REPORT TO: **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 13 FEBRUARY 2012**

REPORT ON: **ANNUAL CONSUMER SURVEY 2011**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

REPORT NO: **36-2012**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report summarises the main findings from the 2011 Annual Consumer Survey and explains their use.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

(i) note the results contained in this report and agree that the issues raised should continue to be addressed as part of the Council's commitment to continuous improvement using the Public Sector Improvement Framework model

(ii) remit the Chief Executive to investigate the reasons for any results which show a decline compared to previous year

(iii) remit the Chief Executive to disseminate the customer contact results to departments for use in staff training on customer care

(iv) invite each Local Community Planning Partnership to consider the key results for their area

(v) authorise officers to publish the report on the Council's website and make available copies on request as part of the Council's commitment to Public Performance Reporting

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4. INTRODUCTION

4.1 The Council commissions an Annual Consumer Survey as part of evaluating progress towards achieving the objectives set out in the Council Plan. The main purpose of the survey is to track over time a core set of questions related to customer satisfaction issues and the public's overall perception of the Council as an organisation. In addition, the survey asks about crime; the way in which respondents access, or would like to access Council services; and about satisfaction with local facilities, environment and quality of life.

4.2 The survey is conducted by an independent market research company, currently Research Resource. As in the past 4 years, the city-wide survey was based on a sample of 800 citizens, increased from the 400 surveyed in previous years, which allows some analysis at ward level for use by Local Community Planning Partnerships. Respondents were interviewed in their homes during October and November 2011.

4.3 Key results from the survey are summarised below. A full copy of the research report will be sent to each Group Secretary and made available in the members' lounge. To achieve efficiency savings through economies of scale, this year's survey was again carried out in conjunction with a wider household survey on behalf of the Dundee Partnership, which covers issues such as neighbourhoods, housing, community involvement, health, employment, community safety and money matters, and focuses in particular on community regeneration areas, although city-wide results are also analysed for comparative purposes. Results of this will be reported through the Dundee Partnership, and are included in the full copy of the research report referred to above. A summary of key results for each ward will be sent to each Local Community Planning Partnership.

5. KEY RESULTS

5.1 Customer Care

5.1.1 A key objective of the survey is to gauge the levels of customer satisfaction perceived by people who contact a Council service, either by phone or by visit to an office. Tables 1 and 2 below show the results on a range of satisfaction indicators in 2011 compared to previous years. The % figures shown represent those who said they were very or fairly satisfied.

Table 1

Satisfaction with Telephone Contacts	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Overall Friendliness/Courtesy of Staff	96%	78%	84%	92%	93%	87%	93%	86%	95%	96%
How Quickly Phone Was Answered	100%	84%	85%	91%	91%	94%	94%	98%	99%	97%
How Well Staff Understood What Was Wanted	84%	80%	79%	90%	93%	92%	91%	83%	89%	92%
Overall Helpfulness of Staff	96%	78%	84%	92%	93%	87%	93%	86%	95%	96%
Ease of Getting Someone Who Could Help	97%	74%	76%	80%	89%	88%	93%	93%	97%	97%
Outcome of Contact	53%	64%	71%	77%	82%	72%	77%	71%	72%	79%
Average	88%	76%	80%	87%	90%	87%	90%	86%	91%	93%

Table 2

Satisfaction with Office Visits	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Ease Of Getting To Office	91%	94%	96%	98%	100%	94%	96%	98%	98%	100%
Suitability of Office	89%	82%	75%	92%	97%	91%	89%	93%	94%	100%
Overall Friendliness/Courtesy Of Staff	100%	79%	85%	92%	81%	89%	82%	93%	91%	100%
Overall Helpfulness Of Staff	100%	79%	85%	92%	81%	89%	82%	93%	91%	100%
How Well Staff Understood What Was Wanted	100%	83%	82%	92%	87%	94%	86%	91%	89%	100%
Outcome of Contact	80%	66%	62%	88%	80%	76%	56%	77%	75%	80%
Average	93%	81%	81%	92%	88%	89%	82%	91%	90%	97%

5.1.2 The profile of satisfaction remains positive across all the indicators, with the score for satisfaction on most indicators up compared to 2010. The survey results show that, among those who had contacted the Council in the past year, almost 89% had done so by a telephone call and 7.5% by an office visit, with less than 4% doing so by letter.

