

# Edinburgh People's Survey – Autumn 2010 and Further Research into Residents' Perceptions of the Council and Local Services

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## Policy and Strategy Committee

17 May 2011

### 1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform Committee of the results of the Edinburgh People's Survey (EPS) 2010 and follow up qualitative research into resident satisfaction and perceptions of the Council and its services.
- 1.2 To advise on how the results will be utilised and disseminated.

### 2 Summary

- 2.1 A total of 5,050 face-to-face interviews were carried out with Edinburgh residents in a variety of venues and locations. Interviewing took place between 4<sup>th</sup> October and 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010. On the whole, the survey findings show positive trends in resident satisfaction over the past four years (see Appendices 1 and 2). Satisfaction with neighbourhood management, landlord services, community safety, environmental services, and schools has improved significantly.
- 2.2 The 2010 results show a decrease in overall satisfaction for a number of indicators. There is no evidence of a significant increase in dissatisfaction (dissatisfaction has remained very low). Rather, a significantly higher proportion of respondents in 2010 responded "don't know" or that they were "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied". Future work will be undertaken to determine the best treatment of "don't know" or "neither" including a review of practice elsewhere.
- 2.3 For a number of key indicators, the drop in satisfaction from the 2009 results is related to a decrease in the proportion of respondents stating that they are "fairly satisfied". The number of those stating "very satisfied" has significantly increased (as illustrated by the graphs in Appendix 2).
- 2.4 Satisfaction with the way the Council is managing the city has risen back to the level recorded by the Spring 2007 Edinburgh Residents Survey, after a downward trend over recent years. Edinburgh continues to be highly regarded as a place to live with only 1% of respondents expressing dissatisfaction.

- 2.5 The majority of respondents held positive views of the Council in general, were satisfied with the way it provides information about the services that they need or use and had positive perceptions of its staff. Satisfaction levels were about the same or better than those monitored by the 2010 Edinburgh Residents Survey.
- 2.6 Further qualitative research was carried out through focus groups. This indicates that there are a number of contextual factors that affect residents' perception of the Council. This appears to have influenced their willingness to commit to a feeling of satisfaction and therefore to express more uncertain and therefore neutral responses in 2010 than in 2009. The research identifies the following factors as being the main influences:
- Understanding and awareness of public sector spending cuts – residents feel they have little specific information on how the cuts will be implemented at a local level resulting in a less positive view of the Council.
  - Perceptions of the future of public services – residents feel they do not have enough information to allow them to be confident in the future of public services, particularly in the context of reducing budgets.
  - Knowledge and perceptions of public services where residents have no direct experience. Where there is a lack of direct experience of a service, there is also lower awareness of services and sometimes lower satisfaction. Although most residents receive their information about services from Outlook (34%), door to door delivery (33%) or word of mouth (24%) as shown in the survey, their perceptions of the Council overall are influenced negatively by what they read in the Evening News in particular.
- 2.7 Other research (national survey by LGInsight<sup>1</sup>) indicates that the recent downturn in satisfaction monitored by the EPS may be picking up on a national trend affecting all of local government. The research identified that there has been a significant drop in satisfaction with local councils, a decrease in perception of value for money and more people feeling they have not been engaged or consulted. The research studied three main factors which appear to influence resident satisfaction – knowledge of the cuts, expectations and impact on council reputation<sup>2</sup>.

### **3 Main report**

#### **3.1 Background**

- 3.1.1 The EPS is a key tool for measuring resident perception and satisfaction with the Council, the delivery of its services, and how it is tackling local issues. It also provides evidence of priorities for improvement and quality of life indicators. It is a motivator for continuous improvement and change within the Council, with the results used widely throughout the organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> A nationally representative survey of 1,002 adults conducted at the end of January 2011.

<sup>2</sup> LG Insight, February 2011, "How residents' views of councils are changing"  
<http://lgcomms.org.uk/asset/292/LGinsight%20report%20%2009%2002%2011.pdf>

- 3.1.2 The EPS was introduced in 2010 to provide one large comprehensive survey of Edinburgh residents. The decision was taken to carry out just one annual Council survey that measures the Council's performance both at a local and citywide level which replaced the Annual Neighbourhood Survey (ANS) and the Edinburgh Residents Survey (ERS). This has saved the Council approximately £50,000.
- 3.1.3 The EPS methodology ensures a sample that is statistically representative at ward and neighbourhood partnership level. Data accuracy at Neighbourhood Partnership level is to +/- 5%<sup>3</sup>. This is the market research industry standard for a survey of this kind. At the city level, the sample size provides data accurate to ±1.38%.
- 3.1.4 The Edinburgh Residents Survey was undertaken with a slightly different methodology to that used in the EPS, however every effort was made to preserve the key questions and their ordering.
- 3.1.5 A total of 5,050 face-to-face interviews were carried out with Edinburgh residents using a variety of locations including on-street, house-to-house and neighbourhood office surveys. Interviewing took place from 4<sup>th</sup> October to 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010. The survey was undertaken and analysed independently by a professional market research company, Research Resource Ltd (who undertook the ANS in 2008 and 2009).
- 3.1.6 Qualitative research (involving seven focus groups, carried out between 24<sup>th</sup> February and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011) was commissioned to explore the findings. In particular, this focussed on why respondents were less willing to commit to a feeling of satisfaction in 2010 than they were in 2009.

## **3.2 Key Findings**

- 3.2.1 Appendix 1 sets out resident satisfaction trends over three years for Services for Communities (SfC) services and related issues, schools and transport. Appendix 2 translates these findings into graphs for indicators with a significant rise in the proportion of respondents stating they were "very satisfied" at the city level.
- 3.2.2 Appendix 3 contains the executive summary of the consultant's report on the 2010 EPS findings for all indicators.
- 3.2.3 Appendix 4 summarises the qualitative research findings, including reasons underlying residents' perceptions of the Council and its services, and areas for improvement.
- 3.2.4 Each of the appendices includes a substantial amount of information important for neighbourhoods, services and the city as a whole. Some key indicators from these appendices have been summarised below:

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<sup>3</sup> The sample of residents is statistically representative at the NP level in terms of age and gender and at the citywide level for age, gender, equality groups and council tenants.

## City-Wide Findings<sup>4</sup>

- 88% of respondents were satisfied with Edinburgh as a place to live. Although this has fallen from the 92% average recorded in the Edinburgh Residents Survey, it should be noted that only 1% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the city.
- 57% were satisfied with the way the Council was managing the city; an increase of 21% from the spring 2010 Edinburgh Residents Survey. Dissatisfaction also fell from 36% to 7%.
- When asked why they held a positive view about the Council's management, 25% said they "had never had any problems, issues or complaints", 20% thought "everything seemed to run well", 12% said Edinburgh was a "nice / good place to live" and 10% recorded "happy with services / good services". Those who did not have positive views mentioned "trams" (13%), "general mismanagement / poor use of funds / high council tax" (6%) and "roads and pavements" (5%).
- 42% felt the Council delivered good value for money; up from 32% in the spring 2010 Edinburgh Residents Survey.
- 67% felt it was easy to find information they wanted from the Council; up from 59% in the spring 2010 Edinburgh Residents Survey.
- 64% felt the Council cares about the environment; up from 60% in the spring 2010 Edinburgh Residents Survey.
- 43% felt they benefited from Edinburgh being a successful tourist destination (a new question in the EPS).
- 58% felt the Council keeps citizens informed about the services it provides (approximately the same as the 55% recorded in the spring 2010 Edinburgh Residents Survey).
- Only 10% of respondents thought it would be easy to find a home to rent if they had to move (33% thought it would be difficult), and only 12% thought it would be easy to find a home to buy (45% thought it would be difficult). Ability to find a new home easily has been identified as a key driver of city and neighbourhood satisfaction.
- It should be noted that the majority of respondents answered 'don't know or not applicable' to all schools questions<sup>5</sup>. These questions were asked of all survey respondents in order to assess overall perceptions of schools. If "don't know" responses are excluded, the satisfaction figures in 2010 (and change from figures calculated in the same way using 2007 data) are:

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<sup>4</sup> At the city level, the sample size provides data accurate to  $\pm 1.38\%$  (margin of error).

<sup>5</sup> This question is asked of all the survey respondents and is therefore likely to include people who do not necessarily have experience or awareness of the facilities, possibly indicated by the high proportion of 'not applicable / don't know' responses.

- 79% were satisfied with nursery schools (increase of 11%)
- 80% were satisfied with primary schools (decrease of 7%)
- 80% were satisfied with secondary schools (increase of 15%)
- Respondents felt that the Council's top five priorities for Edinburgh should be:
  - a strong economy with high levels of employment (66%)
  - reducing crime, disorder, antisocial behaviour and danger (64%)
  - more affordable homes for rent and to buy in the city (58%)
  - a clean attractive city (51%)
  - and residential care and support at home for those who need it (45%).

