

WHAT YOU TOLD US –

HELPING TO IMPROVE COUNCIL SERVICES 2003/04



CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

Over the last year most of you will have received a postal or telephone survey, or been invited to a meeting to discuss one of our many council services. These consultations are very important. They tell us how 'satisfied' you are - or otherwise - with a particular service or the council generally. What you tell us will help us change what we do and the way we do it.

We always say 'we will feedback and tell you what we learned'. But we are not always very good at this – and we want to start to change this. That is what this information sheet is about.

Over the last year we have consulted with you many times - too many to go into in this document. Each department in the council has selected a sample to talk about here.

We will briefly tell you what the consultation was for; what we learned from you and how this information was used.

If you were involved in a council consultation between April 2003 to March 2004 and you want information on the outcome, please let us know.

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*Full reports available on our web site – www.thurrock.gov.uk

QUALITY OF LIFE – ANNUAL TELEPHONE SURVEY

This is an annual telephone survey involving 1,100 people. The survey covers a combination of things, from your satisfaction with our service to looking at what's the most important thing for you in relation to living in Thurrock.

YOU TOLD US

▲ Your aspirations for Thurrock in the next 20 years include:

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

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

▲ Councillors together with 'Shaping Thurrock', the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), are starting work on writing local action plans that will be known as 'Local Community Plans', one for each of the four area assemblies. This survey gives us a local profile for each of the areas and we will look at selecting a few really important things that your area needs to make it work.

▲ Shaping Thurrock LSP will also use your comments to review the Community Strategy on a regular basis.

GOOD NEWS!

83 per cent of you are satisfied or very satisfied with your local neighbourhood up from 79 per cent in January 2003



QUARTERLY SATISFACTION SURVEY OCTOBER TO MARCH 2004

Every three months we also carry out a telephone survey of 600 members of our Citizen Panel, asking for their level of satisfaction about council estates/neighbourhoods, housing service, cleanliness of local area, condition of local parks and the local bus service.

Overall, satisfaction has been good and increasing. We were concerned about the low level of satisfaction with the local bus service and in the last survey, carried out in April 2004, we asked detailed questions to find out what the issues were.



YOU TOLD US

▲ In the April survey, satisfaction for the housing service went down for the first time - from 81 per cent to 72 per cent. The reasons given relate to repairs not being done or taking too long to do.

▲ Levels of satisfaction for the local bus service are still low but have started to increase.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

▲ We are currently re-writing our repairs contracts and revising our repairs priorities the idea is to deal with the types of repairs that most tenants tell us are the most important for them. We can then ensure they are dealt with quickly.

▲ Reliability and frequency of the local bus service are the two issues that we need to discuss with the local bus providers.

▲ In the future we will be asking the Citizen Panel different questions around satisfaction with the local bus service.

GOOD NEWS!

Those of you who live in the West Area told us that in September 2003 only 43 per cent of you were satisfied with the cleanliness of your local area by April 2004 this had increased to 64 per cent satisfaction.

BUDGET CONSULTATION (COUNCIL TAX) JANUARY 2004

This year we wanted to try to show you what we need to think about each year when deciding where to spend your money and 82 per cent of you were very clear that this consultation had helped you understand the issues we need to consider.

YOU TOLD US

SPEND MORE ON:

- Social care for older people
- Community Safety and anti-social behaviour
- Social care for vulnerable children and young people
- Youth Services
- Sports/recreation
- Education

PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING YEAR:

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

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- We have set the council tax this year at £904.05, an increase of 3.87 per cent on last year. Our total budget for 2004/05 is £162.1 million.
- Our anti-social behaviour team is expanding this year with the employment of two more officers.

SPENDING MORE:

These services are getting extra money this year:

- Social Care £3.7m
- Community Services £5.7m
- Education £7.1m

SPENDING ON YOUR PRIORITIES:

- CCTV extension £0.050m
- Street cleansing £0.175m
- Concessionary fares for older people £0.410m

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE BUDGET CONSULTATION

While doing this consultation you were very clear in telling us how we can do it better next year – you told us we need to:

- a. Do this earlier
- b. Ask more people for their views
- c. Give a longer deadline for questionnaires
- d. Provide a clearer account of efficiency savings and more detail on where money is spent
- e. Ensure that we feedback on how well the consultation went and how we have used this information.

MENTAL HEALTH BEST VALUE REVIEW

The Mental Health Service carried out what we call a 'Best Value Service Review'. This means a group of officers and Councillors looked at how we provide the service. We asked people interested in the service to tell us how they believe we can make improvements.

People using these services told us that MIND provide a better overall service compared to the Community Mental Health Trust.

