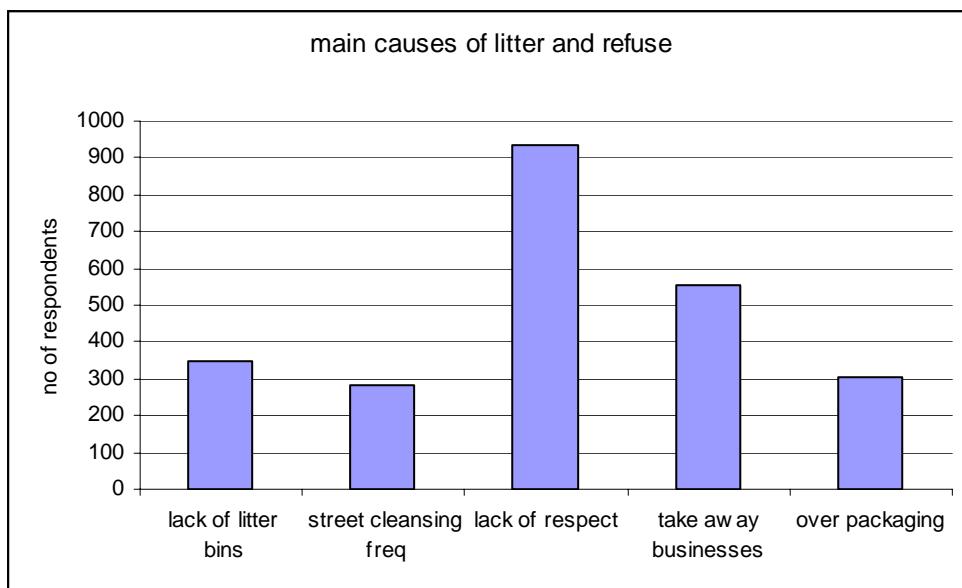
Street Cleansing

16. Just over half of those responding -577 – were fairly or very satisfied that the Council had kept areas like parks, town centres and streets clear of litter and refuse. (This compares to 51.2% 18 months ago).

17. When asked to specify where they thought there was a particular problem,

- 230 said on the street where they live
- 322 said in the town centre
- 362 said in the surrounding area

18. Respondents were then asked to identify what they thought were the main causes of litter and refuse on our streets. They could choose as many or as few categories as they liked and their answers are shown in graphical form below.



19. There was overwhelming support for prosecuting those who do not dispose of their litter in an appropriate way with 95.8% (1022 respondents) in favour. This may however be an area where weighting for age may have an impact.

Recycling

20. Respondents were asked a number of questions about both recycling facilities and kerbside collection schemes. Satisfaction rates for recycling facilities were good with those answering very or fairly satisfied ranging from 66.0% for provision overall to 75.0% for the range of materials that can be recycled.

21. The difference in the schemes provided across the area becomes apparent when looking at the satisfaction rates for kerbside collection. Significant elements answered “don’t know/ it does not apply” to each of the questions asked. Whether this is due to personal choice or because there is no scheme available to participate in requires further investigation and may be revealed to some extent by a cross tabulation of these responses against postcode area.

22. 55.4 % (564 respondents) were satisfied with the kerbside collection of items for recycling. If those answering, “don’t know/ it does not apply” are excluded, this percentage increases to 71.9%.