### **Neighbourhood-Level Findings<sup>6</sup>**

- 89% of respondents were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (a slight increase from the 86% measured in the 2007 ANS).
- 70% of respondents were satisfied with the way the Council was managing their neighbourhood (up 7% since the 2007 ANS)
- The main reasons for feeling satisfied with Council management were similar to those for city management, most had “no complaints” or felt that the Council was “doing its best”.
- 32% felt able to have a say on local issues or how local services were run (down from 43% when first measured in the 2009 ANS; reflecting the issues identified in Appendix 3 of this report)
- 80% were satisfied with street cleaning (13% increase on the 2007 ANS)
- 62% were satisfied with pavement maintenance (11% increase on the 2007 ANS), but satisfaction with road maintenance was only 52%, showing no long-term change in satisfaction.
- 64% were satisfied with the way antisocial behaviour was dealt with in their neighbourhood (an 11% increase from the 2007 ANS).
- It should be noted that the majority of respondents answered ‘don't know or not applicable’ to the question on library satisfaction (perhaps non-users of the service). If “don't know” responses are excluded, the satisfaction figures in 2010 (and change from figures calculated in the same way using 2007 data) show consistently high levels of satisfaction with libraries – 85% in 2010 and 87% in the 2007 ANS. Survey questions will be revised next year

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<sup>6</sup> At the neighbourhood partnership level, the sample sizes provide data accurate to the +/- 5% level (margin of error)<sup>6</sup>.

to reflect the fact that whilst physical visits to libraries are decreasing, both in Edinburgh and the UK, electronic usage has increased dramatically. Customer feedback has been taken into account to establish a marketing plan to continue to attract users to visit libraries. This will be reported to the Culture & Leisure Committee during the summer.

- 81% felt safe in their area after dark (increase of 6% from 2008 ANS).
- 76% of Council tenants were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (no change from 2007 ANS).
- 93% of Council tenants were satisfied with their repairs service (an increase of 35% from the 2007 ANS).
- When asked about priorities for improving the quality of life in local neighbourhoods, respondents said:
  - activities for children / youths;
  - road / traffic improvements;
  - more affordable housing;
  - clean-up area / improved street cleaning
  - shopping, entertainment and amenities.

These priorities change order over time, but have been reasonably consistent over the last few years.

#### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 By combining the Annual Neighbourhood Survey and the Edinburgh Residents Survey, the Council reduced expenditure on external consultants by £50,000, while retaining the integrity and value of the research.

#### **5 Equalities      Impact**

- 5.1 The EPS provides findings broken-down by equality groups where those findings are statistically significant. The survey provides a non-white / non-Scottish sample that is statistically robust at city level.

#### **6 Environmental Impact**

- 6.1 None.

#### **7 Conclusions**

- 7.1 Over the past four years there is a positive upward trend of resident satisfaction with local services and the management of neighbourhoods. In particular, there have been significant rises in satisfaction with neighbourhood management, landlord services, community safety, environmental services and schools.

- 7.2 The 2010 EPS findings indicate a reduction in resident satisfaction with local service delivery from 2009. As there is no evidence of an increase in dissatisfaction, this appears to be a result of an increase in uncertainty and ambivalence towards public services in general, borne out through the focus group research.
- 7.3 It is clear from the research that Edinburgh residents were less willing to commit to satisfaction in 2010 than they were in 2009 as a result of three main factors – information and awareness of public sector spending cuts, assumptions and expectations of service reductions or removal, and media coverage of the spending cuts.
- 7.4 Evidence from this research points to the need for the Council to:
- Provide information on how the public spending cuts will manifest at the local level.
  - Demonstrate ‘value for money’.
  - Increase local engagement and opportunities for local people to be involved further in decision-making.

## **7.5 Next Steps**

- 7.5.1 The research findings will be communicated widely across the Council, with councillors, and with customers. Additionally, the findings will be considered by:
- The Council Management Team and Senior Management Teams
  - Neighbourhood Partnership Boards
  - Partner Organisations
  - Neighbourhood Managers Implementation Board
- 7.5.2 A draft communication plan has been developed. This will involve:
- Presentation and discussion of the findings with managers and partners to develop improvement actions.
  - Customer feedback on how services are being improved in response to their input.
  - Alignment of this data with other related customer research findings such as the Library Adult Plus Survey and SfC Mystery Shopping project.
  - Comparison with data held by the voluntary sector, education, health, and the police.

## 8 Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Notes the findings of the research;
- b) Refers the findings to the Edinburgh Partnership and partner agencies for information.

**Mark Turley**  
Director of Services for Communities

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Appendices	Appendix 1 Table of citywide and neighbourhood partnership area survey results Appendix 2 Indicators with increase in very satisfied graphs Appendix 3 Executive Summary of the EPS 2010 Results Appendix 4 Executive Summary of the Qualitative Research
Contact/tel/Email	Davina Fereday 0131 529 7040 davina.fereday@edinburgh.gov.uk
Wards affected	All wards.
Single Outcome Agreement	The EPS Survey supports all national outcomes and in particular: 'Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs'.
Background Papers	None.

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## Summary of Annual Neighbourhood Survey/ Edinburgh People's Survey Indicators for 2007 to 2010 (page 1 of 2)

This table shows 36 indicators taken from four years of the Edinburgh Annual Neighbourhood Survey and the 2010 Edinburgh People's Survey. The table shows the results in each of the four years and the change over that time. Cells highlighted bright green show a statistically significant increase. Cells highlighted red show a statistically significant decrease over three years. Cells highlighted orange show an area significantly below the city average. Cells highlighted faint green show an area significantly above the city average.

\* indicates this question was introduced to the survey in 2009 and there is no previous data  
@ indicates this question was introduced to the survey in 2008 and there is no previous data

# indicates this question was discontinued and was not asked in the 2009 survey  
T shows the overall trend over three years - it is the percentage difference between 2008 and 2010

	Perceptions of Neighbourhood										Community and Engagement																			
	Neighbourhood as place to live					Management of neighbourhood					Different back-grounds can get on well together					Able to influence decisions #					Able to have a say on local services*					Gave unpaid help in the last year				
	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T
Edinburgh	86%	86%	92%	89%	3%	63%	67%	81%	70%	7%	62%	65%	82%	73%	11%	41%	36%	#	#	43%	32%	-11%	26%	18%	5%	13%	-13%			
City Centre	92%	90%	89%	92%	0%	59%	74%	88%	79%	20%	60%	73%	92%	90%	30%	35%	34%	#	#	34%	22%	-12%	30%	26%	2%	6%	-24%			
Craig / Dud.	91%	76%	87%	94%	3%	59%	57%	74%	82%	23%	58%	69%	81%	86%	28%	36%	31%	#	#	15%	61%	46%	19%	20%	1%	10%	-9%			
Porto. / Craig.	77%	84%	93%	89%	12%	69%	64%	84%	65%	-4%	64%	67%	85%	65%	1%	41%	45%	#	#	56%	33%	-23%	22%	16%	2%	8%	-14%			
Libert. / Gilm.	85%	82%	92%	90%	5%	67%	67%	82%	67%	0%	62%	59%	91%	65%	3%	38%	20%	#	#	64%	27%	-37%	19%	7%	2%	14%	-5%			
South Central	94%	95%	95%	92%	-2%	72%	75%	85%	55%	-17%	61%	64%	79%	79%	18%	44%	39%	#	#	44%	38%	-6%	37%	27%	9%	8%	-29%			
South West	79%	80%	89%	88%	9%	55%	64%	83%	71%	16%	57%	70%	83%	83%	26%	37%	30%	#	#	48%	27%	-21%	24%	10%	3%	8%	-16%			
Pentlands	92%	92%	93%	94%	2%	69%	69%	71%	80%	11%	67%	70%	84%	45%	-22%	43%	45%	#	#	44%	24%	-20%	36%	17%	10%	22%	-14%			
Western Ed.	91%	89%	94%	81%	-10%	58%	65%	72%	52%	-6%	57%	61%	82%	69%	12%	35%	35%	#	#	52%	16%	-36%	30%	18%	12%	21%	-9%			
Almond	86%	95%	97%	90%	4%	72%	81%	95%	78%	6%	72%	66%	83%	83%	11%	60%	64%	#	#	54%	59%	5%	11%	21%	2%	15%	4%			
Forth	71%	73%	92%	83%	12%	55%	49%	81%	67%	12%	58%	53%	85%	73%	15%	34%	23%	#	#	39%	15%	-24%	22%	16%	2%	5%	-17%			
Inverleith	86%	93%	92%	87%	1%	57%	76%	73%	74%	17%	52%	67%	75%	75%	23%	41%	40%	#	#	41%	24%	-17%	27%	17%	12%	13%	-14%			
Leith	87%	81%	91%	85%	-2%	61%	60%	74%	67%	6%	71%	61%	64%	58%	-13%	45%	33%	#	#	20%	28%	8%	27%	17%	6%	27%	0%			

