

**Best Value Survey Results – 2006**

The 2006 Best Value survey was conducted between September and December 2006. The survey was carried out using a postal questionnaire with two reminders sent out between September and October, as prescribed by Government guidance. The questionnaire template we used was supplied by the Audit Commission.

Milton Keynes Council sent out 2700 surveys with the sample base used selected on a random basis, as per Audit Commission guidelines. We had 1233 returns, giving us a 45.6% response rate.

**Headline results**

**Overall satisfaction with the Council as a whole (BV03)**

- Overall satisfaction with the Council is at 54%. This is higher than the 2003 survey but has decreased from the 2005 (face-to-face) survey figure. Please note that it is difficult to deduce a meaningful comparison with the 2005 survey figures as a result of changes to the methodology used that year.
- If we compare the level of satisfaction in 2006 with 2003, where the same survey methodology was used, we see that the level of overall satisfaction with the Council has gone up. When a face-to-face survey is employed satisfaction is seen to be even higher.

|                          | <b>2003 postal survey</b> | <b>2006 postal survey</b> | <b>2005 face-to-face survey</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Very/fairly satisfied    | 51%                       | 54%                       | 70%                             |
| Neither                  | 31%                       | 35%                       | 20%                             |
| Very/fairly dissatisfied | 19%                       | 11%                       | 10%                             |

- As shown in the table above, the level of dissatisfaction with the Council has almost halved in the last three years.

**Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)**

BVPIs are a set of indicators set by central Government to measure how well we perform. The Best Value indicators influence our CPA score. The survey provides satisfaction data for a number of BVPIs. These formal BVPI scores are only available for the two statutory surveys: 2003 and 2006.

|   | <u>2003</u> | <u>2006</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| • BV3 – satisfaction with the way the authority runs things                       | (51%)       | (54%)       |
| • BV4 – satisfaction with the way in which complaint(s) was/were handled          | (33%)       | (33%)       |
| • BV89 – satisfaction with cleanliness  | (54%)       | (74%)       |
| • BV90a – satisfaction with waste collection                                      | (78%)       | (83%)       |
| • BV90b - satisfaction with waste recycling facilities                            | (72%)       | (66%)       |
| • BV90c - satisfaction with waste disposal (local tips)                           | (76%)       | (83%)       |
| • BV103 – satisfaction with the provision of public transport information overall | (34%)       | (33%)       |
| • BV104 – satisfaction with the local bus service overall                         | (38%)       | (42%)       |
| • BV119a – satisfaction with sports/leisure facilities and events                 | (66%)       | (63%)       |
| • BV119b – satisfaction with libraries  | (74%)       | (76%)       |
| • BV119c – satisfaction with museums and galleries                                | (47%)       | (45%)       |
| • BV119d – satisfaction with theatres/concert halls                               | (72%)       | (72%)       |

- BV119e – satisfaction with parks and open spaces (84%) (86%)

**Satisfaction with Broad Service Areas** (question 18)

- Overall satisfaction levels were tested for a number of broad service areas. The service areas are described more as organisational structures than how the public experience them and this may explain why such high proportions answered “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” (note: only 5 options were available, and the figures in brackets represent the 2003 survey):

| Service                            | Very/Fairly satisfied | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Very/fairly dissatisfied |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Fire and Rescue service            | 41% (47%)             | 53% (53%)                          | 1% (0.4%)                |
| Local Authority Education services | 36% (46%)             | 51% (46%)                          | 7.5% (7%)                |
| Housing services                   | 23% (24%)             | 63% (62%)                          | 10% (15%)                |
| Planning services                  | 22% (27%)             | 61% (67%)                          | 12% (6%)                 |
| Personal social services           | 19% (26%)             | 69% (68%)                          | 7% (6%)                  |

**Satisfaction with Individual Service Areas** (question 15)

- When asked about their level of satisfaction with other individual service areas, residents indicated as follows:

|  |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|
|  | <u>2003</u> | <u>2006</u> |
| ○ Parks and open spaces                | (84%)       | (86%)       |
| ○ Libraries                            | (74%)       | (76%)       |
| ○ Theatres/concert halls               | (72%)       | (72%)       |
| ○ Sports/leisure facilities and events | (66%)       | (63%)       |
| ○ Museums and galleries                | (47%)       | (45%)       |

**Household Waste Collection** (question 7)

- When asked about aspects of the household waste collection service, residents showed the highest satisfaction with:

|   |             |             |
|---|-------------|-------------|
|   | <u>2003</u> | <u>2006</u> |
| ○ how clean and tidy the street is following waste collection | (62%)       | (74%)       |
| ○ the collection of bulky waste                               | (58%)       | (57%)       |
| ○ The container provided for your general household waste*    | (76%)       | (50.5%)     |

\* Please note that this question has changed from the 2003 survey, where it read ‘the bin/sack provided for your household waste’. Please also note that question 7 no longer contains elements which were used in 2003, e.g. the reliability of the waste collection, and the place where you have to leave your waste for collection.