5.1.3 Of those who had recently contacted the Council, 53% of respondents said their last contact was to request a service and 92% of these were satisfied. 37% said the contact was to seek information and 94% of these were satisfied. The proportion saying it was to make a complaint was 10%, considerably lower than the figures of 41% in 2008, 29% in 2009 and 19% in 2010. Of those who did contact the Council to make a complaint, 42% said they were satisfied that the Council responded reasonably to the complaint. This is a decrease compared to the figure of 59% satisfied in 2010. Respondents were also asked if they got what they needed in one contact, and 85% said they did so in 2011, compared to 66% in 2010 and 65% in 2009.

5.1.4 The survey asks respondents whether they receive enough information about the Council and the services it provides. Results for 2011 and the previous years in which this question has been asked are:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
60%	64%	69%	70%	64%	71%	66%	69%	97%

5.1.5 The survey also asks about use of, and satisfaction with, the Council's website. Results for 2011 and the previous years in which this question has been asked are:

Used website?				
2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
32%	22%	31%	27%	22%

Satisfaction with website				
2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
83%	84%	85%	92%	91%

The satisfaction rating for the website is based on three questions covering the amount of information provided on the site, how easily users managed to find the information they wanted and the outcome of their contact, and all of these factors continue to score highly. It seems surprising that of the sample saying they have used the website has declined compared to the past 2 years, but this result will be discussed with the relevant officers to consider whether any action is required.

5.2 <u>Crime</u>

5.2.1 The survey asked if the respondent or a member of their household had experienced an incident in the past year which they felt to be a crime. Results were:

Experienced crime?		
2009	**2010**	**2011**
9%	11%	5%

5.2.2 The survey also asked respondents to say if they felt the crime rate in their local area had changed in the last 2 years. Results were:

More crime	6%
About the same	70%
Less crime	9%
Don't know	15%

This is the first time this question has been asked, so this will be repeated in future surveys to establish any trends.

5.3 **Public Image Profile**

5.3.1 The questionnaire includes a list of eleven factors which seek to assess respondents' overall impression of the Council. The full list of factors is shown in Table 3 below, along with the percentage of interviewees who responded positively in 2011 and previous years. 2011's survey continued to use the new factor introduced seven years ago - ' Tackles Important Issues for the Future of the City' - which was seen as a better measure of the Council's image than 'Receives Fair Press Coverage' which it replaced. A new factor was introduced in 2008 - 'Ensures sustainable use of resources and care for the environment' - in order to meet a commitment in the Council Plan to survey public perception of the Council on sustainability issues, and this was again included in the 2011 survey.

Table 3

Public Image Profile	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Good Range of Services	82%	64%	63%	69%	81%	72%	77%	74%	77%	85%
Friendly Employees	85%	67%	68%	75%	76%	73%	77%	77%	80%	82%
Good Quality Services	76%	55%	60%	64%	72%	66%	74%	67%	74%	81%
Efficient Services	70%	54%	58%	63%	66%	62%	70%	65%	67%	81%
Communicates Well	28%	49%	47%	53%	61%	57%	67%	55%	61%	66%
Promotes Services Well	64%	44%	47%	55%	58%	54%	70%	58%	61%	71%
Receives Fair Press Coverage	42%	45%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Value For Money	67%	45%	49%	50%	56%	51%	65%	48%	58%	74%
Listens to Complaints	29%	53%	53%	55%	64%	61%	68%	64%	68%	63%
Has Sufficient Resources	23%	53%	55%	55%	68%	60%	69%	64%	71%	66%
Tackles Important Issues for the Future of the City	N/A	N/A	41%	44%	55%	55%	65%	53%	54%	68%
Ensures Sustainable Use of Resources and Care for the Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	66%	59%	63%	65%
Average	57%	53%	54%	58%	66%	62%	70%	62%	67%	73%

5.3.2 The average score for the public image of the Council across all indicators in 2011 was higher than in all previous years, reflecting increases in the scores for most of the individual factors.