Statistically sig. below city average  
Statistically sig. above city average  
Statistical sig. improvement  
Statistical sig. reduction

	Environment Services																																		
	Dealing with street litter & rubbish					Street Cleaning					Refuse collection					Recycling facilities					Maintenance of roadways					Maintenance of pavements					Street lighting				
	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T
Edinburgh	56%	61%	83%	74%	18%	67%	70%	84%	80%	13%	83%	83%	87%	85%	2%	64%	74%	80%	81%	17%	51%	57%	62%	52%	1%	51%	54%	67%	62%	11%	84%	84%	87%	83%	-1%
City Centre	45%	63%	91%	82%	37%	66%	69%	93%	93%	27%	64%	66%	91%	92%	28%	35%	53%	85%	94%	59%	52%	61%	78%	47%	-5%	55%	58%	80%	76%	21%	81%	82%	95%	94%	13%
Craig / Dud.	68%	63%	73%	88%	20%	68%	69%	75%	92%	24%	86%	89%	88%	95%	9%	76%	80%	82%	96%	20%	63%	52%	82%	55%	-8%	60%	52%	79%	82%	22%	87%	84%	83%	97%	10%
Porto. / Craig.	55%	64%	87%	88%	33%	60%	77%	90%	96%	36%	84%	85%	90%	96%	12%	54%	71%	85%	94%	40%	44%	70%	73%	49%	5%	52%	67%	79%	69%	17%	79%	82%	93%	98%	19%
Libert. / Gilm.	59%	43%	90%	85%	26%	64%	42%	93%	98%	34%	89%	89%	94%	94%	5%	69%	85%	86%	92%	23%	53%	52%	78%	44%	-9%	55%	34%	83%	70%	15%	80%	81%	99%	96%	16%
South Central	64%	66%	93%	71%	7%	73%	73%	83%	73%	0%	81%	83%	78%	80%	-1%	61%	68%	68%	65%	4%	53%	67%	56%	60%	7%	52%	64%	62%	66%	14%	88%	89%	76%	79%	-9%
South West	52%	64%	82%	75%	23%	62%	78%	87%	84%	22%	77%	84%	90%	88%	11%	59%	75%	84%	86%	27%	54%	72%	79%	65%	11%	49%	68%	82%	67%	18%	85%	88%	97%	87%	2%
Pentlands	71%	61%	72%	43%	-28%	73%	67%	73%	57%	-16%	91%	80%	72%	61%	-30%	77%	75%	71%	60%	-17%	39%	46%	54%	26%	-13%	38%	42%	51%	26%	-12%	86%	77%	77%	65%	-21%
Western Ed.	56%	64%	79%	55%	-1%	65%	71%	82%	59%	-6%	90%	88%	90%	72%	-18%	75%	82%	80%	72%	-3%	42%	52%	47%	37%	-5%	40%	50%	56%	37%	-3%	90%	85%	86%	65%	-25%
Almond	59%	79%	90%	87%	28%	78%	90%	89%	90%	12%	89%	93%	96%	92%	3%	80%	86%	93%	88%	8%	61%	53%	64%	67%	6%	62%	53%	64%	69%	7%	86%	89%	90%	88%	2%
Forth	46%	43%	84%	64%	18%	61%	54%	87%	71%	10%	79%	74%	93%	87%	8%	62%	64%	92%	86%	24%	50%	53%	69%	68%	18%	49%	43%	80%	65%	16%	80%	76%	93%	83%	3%
Inverleith	49%	70%	83%	87%	38%	67%	75%	81%	85%	18%	80%	81%	84%	92%	12%	58%	70%	55%	78%	20%	47%	64%	23%	62%	15%	48%	63%	39%	71%	23%	77%	86%	78%	84%	7%
Leith	48%	56%	65%	53%	5%	60%	68%	66%	60%	0%	74%	81%	78%	62%	-12%	55%	74%	75%	61%	6%	54%	39%	45%	36%	-18%	53%	47%	45%	40%	-13%	79%	88%	74%	65%	-14%

	Community Safety																																		
	Dealing with anti-social behaviour					Dealing with neighbour disputes					Street drinking is not a problem @					Dealing with dog fouling					Dealing with vandalism and graffiti					Dealing with violent crime @					Feel safe after dark @				
	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T
Edinburgh	53%	60%	75%	64%	11%	59%	79%	93%	74%	15%	71%	72%	65%	-6%	44%	53%	69%	61%	17%	56%	65%	83%	76%	20%	78%	91%	71%	-7%	75%	81%	81%	6%			
City Centre	41%	69%	88%	75%	34%	50%	73%	96%	90%	40%	70%	63%	43%	-27%	46%	62%	84%	83%	37%	49%	71%	92%	84%	35%	74%	98%	79%	5%	80%	91%	80%	0%			
Craig / Dud.	51%	45%	72%	48%	-3%	56%	68%	87%	93%	37%	64%	80%	51%	-13%	40%	37%	60%	74%	34%	57%	57%	80%	79%	22%	75%	95%	89%	14%	69%	77%	81%	12%			
Porto. / Craig.	39%	57%	77%	73%	34%	38%	82%	93%	81%	43%	70%	61%	65%	-5%	37%	53%	71%	74%	37%	47%	64%	87%	86%	39%	80%	93%	75%	-5%	77%	83%	79%	2%			
Libert. / Gilm.	51%	39%	78%	47%	-4%	26%	83%	94%	51%	25%	68%	70%	50%	-18%	39%	54%	80%	59%	20%	61%	65%	90%	71%	10%	74%	93%	46%	-28%	60%	74%	73%	13%			
South Central	63%	76%	70%	71%	8%	62%	92%	92%	71%	9%	83%	65%	84%	1%	58%	60%	66%	61%	3%	66%	80%	82%	73%	7%	90%	91%	69%	-21%	86%	80%	88%	2%			
South West	49%	54%	75%	75%	26%	66%	73%	93%	83%	17%	64%	76%	77%	13%	38%	48%	77%	58%	20%	52%	59%	85%	78%	26%	74%	95%	78%	4%	72%	83%	80%	8%			
Pentlands	64%	58%	69%	68%	4%	70%	91%	92%	70%	0%	66%	71%	84%	18%	56%	50%	70%	33%	-23%	67%	65%	76%	64%	-3%	90%	95%	70%	-20%	80%	85%	86%	6%			
Western Ed.	57%	60%	69%	73%	16%	70%	83%	90%	73%	3%	72%	74%	68%	-4%	48%	54%	58%	38%	-10%	56%	66%	81%	75%	19%	81%	81%	69%	-12%	79%	79%	76%	-3%			
Almond	70%	89%	91%	59%	-11%	66%	97%	98%	74%	8%	80%	90%	74%	-6%	47%	86%	84%	78%	31%	72%	79%	92%	82%	10%	96%	100%	72%	-24%	87%	92%	86%	-1%			
Forth	37%	34%	83%	72%	35%	54%	53%	96%	86%	32%	65%	58%	78%	13%	29%	31%	76%	51%	22%	42%	44%	86%	73%	31%	52%	87%	84%	32%	67%	81%	74%	7%			
Inverleith	61%	71%	59%	60%	-1%	52%	71%	96%	57%	5%	85%	82%	60%	-25%	45%	58%	50%	66%	21%	60%	73%	81%	81%	21%	71%	77%	55%	-16%	86%	69%	88%	2%			
Leith	47%	57%	55%	48%	1%	68%	82%	86%	64%	-4%	65%	64%	43%	-22%	39%	45%	48%	46%	7%	46%	60%	56%	61%	15%	77%	80%	61%	-16%	60%	68%	76%	16%			

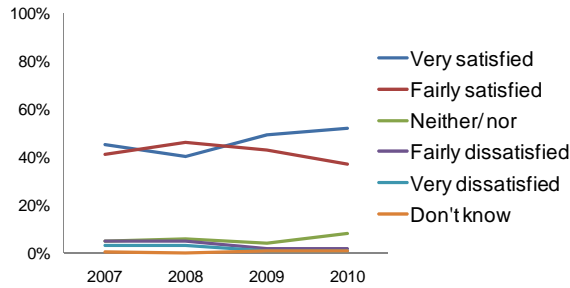
Summary of Annual Neighbourhood Survey/ Edinburgh People's Survey Indicators for 2007 to 2010 (page 2 of 2)

Landlord Services (responses shown are from City of Edinburgh Council tenants only)																														
Dealing with anti-social behaviour					Repairs to council property					Improvements to property					Internal condition					External condition					Ease of paying rent(08/9) / Way you normally pay your rent (10)					
'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	
Edinburgh	47%	52%	60%	47%	0%	58%	78%	87%	93%	35%	51%	81%	88%	98%	47%	67%	69%	70%	76%	9%	67%	66%	64%	69%	2%	79%	73%	65%	58%	-21%