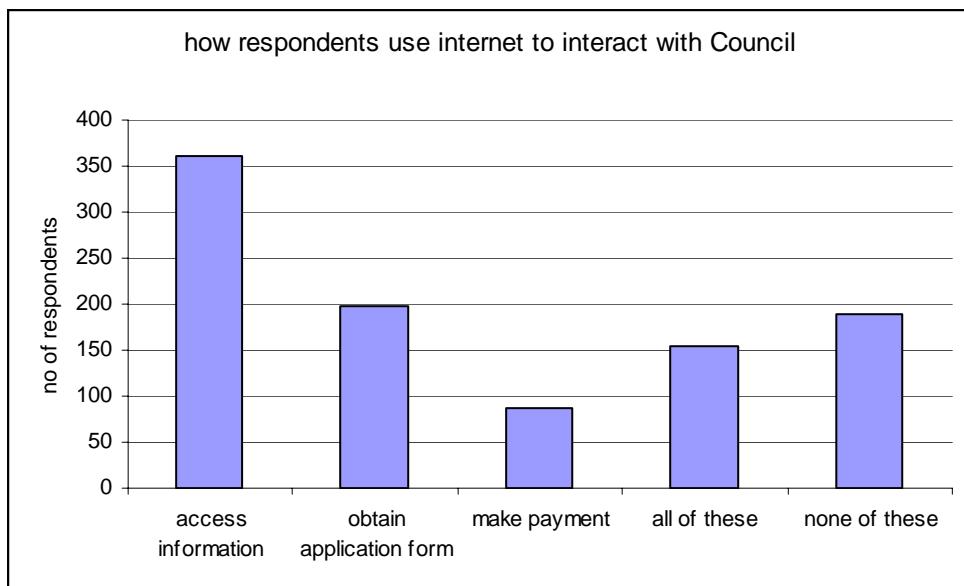
Access to council services

23. Nearly half of respondents (49%) had contacted the Council in the last year. The majority (88.9%) said it was easy.

24. When asked to state whether the response to their enquiry was polite, helpful, easy to understand, most were positive. Some respondents thought that we weren't very helpful (82) or efficient (83).

25. Just over half of respondents use the Internet.

26. When asked to state how they would use the Internet to interact with the Council, respondents answered as follows:



This however may be an area where weighting for age has an impact.

27. Some respondents (139) would like to be able to contact the Council on weekday evenings and on a Saturday during the day (284). 244 respondents would like to be able to contact us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

28. Nearly two thirds of respondents (664) are very or fairly satisfied with the ways in which they are able to access the Council's services. 142 stated that they would use text messaging as a way of contacting the Council. This may be another area where weighting for age may have an impact.

Town Centre Development

29. Satisfaction with various facilities in the town centres as listed below:

- car parks
- choice of shops
- CCTV
- Entertainment and eating out
- Markets
- Pedestrian areas
- Toilets

ranged from 65.4% for markets down to 14.5% for toilet facilities.

30. The majority of respondents (904 or 82.3%) do most of their shopping within the district. Peterborough, Lincoln, Nottingham and Newark were also popular destinations.

31. Nearly two thirds of respondents (63.6%) go outside the district to shop at least once a month.

Affordable Housing

32. Respondents were asked to state how much of a problem they thought the lack of affordable housing was in their neighbourhood. Just under half thought it was a fairly significant or very big problem. This may alter when weighting for age has been applied, and it will also be an interesting area to look at in respect of postcode, as there may well be some differences.

Communication

33. Nearly two thirds of respondents (688 or 62.6%) think that the Council keeps them fairly or very well informed. Only a third of respondents had heard of the Council publication “Districtline” – most of these read it.

Diversity and Cohesion

34. When asked if they thought the Council was doing enough to provide services in ways that reach all residents, including those from minority groups, 648 or 59.4% answered, “don’t know”. Nearly a third thought that the Council was doing enough, with 8.5% answering “no”. It would be interesting to cross tabulate these replies against ethnic group, to see if the Council needs to rethink its approach in this area.

Vulnerable Persons

35. Just over half of respondents (608) were aware of the Helpline and Sheltered Housing services provided by the Council. Approximately 263 stated that they knew someone who may benefit from these services. Both sets of responses show significant marketing opportunities, both in terms of awareness and also need.