5.3.3 The survey also asks respondents to state which of the 'public image' factors are of most importance to them, and there is a fairly good correlation between the top priorities identified by respondents and the factors on which the Council scored most highly. The top four priorities identified by respondents are all in the top five in terms of performance. However, it should be noted that:

- providing value for money services ranked second in terms of importance but fifth in terms of performance
- listening to complaints ranked seventh in terms of importance but eleventh in terms of performance

5.4 **Local Facilities and Quality of Life**

5.4.1 The survey asked about satisfaction with a range of local facilities, ease of accessing those facilities, satisfaction with aspects of the local environment and quality of life. Overall results are set out in Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7 below. The list of facilities asked about in Tables 4 and 5 was changed two years ago to make this consistent with the wider household survey being carried out on behalf of the Dundee Partnership, so the only comparison is with 2009 and 2010.

5.4.2 Note that the figures presented in Tables 4 and 5 exclude respondents who stated that the facility did not exist or they never used it - the figures show the % satisfied of those who expressed an opinion. This may account for the discrepancy between some figures in Tables 4 and 5 i.e. satisfaction with facilities is high when actually experienced, but ease of access to some facilities scores less highly.

5.4.3 Satisfaction with local facilities is shown in the table below.

Table 4

Satisfaction with local facilities	**% satisfied 2009**	**% satisfied 2010**	**% satisfied 2011**
Fire Service	100%	100%	100%
Local schools	99%	96%	99%
Local health services	97%	98%	99%
Refuse collection	96%	99%	99%
Community centres and libraries	96%	98%	98%
Police service	94%	93%	98%
Social care/social work	93%	88%	98%
Street cleaning	92%	94%	97%
Parks and open spaces	91%	88%	97%
Public transport	90%	79%	96%
Local shops	89%	93%	96%
Sport and leisure facilities	89%	91%	97%
Community warden service	81%	74%	99%
Local youth facilities	71%	65%	85%
Local phone boxes	64%	76%	95%

Satisfaction levels are very high. The lowest rating is for local youth facilities but even this has seen a significant increase compared to 2009 and 2010.

5.4.4 Satisfaction with the ease of access to the same facilities is shown in the following table:

Table 5

Ease of accessing local facilities	% satisfied 2009	% satisfied 2010	% satisfied 2011
Fire service	99%	100%	94%
Local schools	99%	97%	86%
Local health services	95%	98%	98%
Refuse collection	98%	99%	99%
Community centres and libraries	92%	96%	92%
Police service	94%	95%	95%
Social care/social work	93%	91%	58%
Street cleaning	98%	97%	98%
Parks and open spaces	90%	91%	94%
Public transport	89%	90%	93%
Local shops	90%	92%	97%
Sport and leisure facilities	87%	94%	82%
Community warden service	79%	77%	42%
Local youth facilities	75%	72%	55%
Local phone boxes	63%	80%	62%

As shown by Table 4 earlier, satisfaction remains high among those who have experienced local facilities. However, Table 5 shows that a number of scores for ease of access to these facilities have shown a decrease compared to 2010, notably in terms of local schools, social care/social work, community warden service, local youth facilities and local phone boxes. Contact will be made with the relevant departments to try to account for these results and consider any action required.

5.4.5 Satisfaction levels with a range of aspects of the local environment are shown in the table below:

Table 6

Local Environment	% Satisfied				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Shopping Facilities	85%	80%	87%	94%	97%
Cleanliness of area around home	83%	79%	91%	93%	97%
Cleanliness of streets	71%	78%	91%	94%	97%
Quality and maintenance of open spaces	70%	80%	88%	91%	97%
Condition of roads, pavements and streetlighting	49%	61%	80%	88%	89%
Children's play areas	57%	52%	68%	55%	88%

The results in Table 6 are very positive, showing further welcome increases in the level of satisfaction with aspects of the local environment. The increase in satisfaction with children's play areas is welcome, but should be interpreted with caution. There is always a high level of 'don't knows' in response to this question, so the figures are based on the fairly small sample who expressed an opinion each year.