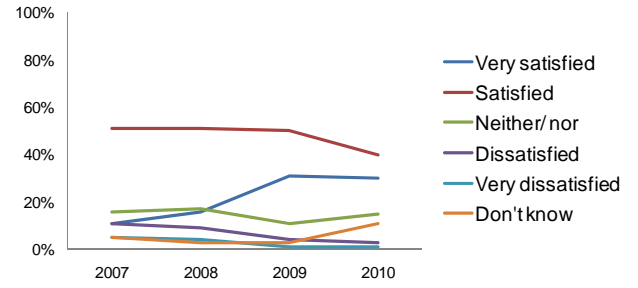
Community Facilities																																			
Library services					Parks and greenspace					Social and leisure facilities					Provision of shopping areas					Facilities for young children					Facilities for teenagers					Facilities for older people					
'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	
Edinburgh	81%	75%	67%	44%	-37%	71%	70%	79%	75%	4%	60%	57%	73%	66%	6%	76%	81%	88%	83%	7%	26%	21%	25%	21%	-5%	12%	15%	19%	13%	1%	24%	28%	32%	24%	0%
City Centre	82%	73%	66%	42%	-40%	80%	77%	84%	80%	0%	63%	76%	88%	87%	24%	79%	88%	97%	98%	19%	14%	16%	25%	28%	14%	5%	14%	23%	19%	14%	17%	22%	34%	30%	13%
Craig / Dud.	82%	75%	65%	27%	-55%	79%	68%	91%	88%	9%	61%	47%	62%	79%	18%	81%	86%	87%	95%	14%	24%	18%	12%	22%	-2%	11%	12%	8%	6%	-5%	27%	27%	27%	25%	-2%
Porto. / Craig.	78%	75%	64%	15%	-63%	67%	72%	88%	80%	13%	60%	50%	71%	52%	-8%	75%	78%	95%	86%	11%	37%	28%	22%	8%	-29%	10%	21%	13%	3%	-7%	28%	34%	34%	21%	-7%
Libert. / Gilm.	73%	84%	69%	17%	-56%	60%	56%	90%	66%	6%	64%	59%	80%	52%	-12%	79%	76%	96%	87%	8%	29%	23%	25%	11%	-18%	14%	9%	17%	4%	-10%	26%	41%	33%	23%	-3%
South Central	85%	87%	66%	68%	-17%	86%	83%	75%	81%	-5%	72%	72%	72%	77%	5%	88%	92%	83%	94%	6%	28%	21%	23%	16%	-12%	8%	13%	18%	12%	4%	26%	29%	24%	14%	-12%
South West	79%	71%	56%	48%	-31%	69%	69%	84%	84%	15%	55%	59%	76%	75%	20%	76%	72%	95%	85%	9%	21%	21%	15%	39%	18%	8%	16%	10%	32%	24%	20%	23%	27%	42%	22%
Pentlands	90%	73%	67%	59%	-31%	76%	52%	63%	58%	-18%	52%	53%	67%	37%	-15%	71%	67%	70%	47%	-24%	28%	29%	42%	18%	-10%	9%	25%	36%	13%	4%	27%	37%	48%	19%	-8%
Western Ed.	83%	71%	65%	59%	-24%	75%	75%	77%	65%	-10%	60%	64%	81%	55%	-5%	72%	74%	84%	64%	-8%	24%	27%	26%	19%	-5%	11%	17%	20%	15%	4%	30%	28%	32%	27%	-3%
Almond	88%	71%	68%	54%	-34%	66%	74%	74%	85%	19%	62%	39%	63%	75%	13%	61%	89%	77%	87%	26%	21%	22%	36%	27%	6%	15%	17%	34%	8%	-7%	18%	34%	44%	23%	5%
Forth	71%	76%	59%	56%	-15%	55%	51%	81%	74%	19%	56%	40%	75%	68%	12%	67%	67%	96%	82%	15%	26%	12%	18%	35%	9%	12%	9%	8%	33%	21%	28%	18%	29%	36%	8%
Inverleith	81%	59%	90%	32%	-49%	78%	80%	83%	74%	-4%	53%	61%	79%	66%	13%	78%	92%	92%	89%	11%	24%	18%	33%	12%	-12%	11%	10%	15%	6%	-5%	26%	19%	22%	15%	-11%
Leith	81%	82%	66%	44%	-37%	72%	79%	57%	56%	-16%	63%	64%	71%	65%	2%	83%	89%	88%	77%	-6%	29%	18%	20%	17%	-12%	13%	10%	14%	3%	-10%	22%	18%	28%	11%	-11%

Community Facilities																				
Public transport					Nursery schools					Primary schools					Secondary schools					
'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	'07	'08	'09	'10	T	
Edinburgh	83%	82%	85%	72%	-11%	31%	42%	37%	34%	3%	39%	46%	39%	36%	-3%	32%	42%	37%	36%	4%
City Centre	88%	84%	93%	83%	-5%	7%	18%	28%	28%	21%	9%	21%	29%	28%	19%	6%	21%	30%	27%	21%
Craig / Dud.	86%	82%	98%	82%	-4%	42%	43%	32%	35%	-7%	45%	49%	33%	35%	-10%	43%	42%	32%	36%	-7%
Porto. / Craig.	85%	87%	94%	50%	-35%	28%	48%	31%	20%	-8%	37%	49%	29%	32%	-5%	31%	47%	26%	30%	-1%
Libert. / Gilm.	86%	90%	84%	50%	-36%	21%	64%	31%	25%	4%	31%	69%	33%	26%	-5%	22%	61%	35%	27%	5%
South Central	89%	88%	80%	90%	1%	22%	27%	40%	27%	5%	24%	33%	40%	30%	6%	18%	30%	37%	28%	10%
South West	87%	84%	84%	88%	1%	26%	41%	27%	55%	29%	32%	42%	28%	54%	22%	26%	42%	27%	51%	25%
Pentlands	79%	78%	77%	46%	-33%	37%	54%	50%	27%	-10%	55%	59%	53%	27%	-28%	45%	50%	52%	27%	-18%
Western Ed.	89%	81%	86%	62%	-27%	33%	39%	41%	38%	5%	42%	47%	46%	38%	-4%	33%	42%	42%	38%	5%
Almond	71%	72%	77%	77%	6%	49%	61%	53%	27%	-22%	57%	63%	54%	30%	-27%	52%	59%	53%	34%	-18%
Forth	78%	75%	97%	91%	13%	47%	41%	26%	71%	24%	67%	48%	26%	72%	5%	49%	43%	25%	71%	22%
Inverleith	72%	69%	81%	64%	-8%	33%	33%	53%	24%	-9%	38%	35%	61%	31%	-7%	32%	34%	59%	29%	-3%
Leith	80%	88%	71%	73%	-7%	23%	38%	29%	31%	8%	29%	39%	30%	31%	2%	23%	37%	23%	31%	8%

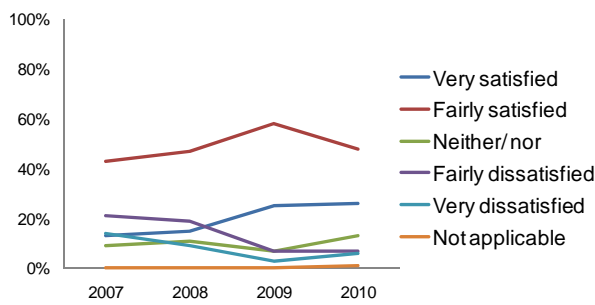
## Appendix 2 - Indicators with a significant rise in the proportion of respondents stating 'very satisfied' at the city level