- Highest levels of dissatisfaction with the waste collection service were:

|   |             |             |
|---|-------------|-------------|
|   | <u>2003</u> | <u>2006</u> |
| ○ The container provided for your general household waste     | (18%)       | (21%)       |
| ○ how clean and tidy the street is following waste collection | (28%)       | (16%)       |
| ○ the collection of bulky waste                               | (23%)       | (11%)       |

**Doorstep recycling (question 8)**

- Residents' levels of satisfaction with the doorstep recycling collection show:
 

|  |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|
|  | <u>2003</u> | <u>2006</u> |
| ○ the service provision overall  | (77%)       | (76.5%)     |
| ○ how clean and tidy the street is following the collection of items for recycling | (67%)       | (74.5%)     |
| ○ The container provided for items of recycling                                    | (71%)       | (63%)       |

**Local recycling facilities (question 9)**

- When asked about their levels of satisfaction with the local recycling facilities, residents indicated:
 

|  |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|
|  | <u>2003</u> | <u>2006</u> |
| ○ The provision of the service overall     | (72%)       | (66%)       |
| ○ The items you can deposit for recycling  | (79%)       | (58%)       |
| ○ The location of the recycling facilities | (70%)       | (54%)       |
| ○ How clean and tidy the site is           | (64%)       | (47%)       |

**Local bus service (question 13)**

- Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with aspects of the local bus service they received (the figures in brackets represent the 2003 survey):

|                                       | <b>Very/fairly satisfied</b> | <b>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</b> | <b>Very/fairly dissatisfied</b> | <b>Don't know/other (not an option in 2003)</b> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| The frequency of buses                | 30% (44%)                    | 9% (21%)                                  | 21% (36%)                       | 40%   |
| The number of bus stops               | 41% (64%)                    | 10% (22%)                                 | 12% (14%)                       | 37%   |
| The state of the bus stops            | 36% (43%)                    | 12.5% (21%)                               | 16% (36%)                       | 35%   |
| Whether buses arrive on time          | 22% (33%)                    | 14% (25%)                                 | 18% (43%)                       | 46%   |
| How easy buses are to get on & off    | 40% (60%)                    | 10% (22%)                                 | 7% (18%)                        | 42%   |
| Satisfaction with bus service overall | 42% (38%)                    | 28% (22%)                                 | 30.5% (40%)                     |   |

**How the Council runs things (questions 17and 33)**

- 52% of Milton Keynes residents feel that the way the council runs things has stayed the same over the last three years. Meanwhile 14% feel that the way the authority runs things has gotten worse. 9% of residents feel things have got better.
- Services with high levels of perceived improvement over the last three years were:

|  |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|
|  | <u>2003</u> | <u>2006</u> |
| - Local recycling facilities                   | (30%)       | (29%)       |
| - Local tips/household waste recycling centres | (18%)       | (28%)       |
| - Doorstep collection of recycling             | (35%)       | (20%)       |
| - Collection of household waste                | (31%)       | (19%)       |
| - Keeping public land clear of litter/refuse   | (17%)       | (18%)       |

- Services most likely to be seen as having got worse over the last three years were:

|  | <u>2003</u> | <u>2006</u> |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| - Local bus service                          | (35%)       | (17.5%)     |
| - Local transport information                | (32%)       | (17%)       |
| - Keeping public land clear of litter/refuse | (41%)       | (14%)       |

#### **Quality of Life in MK (questions 1-3, and 5, MKC1-2)**

- Residents believe the most important Quality of Life issues that make somewhere a good place to live are:

|                             | <u>2003</u> | <u>2006</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| ○ The level of crime        | (68%)       | (55%)       |
| ○ Health Services           | (49%)       | (46%)       |
| ○ Clean streets             | (52%)       | (45%)       |
| ○ Affordable decent housing | (45%)       | (38%)       |
| ○ Parks and open spaces     | (33%)       | (34%)       |
| ○ Education provision       | (37%)       | (33%)       |

- Residents believe that the following Quality of Life issues were most in need of improving in the MK area:

|                             | <u>2003</u> | <u>2006</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| ○ Activities for teenagers  | (31%)       | (36%)       |
| ○ Public transport          | (43%)       | (36%)       |
| ○ Road and pavement repairs | (36%)       | (34%)       |
| ○ The level of crime        | (40%)       | (32%)       |
| ○ Affordable decent housing | (34%)       | (27%)       |
| ○ Clean streets             | (43%)       | (26%)       |

- 77.5% of residents said that they were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared to 7% of residents who were either very dissatisfied or fairly dissatisfied.
- 56% of respondents also definitely agreed or tended to agree that this is an area where people from different backgrounds get on well together.
- 74% of respondents felt that it was very/fairly easy to access key local services, such as a doctor's surgery, post office etc
- 88% of respondents said that taking account of everything, they would consider themselves to be either very/fairly happy.