YOU TOLD US

▲ 40 per cent of you want services available in the evening and at weekend from both the Community Drug and Alcohol Service and the Community Mental Health Team.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

▲ Reconfiguration of the service is planned surrounding assertive outreach and extending the time that services are available.

LEARNING DISABILITIES -

'INDIVIDUAL CARE AND SERVICE PLANNING' SEPTEMBER 2003

We wanted to know your views about being involved both in individual care planning and in the general development of services for people with learning disabilities.

YOU TOLD US

▲ Few of you understood care planning and you wanted more planning for individuals.
▲ You felt you had little influence on planning for services overall. You were not aware of the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

▲ A person-centred planning co-ordinator has been appointed.
▲ The Learning Disability Partnership Board is being more widely publicised.
▲ Structures are being created with service users and carers so they have their views more fully represented.

REFUGEE SERVICES – PRE-SERVICE SUPPORT SURVEY 2003

The survey was targeted at refugees and asylum seekers in Thurrock. We wanted to find out if there was a demand for any drop-in services that were not currently available.

YOU TOLD US

- ▲ There wasn't any interest in our idea for a drop-in service in South Ockendon for the Bosnian community.
- ▲ Afghan women in particular expressed a need to learn English

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- ▲ We have abandoned the idea of the South Ockendon Bosnian drop-in centre.
- ▲ We are holding weekly English classes for women from Afghanistan and looking at the demand for this service from other nationalities.

INTEGRATED STROKE SERVICE – FOCUS GROUPS TO IDENTIFY GAP IN THE SERVICE BEING PROVIDED 2003

Work was undertaken with small focus groups of people who have suffered from strokes and their carers, to consider what an integrated stroke service needed to do.

YOU TOLD US

- ▲ That there is a lack of community services for those discharged from the acute hospital.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- ▲ Prevention of further ill health is important. Some of the areas we are developing cover advice on diet, exercise and use of day hospital facilities, day care and Stroke Club, all of which also support the increase in community services.

BROADWAY ESTATE – UNDERUSED OPEN SPACE ON THE ESTATE

This involved a two-year consultation with a series of planned events including estate fun days. The Broadway Estate Residents were fully engaged in the development of this scheme.

YOU TOLD US

- ▲ Tenants on the estate who formed part of the local traveller community asked for an area to groom and exercise their horses.
- ▲ There was also a need for a safe place for children to play.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- ▲ We completed provision of an outdoor arena for residents to groom and ride their horses.
- ▲ A number of areas have been separated by safe, natural grass banks that are raised and block cars from being driven on to the estate, burned out and abandoned – this makes the two separate play areas for young and older children a safer place for them to play in.

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LOCAL CHILDREN

We received money from the Heritage Lottery Grant to work with local school children to help them develop a better understanding of both the traveller communities and culture of their area.

MEDICAL PRIORITY FOR HOUSING

We wanted to talk to people who would use the new service and ask for their comments on what works well and how the service can be improved.

YOU TOLD US

- ▲ That having a Housing Health Advisor, who is a qualified nurse would help to reassure you that the new procedures would be fairly assessed.
- ▲ That you would like to be part of the training that the new Housing Health Advisor would be arranging.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- ▲ The new Housing Health Advisor post has been advertised.
- ▲ We are expecting the new person to set up a training programme and we will be inviting Tenant and Disability Representatives to attend this training.

LIBRARIES – CUSTOMER COMMENTS

Every three years, the library service asks customers how well it meets their needs. Part of this survey includes the chance for you to comment on the service. By and large, the comments were very positive with several useful suggestions.

YOU TOLD US

- ▲ You want libraries to open for longer hours, in particular on Wednesdays and at weekends.
- ▲ Physical access to library entrances and parking facilities could be a problem.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- ▲ Libraries are now open an extra 25 hours a week and Corringham are opening on Sundays. We are also looking for extra money so that we can increase this future.
- ▲ New doors in the following libraries: Chadwell, Tilbury, Corringham and Belhus. This will make it easy for disabled and frail people to get into these libraries.
- ▲ Stanford library to have a remodelled front entrance

GOOD NEWS! SATISFACTION FOR LIBRARIES AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES IS HIGH
The Citizen Panel in February 2004 told us that 87 per cent satisfied with the Library Service, 73 per cent satisfaction for the Museum and 83 per cent for the Thameside Theatre.

REVIEW INTO THE NUMBER OF G.P.s IN THURROCK

Councillors were interested in investigating this as part of their responsibilities around asking challenging questions about the quality of service local people receive. They felt that we don't have enough GPs and they wanted to know if you had the same view. You told us you thought that we had enough GPs however you did have other concerns.

YOU TOLD US

- ▲ Access to and location of GP surgeries is a problem in some areas.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- ▲ The scrutiny panel have not as yet reported their findings. They will however share your views with the Primary Care Trust who can influence the distribution of GPs across the borough.