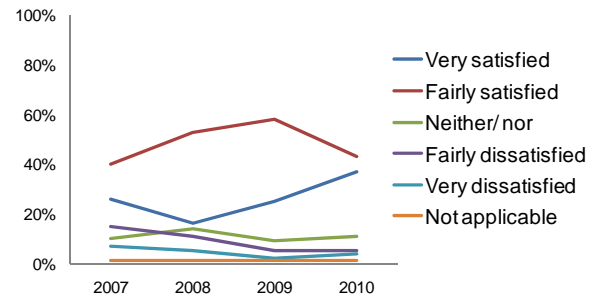
**Neighbourhood as a place to live**



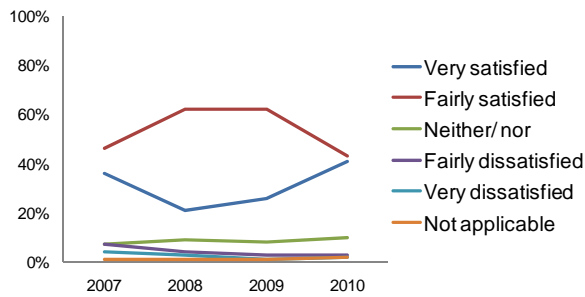
**Neighbourhood management**



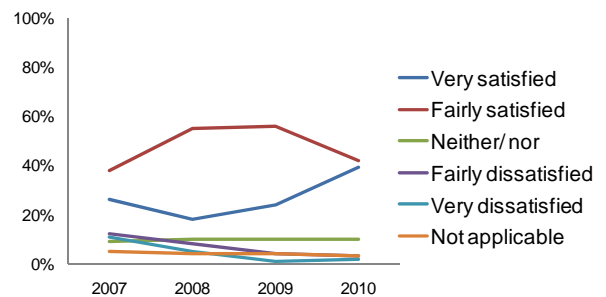
**Litter and Rubbish**



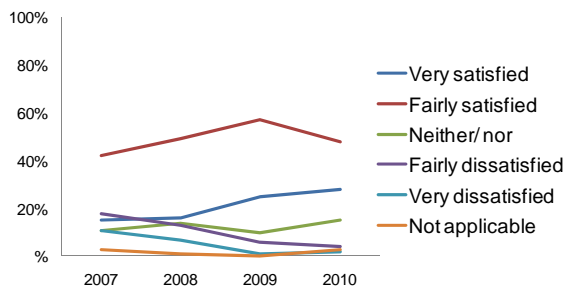
**Street cleaning**



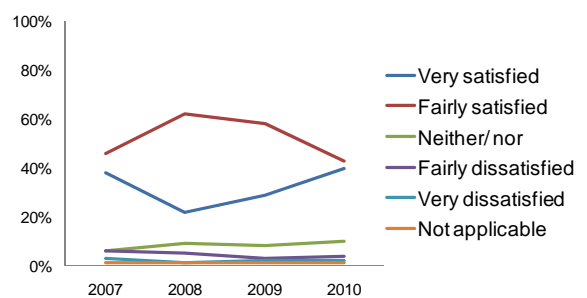
**Refuse Collection**



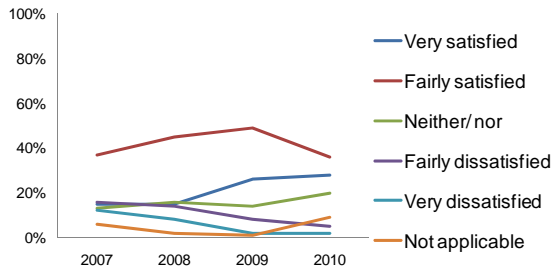
**Recycling Facilities**



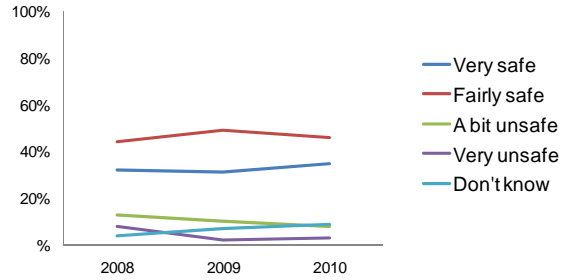
**Vandalism and graffiti**



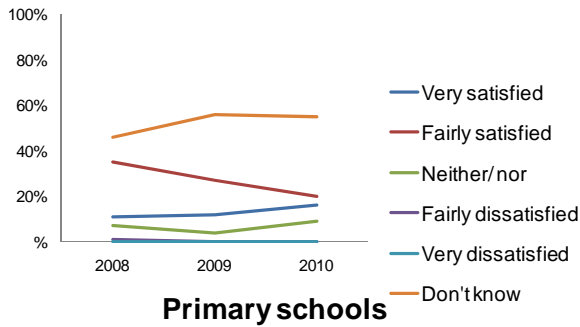
**Street lighting**



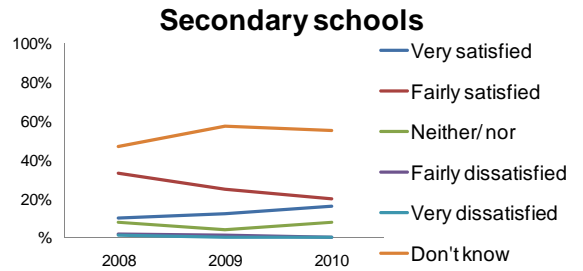
**Dealing with anti social behaviour**



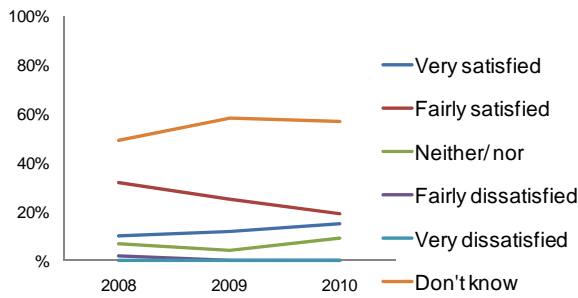
**Feel safe after dark**



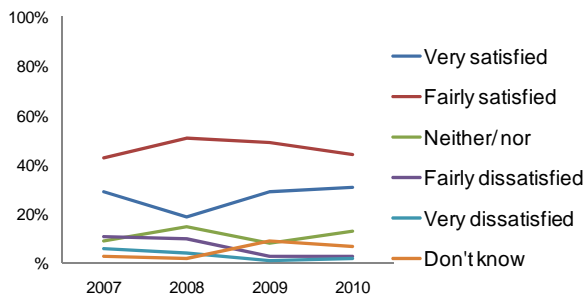
**Primary schools**



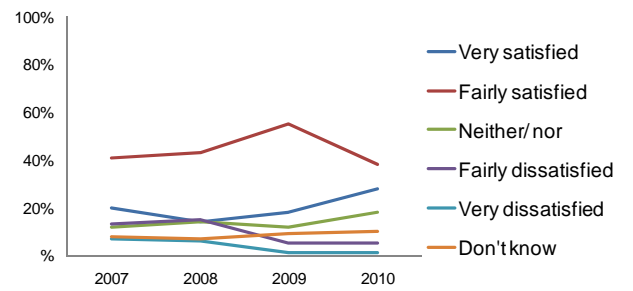
**Secondary schools**



**Nursery schools**



**Parks and green spaces**



**Social and leisure facilities**

## Appendix 3 – EPS REPORT EXTRACT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

This report contains the findings of the City of Edinburgh Council's 2010 Peoples' Survey (EPS).

City of Edinburgh Council has previously commissioned two different types of surveys. These are known as the Annual Neighbourhood Survey (ANS) and the Edinburgh Residents Survey (ERS). The Annual Neighbourhood Survey has been undertaken on an annual basis, since 2007. The project provided information on customer perceptions which is statistically robust and representative at the level of Community Planning Area, Neighbourhood Partnership Area and Ward Areas. It was a key tool for measuring citizen satisfaction with the way Services for Communities is delivering services and tackling issues in their neighbourhood. The focus on the survey was on local services and quality of life.

The Edinburgh Residents Survey has been undertaken twice per annum, since 2004. The main purpose was to gather details of residents' perceptions with regard to quality of life in the city, social cohesion in the city, perceptions of the Council and its performance and topical issues – such as sports and culture, trams and heating the home.

The decision was taken to carry out just one annual survey, the Edinburgh Peoples' Survey, which included key questions from both surveys. The survey format followed, largely, that of the preceding Annual Neighbourhood Survey in that the methodology and scale were the same, however, the questionnaire was adapted in order to ensure that the ANS and ERS surveys were merged while retaining citywide and neighbourhood focus within the questionnaire length.

This report draws comparisons of customer perceptions from the 2007, 2008 and 2009 Annual Neighbourhood surveys allowing managers to evaluate the impact of changes in service planning and delivery. The findings should support managers in their responsibilities for performance management; local community planning, service and budget planning; Customer Service Excellence; and public performance reporting. There is no comparison of EPS data to previous ERS surveys due to the differing project methodologies.

### Approach

In Autumn 2010, a total of 5,050 face to face interviews were carried out using three methods; in-street, door-to-door and neighbourhood offices.

The sample of residents interviewed reflected the demographics of the 12

Neighbourhood Partnership Areas and was therefore statistically representative at this level as well as the following:

- At neighbourhood partnership level in terms of age and gender
- At city wide level for age, gender, equality groups and by tenure

## Key Findings

### Management of the City and Priorities

- 89% of respondents said that they were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with Edinburgh as a whole as a place to live. Just 1% indicated they were dissatisfied in this respect. The main reasons given for being satisfied were that respondents generally had 'no issues/ problems' and that 'everything seems to run well'.
- Respondents indicated that their top priority for the City was 'A strong economy with high levels of employment'. This was followed by 'reducing crime, disorder, anti social behaviour and danger' and 'more affordable homes to rent and buy in the City'.
- Just over half of respondents (57%) indicated that they were satisfied with the way the Council is managing the City.