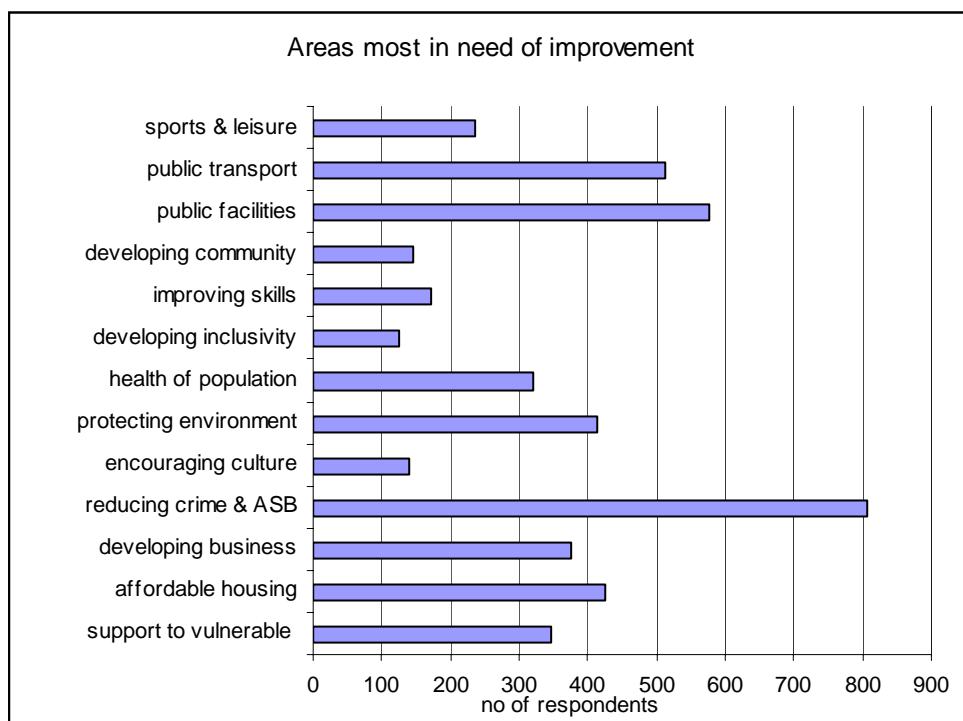
How the Council runs things

36. Just over half of respondents were fairly or very satisfied with the way the Council runs things. This compares to 48.4% 18 months ago.

The Local Strategic Partnership

37. Respondents were asked to comment on the LSP's vision and also what areas they thought were most in need of improvement. Support for the vision was strong, with over 90% (998 respondents) agreeing with "To ensure that by 2020 our residents live in one of the 10 most desirable locations in the country and are proud that they have the skills necessary to participate in sustainable communities that are safe, healthy and economically vibrant".

38. When asked to state which areas they thought most needed improvement, they answered as follows:



39. These responses are interesting because they support the priorities (and non priorities) identified by the Council. Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, improving public facilities, public transport (not in the Councils remit), and affordable housing all emerge as priorities. Encouraging culture is not quite as important.

Sample demographics

40. If the demographic make up of this sample is compared to the latest population figures supplied by the Office of National Statistics, the importance of applying weighting becomes clear. Government guidance states that weighting is not required if the ratio between the two figures falls between 0.8 and 1.2 (i.e. that they are almost one to one). If respective figures are compared on gender then it becomes clear that no weighting is required with respect to gender, as illustrated below.

Gender

	Sample %	ONS %	Weighting factor
Male	46.8	48.2	1.0
Female	53.0	51.8	0.9
Total	100	100	

41. If this is carried out across age group, there are some noticeable differences.

Age

	Sample %	ONS %	Weighting factor
18-24	2.3	8.9	3.9
25-34	9.8	14.8	1.5
35-44	19.0	20.0	1.0
45-54	19.3	17.8	0.9
55-64	20.1	16.6	0.8
65-74	16.5	11.4	0.7
75 +	13.0	10.5	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	

Those under 35 are under-represented. Those aged between 65 and 74 are over represented.

42. When this exercise is undertaken on ethnic group, it appears that the sample is broadly representative in terms of ethnic group.

Ethnic group

	Sample %	ONS %	Weighting factor
Non black minority ethnic group	98.7	98.4	1.0
Black minority ethnic group	1.3	1.6	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0	

Conclusion

43. Weighting for age may have an impact on the distribution of responses, and as such the results outlined in this report should be treated with caution. They do however provide an initial indication of what residents think and are valuable when considering priorities.

44. It is my intention to cross tabulate some sets of responses against age group and postcode area when weighting has been applied. An analysis of the free comment boxes will also be undertaken.

PLEASE NOTE:

- (I) Population figures on age and gender are from ONS population estimates 2003.
- (II) Ethnic group data from 2001 census
- (III) Comparative figures are from the 2003 triennial general survey (weighted results)