LOCAL BUS SERVICE CONSULTATIONS

We consulted last year on both the bus strategy and bus information strategy. We also have regular discussions with both the Bus User Group and the Thurrock Over Fifties Forum (TOFF). The Youth Commission also asked in their survey questions around transport services. Young people told us that a large number of them use public transport at least twice a week and they felt that the fares were too high.



YOU TOLD US

- ▲ There is a need for local bus services to subsidise their bus fares.
- ▲ To improve bus services for example in Purfleet.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- ▲ We have introduced free bus travel for over-60's and disabled people.
- ▲ We are piloting a scheme with Arriva to reduce fares by half for students in full time education attending Palmer's College and Thurrock and Basildon College.
- ▲ We are still at the planning stage but we are having discussions around what improvements could be made to the service in the Purfleet area.



YOUTH COMMISSION – PERCEPTIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THURROCK

The Youth Commission undertook consultation work to see how young people perceived the area. A quarter of the population of Thurrock are under 18, so these young people represent a very big part of our local communities. 60 per cent of young people know where the local youth clubs are but only 20 per cent actually use them.

YOU TOLD US

- ▲ That there are not enough facilities in Thurrock for young people.
- ▲ We do not publicise the youth clubs and their activities enough.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- ▲ We are actively working on doing more for young people:
 - Youth Commission and Impulse Leisure funded a 'free swim', event for the May Bank Holiday over 300 young people attended.
 - Basketball sessions from Palmers college Saturday mornings has been part-funded and supported by the area assemblies.
- ▲ Publicity of youth clubs – locally youth clubs have seen a revival, South Ockendon now have a membership of over a 100 young people.

THREE YEARLY TENANTS SATISFACTION SURVEY

This is what we call a 'statutory survey', the government tell us we must do this every three years. They also tell us what we need to ask you around different levels of satisfaction for different housing services.

YOU TOLD US

- ▲ You do not believe that we take Anti Social Behaviour seriously.

GOOD NEWS!

Not only have you told us that 80% of you are satisfied with the Housing Service an increase on three years ago. Also 53% of you feel more involved in how we make decisions with the Housing Service.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- ▲ We will be investigating this further to find out why you have this view. We have advertised for two more anti-social behavioural officers. Currently there are 17 acceptable behaviour contracts and 12 good neighbour contracts in place.

CONTINUING CARE WITH LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN

This is a recent survey and early results show a 47 per cent response rate. We are still analysing the results but we have already picked up some concerns for children who have been placed with foster carers outside Thurrock.

YOU TOLD US

- ▲ That you feel living outside Thurrock you don't have enough contact with your Social Worker.
- ▲ You miss living in Thurrock.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- ▲ An immediate action is to prioritise giving those children who live outside the Borough access to a new scheme called 'CareZone'.

WHAT IS CAREZONE?

It is a site on the web that enables children to build their own virtual world, have a safe place to put precious possessions and helps them to talk to other looked-after children and their social workers. They have their own personal passwords and we will make sure they have access to a computer. This is a new scheme and we are one of a few authorities testing it out to see how useful it is in helping young people in care.

DERWENT PARADE AREA IMPROVEMENTS

Overall, the aims of the scheme had been to improve the environment for the public and residents, to make better use of the public space, and to rejuvenate the business and trade activity for everyone's benefit. The scheme was controlled from start to finish by the community through their Community Forum.

YOU TOLD US

- ▲ That the noise and disturbance caused by the market in the main parade was a problem.
- ▲ Parking and obstructions caused by cars was also an issue for residents.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- ▲ Now that the market has been moved to the front of the estate, this disturbance has been lessened and trade has increased for traders.
- ▲ The main car park has now been switched from the front to the renovated car park at the rear. The front has also been pedestrianised preventing anyone from causing an obstruction with their cars.

INDEPENDENCE STRATEGY FOR PEOPLE AS THEY GROW OLDER

The Independence Group wanted to revisit this strategy and ask older people if they felt that it was discriminatory on the grounds of gender, disability, religion, race, age, sexuality and trans-gender issues. We call this process an Equality Impact Assessment.

YOU TOLD US

▲ To look at the needs of older people who are disabled, gay/lesbians, members of ethnic minority communities and older women who have to work.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE/WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- ▲ Review membership of the Independence Strategy Group and invite Thurrock Disability Network, The Centre for Independent Living and Thurrock Lip-reading group as new members amongst others.
- ▲ Develop the directory of services/activities to include more diverse information.
- ▲ Target some of our 'Healthy, Wealthy & Wise' Roadshows. To encourage higher attendance by special interest groups such as black and minority elders, women over 50 still in work and those attending pre-retirement courses.