### Neighbourhood management and Priorities

- 89% of Edinburgh residents surveyed said they were either very or fairly satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live. This figure has increased since 2007, when satisfaction with the neighbourhood was 86%.
- 70% of respondents were satisfied with the way the Council is managing their neighbourhood (increase of 7% since 2007). The main reasons given for being satisfied were generally that the Council was 'doing its best' or that they had 'no complaints'.
- Of those respondents interviewed on leaving a neighbourhood office 91% were satisfied with the service overall (an increase of 2% since 2007).
- The top 5 priorities for the neighbourhood for 2007 to 2010 are shown below. 'Activities for children and youths' was the top priority for the last three years.

**Figure 1: Top 5 priorities for the neighbourhood, 2007 to 2010**

	2007		2008		2009		2010
1	Clean up the area/ improved street cleaning	1	Activities for children/ youths	1	Activities for children/ youths	1	Activities for children/ youths
2	Tackle anti social behaviour	2	Road/ traffic improvements	1	Clean up the area/ improved	2	Road/ traffic improvements



				street cleaning			
3	Activities for children/ youths	3	Tackle anti social behaviour	3	Road/ traffic improvements	3	Improved/ more affordable housing
4	Road/ traffic improvements	4	Clean up the area/ improved street cleaning	4	Tackle anti social behaviour	4	Clean up the area/ improved street cleaning
5	Improved public transport/ transport links	5	Shopping, entertainment, amenities	5	Better police services/ patrols	5	Shopping, entertainment, amenities

### Key Drivers of Satisfaction

Several indicators of overall satisfaction were put through key driver analysis – this process shows what factors are most closely linked to overall satisfaction and may indicate what causes high or low satisfaction. These indicators and their drivers are summarised below.

<b>Edinburgh as a place to live</b>	<b>Your neighbourhood as a place to live</b>	<b>The way the Council is managing your neighbourhood</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Satisfaction with the quality and condition of your home</li> <li>* Believing Council staff are friendly</li> <li>* Ease of finding an affordable home to rent</li> <li>* Maintenance of open spaces</li> <li>* Believing your neighbourhood is a place where people of different backgrounds can get on well together</li> <li>* Provision of adequate shopping areas</li> <li>* Litter and rubbish in the streets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Satisfaction with the way antisocial behaviour is dealt with</li> <li>* Satisfaction with the quality and condition of your home</li> <li>* Feeling able to have a say on how things happen in your neighbourhood</li> <li>* Feeling safe in your neighbourhood after dark</li> <li>* Ease of finding an affordable home to buy</li> <li>* Believing Council staff are friendly</li> <li>* Believing your neighbourhood is a place where people of different backgrounds can get on well together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Satisfaction with facilities for young children</li> <li>* Ease of finding an affordable home to buy</li> <li>* Satisfaction with the way antisocial behaviour is dealt with</li> <li>* Believing the Council delivers good value for money</li> <li>* Whether street drinking is a problem in the neighbourhood</li> <li>* Maintenance of roadways</li> <li>* Believing the Council cares about the environment</li> <li>* Provision of adequate shopping areas</li> </ul>

<i>Changes in these indicators explain 45% of the change in satisfaction with Edinburgh as a place to live.</i>	<i>Changes in these indicators explain 37% of the change in satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live.</i>	<i>Changes in these indicators explain 43% of the change in satisfaction with Council management of neighbourhood.</i>
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## Community Engagement

- Respondents were asked if they felt they were able to have a say on local issues or how local services are run in their area. In 2010 32% said they felt they were able to have a say. This was a new question in 2009 where 43% said they felt they were able to have a say.
- Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed that their neighbourhood was a place where people from different backgrounds could get on well together; the citywide average level of agreement was 73% (increase of 11% since 2007).
- Only 13% of respondents had given unpaid help to a group or organisation in the previous year (decrease of 13% since 2007).

## Information Sources

A new question was added to the 2010 EPS asking respondents about the communication sources they used to find out about Council services and activities and what is going on in their area. In terms of where respondents find out about Council services, the main sources were:

- Outlook – the Council newspaper,
- Information delivered through the letterbox, and
- Word of mouth

With regards to what was going on in the local area, the main sources were:

- Word of mouth, and
- Information delivered through the letterbox.

It is interesting to note that for both aspects, respondents aged 45+ were more likely to refer to newspapers, whether local or Council newspapers, than those aged 45 and under.

85% of respondents said they received about the right amount of information about the services they need. 6% said they received 'too little'

## Environmental Services

Citywide satisfaction in 2010 (and the change since 2007) with services linked to the environment included:

- Dealing with street litter and rubbish – 74% (18% increase)
- Street cleaning – 80% (13% increase)
- Recycling – 81% (17% increase)
- Pavement maintenance – 62% (11% increase)



- Road maintenance – 52% (no significant change)
- Street lighting – 83% (no significant change)
- Parks and green space – 75% (4% increase)
- Refuse collection – 85% (2% increase)

22% of respondents agreed that the Council should change its collection of green residual waste bins from weekly to fortnightly given that the proportion of waste recycled by City of Edinburgh Council has increased significantly and is likely to increase further with the introduction of food waste recycling. 33% disagreed with this.

### Landlord Services

These findings related to council tenants (552 interviewed in 2010)

- 76% of tenants were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (no significant change).

Tenants were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with various services provided by the Council. The findings were as follows for 2010 (and the change since 2007):

- Improvements carried out to council property – 98% (increase of 47%)
- Repairs service for council property – 93% (increase of 35%)
- Internal condition of council property – 76% (increase of 9%)
- External condition of council property – 69% (increase of 2%)
- Dealing with anti social behaviour – 47% (no significant change)
- Ease of paying rent – 58% (decrease of 21%)

### Community Safety

Citywide satisfaction in 2010 (and the change since 2007) with issues linked to anti social behaviour and perceptions of enforcement were:

- Dealing with neighbour disputes – 74% (increase of 15%)
- Dealing with vandalism and graffiti – 76% (increase of 20%)
- Dealing with dog fouling – 61% (increase of 17%)
- Dealing with anti social behaviour – 64% (increase of 11%)

### Alcohol Disorder/ Safety after Dark

Citywide satisfaction in 2010 (and the change since 2008) with issues linked to alcohol disorder and safety after dark included:

- 14% felt their neighbourhood had an issue with alcohol disorder or street drinking (decrease of 15%)
- 81% felt safe in their area after dark (increase of 6%)
- Top priority for improving neighbourhood safety was 'more visible/ improved policing'.

## Community Facilities

Citywide satisfaction in 2010 (and change since 2007) with local community facilities included:

- 66% stated they were satisfied with social and leisure facilities in neighbourhoods (increase of 6%);
- The average satisfaction level with public transport in neighbourhood was 72% (decrease of 11%)
- 83% were satisfied with the provision of shopping areas in local neighbourhoods (increase of 7%)
- The average satisfaction with facilities for different age groups across the city was:
  - For young children (up to 12 year old) – 21% satisfied (decrease of 5%)
  - For teenagers – 13% satisfied (no significant change)
  - For older people – 24% satisfied (no significant change)

Over half of the survey respondents answered 'don't know' with regards to facilities for young children, teenagers and older people. This question was asked of all respondents. When respondents who answered 'don't know' are excluded from the calculation, the average satisfaction with facilities in 2010 (compared to figures calculated in the same way for 2007) was:

- For young children (up to 12 year old) – 50% satisfied (3% increase)
- For teenagers – 30% satisfied (8% increase)
- For older people – 58% satisfied (9% increase)

## Library Services

- The average satisfaction with the library service in neighbourhoods was 44% (decrease of 37% in 2007). It should be noted, however, that almost half of respondents (48%) said 'don't know' to this question, potentially indicating a lack of awareness of usage of library services. The level of 'don't know' responses increased significantly since 2007, possibly due to the fact that fewer interviews were carried out outside libraries in 2010 than was the case in 2007.
- Excluding don't know responses, satisfaction with libraries was 85% across the city in 2010 – about the same as the 87% satisfaction calculated in the same way from the 2007 responses.
- Only 27 respondents to the survey said they were dissatisfied with library facilities, with the majority of these individuals being of the opinion that library services were out of date or require upgrading.