5.4.6 The % of respondents satisfied with the overall quality of life in their neighbourhood is shown in the following table:

Table 7

Quality of Life in the Neighbourhood	**% Satisfied**				
	2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
Very satisfied	43%	31%	50%	40%	52%
Fairly satisfied	46%	55%	45%	54%	47%
Fairly dissatisfied	8%	9%	5%	4%	2%
Very dissatisfied	3%	5%	0%	2%	0%

Table 7 shows an increasing % of respondents very or fairly satisfied with the overall quality of life in their neighbourhood compared to previous years.

6. BENCHMARKING

6.1 The Improvement Service for Local Government in Scotland is supporting the development of a benchmarking group for Councils and other organisations using the Public Sector Improvement Framework, which may provide opportunities to benchmark our customer satisfaction results with other authorities. Comparisons with other Councils will be included in future reports if these become available.

6.2 The latest results from the Scottish Household Survey were produced in August 2011, covering the results of surveys carried out in 2009 and 2010. This is an entirely separate survey, commissioned by the Scottish Government, and none of the questions used are directly comparable to the Council's own survey. However, there are a number of questions which cover similar areas to those covered in our own survey and outlined above, and provide an opportunity to benchmark the Scottish Household Survey results for Dundee with the average for Scotland as a whole. Tables 8, 9,10 and 11 below show results from the sections on 'local authority services' and 'neighbourhoods'. The figures for Dundee remain broadly comparable with those for previous years and for Scotland as a whole.

Table 8 - Scottish Household Survey

Agreement with statement 'My Council provides high quality services'	**Dundee**			**Scotland as a whole**		
	2007	**2009**	**2011**	**2007**	**2009**	**2011**
Strongly agree	7%	6%	7%	5%	5%	6%
Tend to agree	39%	37%	37%	38%	35%	37%
Neither agree or disagree	16%	25%	21%	19%	23%	20%
Tend to disagree	20%	16%	15%	20%	19%	18%
Strongly disagree	12%	9%	11%	13%	11%	11%
No opinion	8%	6%	9%	5%	7%	9%

Table 9 - Scottish Household Survey

Agreement with statement 'My Council does the best can with the money available'	Dundee			Scotland as a whole		
	2007	2009	2011	2007	2009	2011
Strongly agree	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%
Tend to agree	29%	33%	33%	34%	32%	32%
Neither agree or disagree	15%	21%	21%	17%	20%	17%
Tender to disagree	23%	18%	22%	21%	20%	18%
Strongly disagree	16%	12%	10%	15%	13%	14%
No opinion	11%	11%	11%	9%	11%	13%

Table 10 - Scottish Household Survey

Agreement with statement 'My Council is addressing the key issues affecting the quality of life in my neighbourhood'	Dundee			Scotland as a whole		
	2007	2009	2011	2007	2009	2011
Strongly agree	7%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%
Tend to agree	33%	32%	31%	34%	30%	30%
Neither agree or disagree	18%	25%	24%	20%	23%	21%
Tender to disagree	19%	23%	18%	19%	20%	17%
Strongly disagree	13%	6%	12%	13%	12%	13%
No opinion	11%	8%	11%	9%	11%	15%

Table 11 - Scottish Household Survey

Rating of neighbourhood as a place to live	Dundee			Scotland as a whole		
	2007	2009	2011	2007	2009	2011
Very good	47%	46%	43%	51%	52%	55%
Fairly good	44%	43%	48%	41%	40%	38%
Fairly poor	6%	7%	7%	5%	5%	4%
Very poor	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%
No opinion	1%	4%	0%	2%	2%	0%

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Annual Consumer Survey continues to provide valuable information on residents' perception of the Council and satisfaction with local facilities and neighbourhoods. As in previous years, the issues raised by the survey results will continue to be addressed as part of the Council's commitment to continuous improvement through consultation with service users. The survey provides important information on trends for self-assessment under the Public Sector Improvement Framework, which is a key part of the Council's performance management arrangements for Best Value. The results will be distributed amongst officers and used in training courses in relevant areas. Results which show a declining trend will be investigated.

7.2 The survey also provides valuable information on how the public access our services, which will inform the continuing development and implementation of the Council's Customer First strategy.

8 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

9 CONSULTATIONS

The Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Director of Finance and Head of Public Relations have been consulted on this report.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was relied upon in the preparation of this report:

Citizen Survey 2011 - Report prepared for Dundee City Council by Research Resource January 2012.

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Chief Executive 03/02/2012