#### **Anti Social Behaviour (question 4)**

- When asked about Anti Social Behaviour, significant numbers of residents believe the following to be problems. Where comparisons are possible the view seems to be that the problems are less severe, especially in respect of litter, vandalism and graffiti.

|   | <u>2003</u> | <u>2006</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| ○ Parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children | -           | (48%)       |
| ○ Teenagers hanging around on the streets                               | (50%)       | (45%)       |
| ○ People not treating other people with respect and consideration       | -           | (37.5%)     |
| ○ Rubbish and litter lying around                                       | (55%)       | (37%)       |
| ○ Vandalism, graffiti and other damage                                  | (63%)       | (36%)       |

#### **Complaints (questions 23 and 25)**

Fewer people now contact the council with complaints.

- Percentage contacting the authority with a complaint 2003 2006  
(24%) (19%)
- Satisfaction with the way in which complaint(s) was/were handled (33%) (33%)

**Contacting the Council** (question 28)

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with various aspects of service they received when contacting the Council (*It is not possible to deduce a meaningful comparison between the 2003 and 2006 surveys, as the question has changed*):

|  | Very/fairly satisfied | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Very/fairly dissatisfied | Don't know/other |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| How easy it was to find the right person to deal with            | 36%                   | 8%                                 | 11.5%                    | 44%              |
| The length of time it took to deal with the person you contacted | 34.5%                 | 7%                                 | 13%                      | 45%              |
| Any information you were given                                   | 35%                   | 8%                                 | 10.5%                    | 47%              |
| How competent the staff were                                     | 37%                   | 8%                                 | 7.5%                     | 48%              |
| How helpful the staff were                                       | 37%                   | 7.5%                               | 8%                       | 48%              |
| The final outcome  | 33%                   | 6%                                 | 13%                      | 48%              |

**Local decision-making** (questions 29, 30, and 31)

Respondents were asked about the extent to which they felt they could influence local decision-making, and their satisfaction with opportunities to participate.

- 20% of respondents were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the opportunities to participate in local decision making. This compares to the same percentage of respondents who were either very dissatisfied or fairly dissatisfied
- 31% of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the opportunities to participate in local decision making
- 48% of respondents tended to disagree or definitely disagreed with the statement that "they can influence decisions affecting the local area".
- When asked about whether or not they would like to be involved in decisions made by the Council, 53% of respondents said it would depend on the issue, whilst 26% said yes.

**Impressions of the Council** (question 32)

- 62% of residents feel that the Council is making the area a better place to live
- 51.5% of residents feel that the Council is working to make the area safer
- 65% of residents feel that the Council is working to make the area cleaner and greener
- 40% of residents feel that the Council is efficient and well run; whilst 33% do not feel that it is efficient and well run.
- 40% of residents feel that the Council does not give good value for money. This compares to 35% of residents who feel that the Council does give good value for money.

- 37% of residents feel that the Council is trustworthy, whilst 28% felt the Council was not very/not trustworthy at all.
- 45% of residents feel that the Council is too remote and impersonal compared to 30% who do not feel that the Council is remote and impersonal.
- 40% residents feel that the Council promotes the interest of local people, compared to 34% who do not.
- 40% of residents feel that the Council acts on the concerns of local residents, compared to 34% who do not feel that this is the case.
- Residents are more likely to feel the Council treats all types of people fairly, when compared to the 2003 survey (44.5% compared to 34%)

**Communication** (question 21)

Respondents were asked about overall how well informed they are about the services the Council provides; 51% of respondents indicated that they were “not very well informed/not well informed at all” about the services and benefits the council provides.

- Residents were asked about how well informed they were about certain services:

|  | Very/fairly well informed | Not very well informed/not well informed at all | Don't know/Other |
|--|---------------------------|---|------------------|
| How to pay bills to the Council  | 82%                       | 9%  | 9%               |
| How and where to register to vote  | 84%                       | 10%   | 6%               |
| How you can get involved in local decision making                            | 38%                       | 46%   | 16%              |
| How to complain to the Council   | 43%                       | 45%   | 12%              |
| What the Council spends its money on   | 44%                       | 44%   | 12%              |
| What standard of service you should expect from the Council                  | 39%                       | 47%   | 14%              |
| Whether the Council is delivering on its promises                            | 25%                       | 57%   | 18%              |
| What the Council is doing to tackle anti-social behaviour in your local area | 17.5%                     | 63%   | 19%              |
| How well the Council is performing   | 28%                       | 53%   | 19%              |

**Disclosure Control**

*This document has been produced using the results of the BV General Survey 2006. As a result of changes to some of the questions, it is not always possible to deduce meaningful comparisons between the 2003 survey and this survey.*

*Please also note that all totals may not add up to 100% because of rounding. Please also note that the percentages used are inclusive of non-valid responses, such as "don't know", "not provided".*