## Schools

Residents were asked to rate their satisfaction with nursery, primary and secondary schools in their area. Average satisfaction with these services (and change since 2007) was as follows:

- 34% were satisfied with nursery schools (increase of 3%)
- 36% were satisfied with primary schools (decrease of 3%)
- 36% were satisfied with Secondary schools (increase of 4%)

It should be noted that for all schools questions the level of dissatisfaction was 0%. The majority of respondents answered 'don't know' to all schools questions. This question was asked of all survey respondents in order to assess overall perceptions of schools. If don't know responses are excluded, the satisfaction figures in 2010 (and change from figures calculated in the same way using 2007 data) are:

- 79% were satisfied with nursery schools (increase of 11%)
- 80% were satisfied with primary schools (decrease of 7%)
- 80% were satisfied with Secondary schools (increase of 15%)

### Housing

- Citywide, 88% of respondents were satisfied with the quality and condition of their home.
- Just 10% of respondents thought it would be 'easy' to find a home that was affordable to rent, if they had to move compared to 33% who thought it would be difficult.
- 12% said thought it would be 'easy' to find a home that was affordable to buy, if they had to move, compared to 45% who said thought it would be difficult.
- 8% of respondents said they would need to move in the next 12 months.

### Perceptions of the Council

The 2010 survey asked respondents the extent to which they agreed with a range of statements about the Council. Statements relating to the provision of information, accessibility and staff were most likely to be agreed with:

- It is easy to find the information I want form the Council (67%)
- The Council cares about the environment (64%)
- I receive regular information from the Council in a form that suits me (63%)
- The Council keeps me informed about the services it provides (61%)
- The Council is easily accessible and friendly (60%)
- The Council keeps citizens informed about the services it provides (58%)
- Council staff are friendly (56%)
- Council staff are polite (55%)
- Council staff are fair (53%)

Agreement with a range of other statements relating to fairness, value for money and financial management were less strong:

- The Council demonstrated fairness and equality of opportunity (48%)
- The Council provides protection and support for vulnerable people (44%)
- I benefit from Edinburgh being a successful tourist destination (43%)
- The Council delivers good value for money for its citizens (42%)
- The Council puts its customers first (41%)

- The Council displays good financial management (31%)

### **Communication and Contact with the Council**

- 78% of respondents overall said that they were very or fairly confident that they would know how to report an issue to the Council. Most likely to be confident were those aged 35 to 64, with the youngest and oldest respondents least likely to be confident.
- Telephone was the method which is used most by respondents to contact the Council and was also the preferred method for contacting the Council.
- For those that had contacted the Council, but were not interviewed in an exit interview from one of the Council offices, 55% said they were well treated and their query/ issue was resolved.
- For those that participated in an exit interview at one of the Council's local offices, 83% said they got what they wanted from their visit and 92% were satisfied overall with the level of service.

# **Appendix 4 – Perception of Local Public Services – Focus Group Research Report Extract – Executive Summary**

This report summarises the key findings of a programme of research carried out by Research Resource on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council in order to explore perceptions of local Council services.

## **Background**

The Edinburgh People's Survey (previously the Annual Neighbourhood Survey) tracks a number of key indicators for Services for Communities in terms of perceptions of the neighbourhood and local services. Compared to 2009 satisfaction levels, there appears to have been a decrease in satisfaction for a number of these indicators. However, there has not been a comparative increase in dissatisfaction. Analysis indicates that more respondents are now stating they are 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' or 'don't know' how satisfied they are compared to 2009. It is worth noting, however, that for many indicators, the decrease in satisfaction is bringing satisfaction back in line with the levels of satisfaction reported in 2007 and 2008 surveys.

Analysis has been carried out using survey data and for some indicators, there are trends on the basis of tenure, geographical or age where certain groups are more likely to be saying that they are 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' compared to others. However, this analysis does not indicate that this is the case across all indicators therefore it cannot be said that any one demographic or geographic group is more likely to say 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' than any other in a consistent manner.

This has led to consideration of other environmental factors which may have an impact on whether or not residents are satisfied with local services and their local area. Within the last year, for example, there has been widespread reporting in the media of public sector spending cuts in addition to an increase in the extent to which the economic recession is affecting households. These may be factors which have had an influence on residents' perceptions; however, these cannot be confirmed through empirical analysis of the EPS survey data. To this end, Services for Communities commissioned Research Resource to carry out further qualitative research in order to understand Edinburgh residents' current perceptions of local public services and the factors which influence these.

## **Methodology**

A total of 7 focus groups were carried out, spread across the City. Groups were carried out on a geographical basis, held in local facilities with participants recruited from the surrounding area. Focus group participants were recruited based upon their participation in the Edinburgh People's Survey and were recruited in order to ensure participation from different ages, genders and tenures. All focus groups were carried out between the 24<sup>th</sup> February and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

## **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS OF RESEARCH**

### **General perceptions towards public services**

The discussions began by asking residents about their current general perceptions of local Council services. A key finding across the focus groups was that there was real variance in

terms of perception of public services, with some group participants being very satisfied in general with public services and others being very dissatisfied. Across groups, there was not a general feeling that any one particular age, gender or tenure were more or less likely to feel positive about public services than any other.

A key point in relation to perceptions of local services and general feelings towards Council services is that there appears to be little thought given to public services until things go wrong.

There were a number of positive examples given of where the Council is perceived to be doing a good job in delivering local services. Schools and libraries were both held up as being extremely good in Edinburgh, by those that have direct experience of using these services. It should be noted that whilst these are individual comments, they were mirrored across a number of groups, indicating that perceptions of these services are strong, for service users, across Edinburgh:

*I think they're (libraries) a fantastically good service. They're not just books, I mean they've spread their wings, there's all sorts of things going on in libraries and if, this is a community centre, a library's a bigger community centre.*

*Schools around here (Leith) are very good and I've got four kids, who went and are now at university and I'm very, very pleased with the school.*

Waste amenity sites were also well perceived:

*I think the community tips are brilliant because where you just drive around and a different place to put everything and we use it a lot because it is not a great distance to go and if it is on the way to where you are going shopping anyway and it is no trouble at all and they have places that some of them were good as new stuff that you can use and which I think is brilliant you know if you say we don't need this coffee table anymore oh we will take it to the tip and put it the re-housing shed.*

An interesting finding from the focus groups was that, across all groups, perceptions of the customer service and customer care provided by the Council was very good, for those that have had contact with the Council. Examples of this were reporting lighting faults or other issues where the response was perceived as excellent.

*I have been pleased whenever we phone up if there is a loose manhole cover or a big pothole or anything like that. It is always fixed and the longest we have ever waited is a week. One day last week we phoned about a streetlight not working in the morning when we were going up shopping and by the time we came back they were sorting it so an hour and a half later.*

For those that had not directly contacted the Council about, for example, a pothole, their perception in relation to how they deal with things such as this appeared to be more negative.

There was evidence of services being removed which was causing dissatisfaction from the perspective of participants. For example, in Sighthill, a play park had been taken away. This was perceived as evidence that the Council was reducing public services, however, the impact of this was significant in terms of the local community in that younger children no longer have somewhere to play which leads to them misbehaving in the vicinity of local houses, increased littering, increasing incidence of neighbour problems when there are disagreements over children and increased anti social behaviour.

*It was there one minute and gone the next. So even facilities for like the younger ones and that, you know, you used to be able to sort of let them out in the park, but you can't do that now, so I reckon people just feel let down by the Council.*

*It's cheaper, much cheaper to shut it and take it away than it is to take care of it, so that's what they do, but you're entitled to some kind of service considering where you live and how much you pay to live here.*

What was notable was that residents who lived in more densely populated areas appeared to be generally less happy with public services than others. Examples of this were evidenced in Leith, Broomhouse, and Sighthill. Within more densely populated areas the issues that are associated with more people and greater 'traffic' in an area were evident. This meant that issues such as street cleaning, litter picking and parking were all perceived as significant issues in these areas, and causes of dissatisfaction.

Across all areas, there was evidence of increasing dissatisfaction with refuse collection and bulk uplifts. There were a number of aspects of these services that were causing dissatisfaction. Firstly, the refuse collection service during the severe winter weather was perceived by most to have been less than satisfactory. There was also a change in perception relating to this service as a result of the 'strike' or 'work to rule'. Questions were asked at more than one group about why this had not been resolved and there was concern that the inability to resolve the issues was indicative of poor management within the Council.

### **Experience vs. Perception of Spending Cuts**

There was a strong sense of awareness across all groups relating to public sector spending cuts. This sense of awareness tended to come from national media, although there was some local awareness from television and newspapers more locally.

*You listen to the news nationally and locally and its gloom and doom.*

Despite this general sense of awareness there was little specific knowledge of where the cuts would hit or how they would manifest themselves, indeed over all groups just two individuals were able to name any facts about future local spending cuts, and even then they were unclear about the impact:

*I think I read somewhere about how much Edinburgh Council had to cut back, I can't remember, it was 300, oh I canny remember the number but it was huge and I thought 'oh oh what are we going to lose?'*

*At this stage I haven't heard too much about what is going to happen it is all big numbers.*

Their views in relation to what may be cut locally appeared to be based upon conjecture, word of mouth or what they read in the Edinburgh Evening News. There seemed to be little evidence of an awareness of decisions on spending priorities and cuts based upon information provided by the Council. There was a clear desire to receive more information about these cuts and how they will impact local people:

*You hear about how they are freezing council tax but people don't know what is going to happen. They say they are going to cut services but you don't know which ones. It's inevitable that we are going to start getting less as they need to cut back on their spending. I would like to see more information on what they are going to be cutting back on, what things are going to go.*



The main thing that all participants said they would like to find out about was regarding how Council money is spent. This was perceived as being even more important for the public nowadays and all the more so once the cuts come into place.

