

Report of:	Director of Legal and Governance Services
Relevant Executive Member:	Executive Member for Finance and Governance
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	20 December 2023
Title:	2023 Middlesbrough Resident survey – key findings and next steps
Report for:	Information
Status:	Public
Strategic priority:	All
Key decision:	No
Why:	Not applicable
Subject to call in?:	Not applicable
Why:	The report is for information only.

Proposed decision(s)

That Executive notes the information set out within this report and the planned next steps.

Executive summary

The report sets out the findings from the 2023 Resident Survey, highlights movement since the survey was last completed in 2017 and sets out the planned next steps.

Findings of the survey show a fall in satisfaction levels since the survey was last undertaken in 2017 when compared to that data return.

It also shows Middlesbrough performance is lower than available comparison data through LG Inform which enables performance to be compared to statistical neighbours (those councils with similar population profiles to Middlesbrough) and North East averages for almost all of the measures.

The findings in this report will be reflected within the priorities of the Council Plan considered at this same meeting.

Purpose

1. To summarise the findings from the 2023 Middlesbrough Community Survey, compare to the 2017 Survey and set out for the consideration of the Executive proposed actions in response.

Recommendations

2. That Executive notes the information set out within this report and the planned next steps.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3. Not applicable. This report is for information. The planned response to the findings from the survey will be delivered by the Council Plan, considered as part of this meeting's agenda.

Background and relevant information

4. The Council's strategies and plans must be evidence based, if they are to effectively address the challenges facing Middlesbrough and maximising the opportunities.
5. As well as using data, they should also be informed by, and responsive to, the views of local residents if they are to be fully inclusive and fully effective. This report advises Executive of the main findings from the 2023 Middlesbrough Community Survey, so that these can be taken into account within the Council Plan and the supporting policy and strategy framework.

Methodology

6. The LG's standard question bank for such surveys was used, with 18 broad question areas capturing views on the local area (within 15-20 minutes walking distance from home), community safety, and the Council and its services.
7. A total of 1,200 questionnaires were completed by telephone, supported by street interviews where required, providing a demographically representative sample of Middlesbrough's population. The sample was also balanced across town so that an indication of variation in responses by area could be provided, as set out below:

Area	Wards Included
North	Central, Linthorpe, Longlands and Beechwood, Newport, Park
South	Coulby Newham, Hemlington, Marton East, Marton West, Nunthorpe, Stainton and Thornton
East	Berwick Hills and Pallister, Brambles and Thorntree, North Ormesby, Park End and Beckfield
West	Acklam, Ayresome, Kader, Ladgate, Trimdon

8. Where responses have a strong leaning one way or the other, we can be more confident that these responses are more likely to be representative of the wider communities from which respondent live. The greater the number of people surveyed, the more confidence can be applied. In this case, where 1,200 of our 143,900 residents were surveyed, the following margins of error should be used when reading the results (confidence intervals) at the 95% confidence level for the survey are set out below.

Responses are split equally across two main groups – 50/50 split in responses	There is a stronger leaning towards one of two answers – 30/70 split in responses	There is a very strong preference for one answer – 10/90 split in responses
Anticipate that a survey of the whole population in the area could result in a variation in this result of +/- 2.8%	Anticipate that a survey of the whole population in the area could result in a variation in this result of +/- 2.6%	Anticipate that a survey of the whole population in the area could result in a variation in this result of +/- 1.7%

The 95% confidence intervals for the total sample and key sub-groups for the study at a variety of response levels are detailed below:

			Confidence interval		
			50/50	30/70	10/90
			±%	±%	±%
		Sample			
Gender	Male	553	4.2	3.8	2.5
	Female	647	3.9	3.5	2.3
Age	16-24	169	7.5	6.9	4.5
	25-34	206	6.8	6.3	4.1
	35-44	167	7.6	7.0	4.6
	45-54	163	7.7	7.0	4.6
	55-64	185	7.2	6.6	4.3
	65-74	159	7.8	7.1	4.7
	75 and over	146	8.1	7.4	4.9
Disability	Yes	262	6.1	5.5	3.6
	No	915	3.2	3.0	1.9
Ethnicity	White British	1012	3.1	2.8	1.8
	Ethnic minorities	166	7.6	7.0	4.6
Area	East	274	5.9	5.4	3.6
	North	486	4.4	4.1	2.7
	South	242	6.3	5.8	3.8
	West	198	7.0	6.4	4.2
Total		1200	2.8	2.6	1.7

The data was weighted to make it representative of the population both geographically and demographically. Two stages of weighting were applied: · Gender and age (at local authority area level). · Ward overall population figures. Full details of the weightings can be found in Appendix 1. There are a number of charts and summarised data tables throughout the body of this report. All of these are based on weighted data.

