

Connections the voice of Thurrock - Citizen Panel Feedback

Thurrock Council

Quarterly Satisfaction Survey—November 2003

This is the second satisfaction survey that MRUK have carried out for us this financial year.

We want to be able to track improvements and/or identify poor services by monitoring your responses to these questions.

We have used the same method of a telephone survey of 600 of you.

What you told us

Overall the number of you who are very satisfied or satisfied with the housing service, local estates, cleanliness of the local area and condition of local parks has increased since September.

However, there has been a decrease in the satisfaction levels for the local bus service.

- From 69% to 74% satisfaction for council estates/ neighbourhoods
- From 75% to 81% satisfaction for housing service
- From 46% to 54% for cleanliness of local area
- From 49% to 60% for condition of local parks
- From 30% to 20% for local bus service

What annoys you the most is the amount of litter in the streets and the frequency of the buses.



Cleaner streets—9% increase in satisfaction in 3 months

We will continue with the commitments we made in our last feedback to you in November and see if these actions continue to show improvements in these services.

OVERALL YOU ARE TELLING US MOST OF THESE SERVICES ARE GETTING BETTER

Some themes across all of these consultations— you are telling us

- Satisfaction levels overall showing improvements
- You want to know more about what we as a council are doing
- Tackling crime is a priority
- There is a demand for more transport
- We need to invest in young and older peoples services

Inside this issue:

Quarterly Satisfaction Survey— November 2003	1
Annual Quality of Life Survey	1/2
Budget Consultation	3/4

ANNUAL QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY—YEAR 2



You want to know more about what we as a Council are doing.

We asked a new set of questions this year. In relation to our opening times you told us that

85% of you feel you are able to contact the Council during the hours you want to.

However, nearly two thirds of you expressed an interest in extended opening hours. The most popular times for us to open were from 8am to 8pm.

51% of you think the Council should open on Saturday morning.

The vast majority of you do not suffer from problems related to noise.

20% of you believe that you can significantly influence decisions about your neighbourhood this is a 5% increase on last year.

We have started to vary opening hours for some services for instance there are two housing offices that open on Saturday mornings and the Chadwell one-stop service opens in the evenings and on Saturday.

YOUR PRIORITIES FOR THURROCK

YOUR concerns are for providing services for young people, having cleaner streets and improving public transport. These are both a priority and an aspiration for the future

Main priorities

- Policing/tackling crime
- Need for cleaner streets/environment
- More provision and support for young people
- Transport – more buses

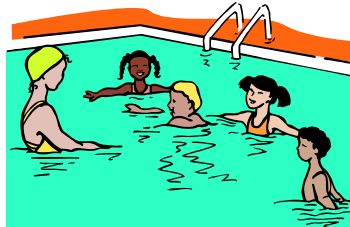
One thing about Thurrock you hope will never change

- Preserving 'green' places
- Community spirit/friendly people
- Maintaining the characteristics of the borough and not over developing

Aspirations for the next 20 years include

- More provision for young people and families
- Improve cleanliness of the Borough
- Preserve and improve 'green' areas
- Improve hospital provision/healthcare
- Better schools/education
- Improve local public transport

The results from this survey will be used to help Shaping Thurrock—local strategic partnership to review the Community Strategy and future priorities.



Providing services for young people

BUDGET CONSULTATION—SATISFACTION SURVEY

In November we added two questions to the quarterly satisfaction survey and asked 600 of you to consider a couple of questions.

We had a combination of three questions that looked at the potential impact of increasing or maintaining council tax at the rate in relation to maintaining, improving or reducing levels of service. The overall response to this was inconclu-

sive.

The second question asked you to identify areas you would like to spend more or less on - it is obvious from the responses that it was much easier to say where you would spend more money. The top three responses were:

Spending more on:

- 83% on social care for older people
- 81% community safety

and anti-social behaviour

- 80% on social care for vulnerable children and young people

Spending less on:

- 44% Planning permission for home and business extensions
- 39% Arts, museums and events
- 32% Libraries



Community Safety is one of your top Priorities

BUDGET CONSULTATION FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

In January 2004 we set up a number of focus groups to discuss our publication of a consultation document 'proposals for 2004/05 budget'.

In total 18 members of the citizens panel got involved in this. Other groups included 16 councillors, 5 community representatives and representation from the voluntary organisations and Thurrock Police. There was a mixed level of support for paying more council tax in return for improved services. Those of you supporting this would wish to see 'demonstrable' improvements

(particularly in efficiency, effectiveness and value for money)

Spending more on:

- Social Care
- Youth Services
- Sports/recreation
- Education

Spending less on:

- Others
- Road Safety and Traffic Management
- Libraries

- Planning Permissions

The groups clearly identified priorities for the coming year as:

- CCTV expansion
- Police Community Support Officers
- Improving outdoor facilities
- Improving rural verge maintenance

There was majority support for increased spending on the Environment and Community Safety.

All agreed the consultation process had been helpful in increasing awareness and understanding of issues the Council has to consider

BUDGET CONSULTATION LEARNING FOR US

The consultation document as well as enabling those who took part to have a focus for discussion was also a topic of conversation.

Everyone agreed that it had been helpful in increasing awareness and understanding of issues the council has to consider.

We have learnt a number of

lessons for next year's budget consultation — you have told us that we need to:

- Do this earlier
- Ask more people for their views
- Give a longer deadline for questionnaires
- (If we) produce this

type of document again it needs to give a clearer account about efficiency savings and give more details on where we spend your money.

- Ensure we tell you how well the consultation worked and how the information has been used - see next article

Thurrock Council

Corporate Development and Improvement
Team
Managing Director's Department
Civic Offices
New Road
Essex RM17 6SL

Phone: (01375) 652831
Fax: (01375) 653785
Email: cdit@thurrock.gov.uk

WE'RE ON THE WEB
WWW.THURROCK.GOV.UK

WHAT NEXT—

MARCH 2004:

- ***TELEPHONE SURVEY ON CULTURAL SERVICES***
- ***THIRD QUARTERLY SATISFACTION SURVEY***

APRIL 2004:

- ***RECRUITMENT EXERCISE—
TO REPLACE ONE THIRD OF
THE PANEL WITH NEW
MEMBERS***

BUDGET CONSULTATION—HOW WE ARE USING THIS INFORMATION

We asked for your views on the Council's budget to help us where we have choices to decide which services to maintain, improve or even reduce in relation to how much we spend. Which will then impact on the level of Council Tax set this year.

The information you have given us will influence where we spend money this year and how we start to plan where to spend your money in the future.

For this years budget setting some additional funding has been found and the relevant Councillors with the service Directors will be asked to consider your views in relation to

the top five priorities areas, along with the areas for spending more or less and to add these where practical to their budgets—if this has not already happened.

In relation to helping us with our plans over the next three years your views will be added to our medium term financial strategy. This helps us select our spending priorities, to look at how to show you that we can give value for money and provide effective and efficient services. Whilst planning to avoid any excessive council tax increases during this time.

The full council will agree the level of next year's Council Tax on the 25th February 2004.