*Well, on how the money is spent that kind of thing. What do they spend the money on?*

*Especially if things are getting cut then you want to know how it is being spent.*

The general awareness of the cuts also appears to be creating a real fear for the future of public services, with group members feeling particularly pessimistic for the future:

*All you hear about is the cuts. I think people are feeling uncertain about the future.*

*I'm quite concerned that community centres are getting shut down*

*I am worried about them proposing to shut the libraries. You keep hearing that libraries are going to be shut*

*My expectations haven't changed as such but my fear of the future has changed. I think we will lose everything we have.*

There was a sense from many of an increasing dissatisfaction, resulting from services that have been removed or reduced, for example, removal of community warden services, removal of a local play park, reduction in litter picking, closure of a library, move towards fortnightly bin collection. There was a feeling that the 'cutbacks are beginning to show'. However, this did not appear to be based upon any sort of fact. Rather it would appear that whenever anything doesn't happen as it should or as expected, the perception appears to be that this was due to cutbacks.

### **Factors which influence resident perceptions of local services**

A variety of factors were identified by residents as having an influence on resident perceptions of local services, wider than what they see around them, as alluded to in the previous section of the report. These themes, discussed below, were common across all focus groups.

#### **PROVISION OF INFORMATION**

The main factor that was raised across all groups was the provision of information, or the lack of it, from the Council. A lack of information was perceived to affect peoples' views of the Council, in particular reinforcing where money has been spent and what has been achieved.

*I think you have to be clear to people that these are the things that we've done so they know where the money's been spent, because once things are sorted out maybe people don't notice if it's working they don't think about it.*

The main thing that all participants said they would like to find out about was regarding how Council money is spent. This was perceived as being even more important for the public nowadays and once the cuts come into place.

#### **FOCUS ON CITY VS LOCAL AREAS**

A key factor that appeared to have an influence on perceptions of local services was the perception that the Council was not managing its money effectively from the perspective of the local resident. Examples were cited of the trams and Hogmanay where group members saw



the Council spending significant amounts of money, potentially for the greater good, but it did raise real concern when they saw money being spent in that way whilst their perception was that local services were being reduced. This was perceived to be a significant influence on how respondents felt about the Council generally and indeed in their local neighbourhood.

Around the table it was perceived that perceptions of public services are greatly affected by the tram system and the perceived costs incurred:

There does appear to be a perception that the Council can focus on the City Centre and tourism at the expense of local areas.

### EDINBURGH EVENING NEWS

At every group, the Edinburgh Evening News was cited as a key influence on the Council and residents perceptions of local Council services. It was noted by all that this was a strong negative influence on perceptions. At every group, a number of group members cited that their view was heavily governed by what they read about the Council, in particular in the Edinburgh Evening News. This was perceived to be the main, if not only, source of information relating to local services:

*I think people are affected by what they hear on the news and what they read in the paper. The Evening news is always writing about the Council.*

It was also mentioned that the Evening News has a section which they treat like a 'name and shame' which all participants had seen. It was felt that articles like this have a very strong influence on how people feel about the Council:

*They have a section in the evening news that is a bit like a name and shame and they have pictures of graffiti and then say ... 10 weeks on still not removed. Or they put up pictures of potholes and updates on how long it takes to fix them. You can write into the evening news and they will investigate it straight away.*

There was recognition that this is extremely negative and 'sensationalist'.

*I get most of my information on the Council from the Evening News. It is quite slating about the Council mind you.*

*It doesn't help matters because the News gets more and more sensationalist.*

### TAKING ACCOUNT OF RESIDENT VIEWS

Another factor in influencing residents perceptions is the view that the Council does not consult enough with residents and does not take account of their views. In relation to involving locals and providing the opportunities for consultation, there was limited awareness at some groups of a range of ways in which people could put their views forward, however, these were not perceived to be accessible for all, for example, Neighbourhood Partnership meetings.

There was a general feeling that Edinburgh residents are not given an opportunity to have their say on the delivery of services in their neighbourhood and that the Council could do more to seek their views and involved residents in decision making.

However, it was also noted that the main barrier to getting people to become involved is a sense of apathy amongst residents who feel that their participation would not be worthwhile or make any difference.

*We are apathetic. Everyone is of the opinion, "somebody else will do something about it". I think everyone is thinking what is the point.*

A key barrier to becoming more involved and communicating with the Council is the fact that, even if residents do participate and give their views, there is cynicism as to whether or not they will be taken account of.

*I think it comes down to the idea of communication, there really isn't any and then do you really get heard at the end of it all anyway?*

The majority of the groups said they did not have the opportunity to have a say on services or decisions affecting their area. Most participants were of the opinion that this would be something they would be interested in attending if they knew where and when consultations were taking place.

## Expectations of Service

There was a feeling amongst some groups that expectations were getting higher, with a sense that once things have improved you 'can't go back'. This is perceived to be causing significant issue when it comes to the future of public services and the potential spending or service cuts that may be coming about.

*I think if they improve things then they set a rod for their own back, don't they? I mean if you improve service, if you give somebody a better condition then they expect better conditions and we have improved.*

There was a feeling amongst participants that expectations were potentially higher in relation to local services now, however, these had been raised by the Council themselves with the introduction of a variety of services which had been introduced and then removed. They were described by one participant as "false dawns". An example was the street cleaning which happened and then stopped. This leads people to assert that it is due to a lack of funding or finance that services are removed.

## What does 'neither nor' mean?

Discussion around what 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' means with respect to local services, focused on the fact that there was a feeling that people just accept public services and tend not to think about them until there is an issue or problem. A good example was given to illustrate this relating to bin collection:

*If my bins go out on a Wednesday and they get picked up every Wednesday and somebody says how is the bin collection you are like that I suppose it is alright but it is not a cause for concern, it is not brilliant but actually if you think about it, it is good... actually they are there every Wednesday. People are just not actually thinking about the question but it is only a problem when it is a problem.*

For others, they felt that respondents may say 'neither nor' due to a real lack of interest or apathy. There was a sense that this is something that was increasing and something that wider society is experiencing, as evidenced in the low turnout at the polls in the last election.

Others believed that it was due to people feeling that their opinions don't matter and asserting that they are feeling disengaged and not listened to.

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the focus groups was to gain an understanding of why residents are now less willing to commit to a feeling of satisfaction than they were in 2009.

Whilst participants could indicate both positive and negative examples of local services, a clear finding of the research is that there are a range of other factors which impact on their views of local services, beyond the specific service that they receive. Our conclusion is that the key aspects which influence satisfaction with local service delivery are:

- with information and communication received relating to public services,
- understanding and awareness of public sector spending cuts,
- *perception* of what is happening with respect to public services.

A key issue is with regard to information and communication or consultation with regard to Council services. There was not a significant awareness about public services beyond what residents saw round about them or read in the Edinburgh Evening News. Usage of direct sources of information relating to the Council and local services, for example, from Community Councils or through Outlook was very limited with only a handful of participants mentioning these as a source of information. The result is a very negative view of Council services, generated by the Evening News or an apathy and lack of awareness of services, beyond specific service users.

In terms of understanding and awareness of public sector spending cuts, there was significant awareness across all groups that budgets were being cut. This was leading to a strong feeling of uncertainty for the future and a worry about the impact on services. A key finding in this respect was that residents have no specific awareness of how the cuts will manifest. There is very limited awareness of some very large figures relating to these cuts, but no link has been made in terms of how that will translate to service delivery on the ground and how this will impact Edinburgh residents. This is leading to '*trepidation*' for the future and is impacting on residents feelings towards the Council and its services. It is also leading to residents questioning spending or what is being done by the Council city wide and for tourists, increasing dissatisfaction with the Council in this respect.

Finally, the lack of information and the uncertainty is leading to residents drawing conclusions or making assumptions about what is happening with regard to public services and assuming that any sort of failure, delay or change in service is attributable to the spending cuts, even when in many instances it is not. For example, residents see one library closing and make the assumption that all will close, they see one community centre closing and make the assumption that all will close; bins are collected a day late due to a bin lorry breaking down and the perception is that this is a reduction in service due to spending cuts. Changes in policy, such as the change to fortnightly bin collection or giving areas of parks 'back to nature' are also perceived to be cost cutting measures. Without specific information on these services and changes, residents are drawing their own conclusions and are unable to commit to satisfaction as they do not know why things are changing what is going to happen in the future with regard to these services.