Findings

9. The overall responses to the survey to all questions in the survey is shown in chart format attached to this report at Appendix 2.

10. The charts in the appendices compare these with responses for the four areas of the town and findings compared to the LG average for the period 2018 – 2022, where available and North East average for the period 2021-22 (also where available) and the 2017 survey results.
11. Benchmarking must also take into account local circumstances. Work undertaken by Ipsos MORI on the former national Place Surveys identified a range of factors for which high prevalence negatively affects perceptions of local areas and of councils, including:
- Deprivation
 - Young people
 - Over-occupancy
 - Ethnic diversity
 - Population churn
 - Urbanity
12. Middlesbrough has a high prevalence of the majority of the above factors. For example Middlesbrough is currently ranked the 6th most deprived area nationally and the second most ethnically diverse in the North east.
13. The overall findings of the survey shows that satisfaction levels have dropped since the 2017 survey and are below the national bench mark but more closely aligned to the North East average with a smaller gap.
14. The following sections of this report present the findings from the survey, grouped by the following themes:
- Your Local area and Council services
 - Community cohesion
 - Community safety
 - Communication preferences.
15. Analysis in the next section of this report, sets out the 2023 Resident Survey overall performance, comparison information from the national LG Inform survey platform and the North East average for the LG Inform survey. The report also breaks down the 2023 Resident Survey results by North, East, South and West areas of the town, where there is a significant difference in opinion.

Your Local area and Council services

16. Satisfaction with the local area as a place to live (66%) falls beneath the LG Inform (81%) and the North East (74%) averages. It has also dropped when comparing to the Middlesbrough 2017 Resident survey. Variation is seen between the areas of the town with most satisfaction in the South (75%) closely followed by the West (74%), with satisfaction much lower in the East (56%) and North (62%). Satisfaction levels were higher among respondents classified as belonging to an ethnic minority (72%), higher than Middlesbrough overall.
17. Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things was significantly lower in Middlesbrough (45%) than the National (64%) and NE average (61%) and satisfaction has dropped since 2017. Though the North have higher satisfaction levels (48%) than the Middlesbrough overall, in 2017 this was the lowest area of

satisfaction. Again, satisfaction levels were higher among respondents classified as belonging to an ethnic minority (55%) than Middlesbrough overall.

18. Fewer people in Middlesbrough thought the Council provided value for money (37%) when compared to the LG Inform average (48%), the North East average (50%) and the return from the 2017 survey. Variation between areas was not significant. People with a disability were most positive about the Council (41%). Agreement levels differed notably between age groups, ranging between 29% (aged 35-44) to 44% (aged 25 – 34) agreeing compared to between 23% (aged 16-24) to 29% (aged 25-34) in disagreement.
19. Again, less than the LG Inform (58%) and North East (55%) averages considered that the Council acts on the concerns of local residents (43%). There was little variation between the areas. Individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds expressed a stronger support for the statement that Middlesbrough Council addresses the concerns of residents with 51% agreeing or strongly agreeing that it did.
20. Respondents were asked about the satisfaction levels with various services. The highest satisfaction levels were Waste Collection (79%) (on par with the LG average). The second highest level of satisfaction being Parks & Green spaces (62%). This was unchanged from 2017 survey. That being said, the percentage of people who were satisfied with these services has dropped by 8% and 17% respectively.
21. The lowest levels of satisfaction were observed in services and support for older people (31%) which is below the LG Inform (43%) and North East averages (42%). The highest levels of satisfaction were seen in the North area (36%) and the lowest in the South (25%).
22. Less than the LG Inform average (60%) and North East average (63%) considered the Council keeps residents informed about services and benefits it provides (49%), with the North (53%) observing the highest level of being considered informed. There was little difference between age bands but the 25-34 the highest level of being considered informed.
23. Trust in the Council (57%) was only slightly lower than the LG Inform average (61%) and North East averages (60%) compared to that of other local councils. The highest amount of trust being observed in the East (61%). Variations were observed across the age groups, it was highest amongst those aged 35-44 (65%) dropping to 52% in those aged 55-64. Individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds showed significantly higher levels of trust in Middlesbrough Council (65%).
24. Trust in the Council to make decisions about services are provided in the local area (53%) was far greater compared the trust of central government (9%). The LG Inform (72%) and North East average (73%) displayed a greater about of trust per local council than Middlesbrough. Trust in Middlesbrough Council in comparison to central government displayed a similar pattern across the four areas. Older residents displaying a stronger inclination to trust Middlesbrough Council over central government, from 47% among 16 to 24 year olds to approximately 60% for those aged 65 and over.

25. Trust in individuals to make decision about how services are provided in the local area (62%) was greater for Local councillors than that of members of parliament (5%) or Government ministers (4%). 19% didn't trust any of the individuals to make the decisions.
26. Marginally more people locally indicated it was important to treat local politicians with respect and courtesy when disagreeing or debating with them (87%) than the LG Inform average (84%). The highest agreement was observed in the South (93%).
27. More residents were unaware of what the local councillor does in the local area, which was consistent across all age groups. The LG Inform average showed a higher average (46%) than that observed locally (39%). The highest level of awareness was observed in the South (47%).
28. More Residents agreed locally that the media view the Government (57%), Local councils across the country (39%) and Middlesbrough council (40%) in a negative way. The same trend was observed with the LG Inform average regarding the Government (59%) and each Local Council, except for councils across the country where most agreed that they were viewed as either positive or negatively. Across the four areas all again more residents indicated the same three organisations were negatively viewed.

Community Cohesion

29. The 2021 census return showed we have a more diverse population than 10 years ago - those from an ethnic background have increased from 11.7% to 17.6%.
30. More residents agree (67%) that people from different backgrounds get on well together than in 2017 (64%). Those in the East of the town are least likely to agree (55%), compared to the West that is most likely to agree (72%). Those aged 35-44 years old are least likely to agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together (62%).
31. 50% overall felt people pull together to improve an area (previously 49%), rising to 59% in the South and reducing to 39% in the East.

Community Safety

32. 83% of respondents reported feeling safe during the day which is lower than the LG Inform (93%) and North East (92%) average, and is also lower than the 2017 survey. The same was true of the feeling safe after dark but less respondents reported feeling safe after dark (46%) compared the LG Inform (76%) and North East average (66%).
33. Gender differences were observed with 12% of females feeling unsafe during the day compares to 8% of males. After dark the gap widened from 45% of females and 30% of males feeling unsafe. Respondents in the East felt most unsafe after dark at 54% compared to 30% in the South.

34. Residents were given a list of anti-social behaviour and crime topics and asked to say whether their area had a problem with them. The top three problems identified by respondents were 'rubbish or litter lying around' (44%), and 'people using or dealing drugs' (40%) and 'groups hanging around the streets' (39%). Concern in relation to all these areas had increased since 2017.

Communication preferences

35. Respondents were asked to identify their current method of finding out about the Council and its services. The top five responses were as follows which shows a change to the methods observed in 2017:

Middlesbrough 2023 Responses	LG Inform average	2017 Survey
1 Council website	1 Word of mouth	1 Printed Information provided by the Council
2 Printed Information provided by the Council	2 Council website	2 Council website
3 Word of Mouth	3 Printed information provided by the council	3 Council magazine / newsletter
4 Social media sites and blogs	4 Local media	4 Word of mouth
5 Local media	5 Social media sites and blogs	5 Local media

36. Notably there has been a shift in reliance from printed to digital methods since 2017. Nearly half (48%) of the respondents reported that they currently access information about the Council and its services through the Council website, with higher engagement observed among individuals aged 25 to 44 and 55 to 64.

37. However the LG Inform average showed word of mouth as being the most relied upon source of information regarding the Local council (however this is only based upon a 6 month average period).

38. 6% stated they not to have the need to find out any information about services provided by Middlesbrough Council, the LG Inform average was 2.5%

Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

39. Not applicable - this report is for information only.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Financial (including procurement and Social Value)

40. The cost of the 2023 Community Survey was £17,900

Legal

41. There are no legal implications arising from this information only report.

Risk

42. This report does not have a direct impact on risks within the Strategic Risk Register, however it does provide an evidence base to understand whether there are public concerns in relation to specific services.

Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion

43. Not applicable, this report is for information only.

Climate Change / Environmental

44. Not applicable, this report is for information only.

Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers

45. Not applicable, this report is for information only.

Data Protection / GDPR

46. Not applicable, this report is for information only.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline

Appendices

1	Data Weightings
2	Your Local area and Council services
3	Community Cohesion
4	Community Safety
5	Communication preferences

Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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