REPORT TO: **POLICY AND RESOURCES - 14 FEBRUARY 2011**

REPORT ON: **ANNUAL CONSUMER SURVEY 2010**

REPORT BY: **ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

REPORT NO: **43-2011**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report summarises the main findings from the 2010 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 Assistant Chief Executive to disseminate the customer contact results to departments for use in staff training on customer care

(iii) invite each Local Community Planning Partnership to consider the key neighbourhood results for their area once the detailed information has been analysed and disseminated

(iv) 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 fear of 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, Ashbrook Research. As in the past 3 years, the 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 Autumn 2010.

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. 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 results on the key neighbourhood questions for each ward will be sent to each Local Community Planning Partnership once further detailed analysis has been carried out.

5. KEY RESULTS

5.1 <u>Customer Care</u>

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 2010 compared to previous years:

Table 1

Satisfaction with Telephone Contacts	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Overall Friendliness/Courtesy of Staff	81%	96%	78%	84%	92%	93%	87%	93%	86%	95%
How Quickly Phone Was Answered	84%	100%	84%	85%	91%	91%	94%	94%	98%	99%
How Well Staff Understood What Was Wanted	71%	84%	80%	79%	90%	93%	92%	91%	83%	89%
Overall Helpfulness of Staff	81%	96%	78%	84%	92%	93%	87%	93%	86%	95%
Ease of Getting Someone Who Could Help	64%	97%	74%	76%	80%	89%	88%	93%	93%	97%
Outcome of Contact	59%	53%	64%	71%	77%	82%	72%	77%	71%	72%
Average	73%	88%	76%	80%	87%	90%	87%	90%	86%	91%

Table 2

Satisfaction with Office Visits	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ease Of Getting To Office	100%	91%	94%	96%	98%	100%	94%	96%	98%	98%
Suitability of Office	87%	89%	82%	75%	92%	97%	91%	89%	93%	94%
Overall Friendliness/Courtesy Of Staff	81%	100%	79%	85%	92%	81%	89%	82%	93%	91%
Overall Helpfulness Of Staff	81%	100%	79%	85%	92%	81%	89%	82%	93%	91%
How Well Staff Understood What Was Wanted	83%	100%	83%	82%	92%	87%	94%	86%	91%	89%
Outcome of Contact	58%	80%	66%	62%	88%	80%	76%	56%	77%	75%
Average	82%	93%	81%	81%	92%	88%	89%	82%	91%	90%

5.1.2 The profile of satisfaction remains positive across all the indicators. The average score for satisfaction with telephone contacts is up compared to 2009, reflecting increases in most of the individual ratings. The satisfaction scores for office visits are similar to 2009, maintaining the improvement on 2008's results. The survey results show that, among those who had contacted the Council in the past year, 73% had done so by a telephone call and 19% by an office visit, with other contacts being by letter (5%), or email/website (3%).

5.1.3 Of those who had recently contacted the Council, 47% of respondents said their last contact was to request a service and 82% of these were satisfied. 31% said the contact was to seek information and 85% of these were satisfied. The proportion saying it was to make a complaint was 19%, considerably lower than the 41% figure in 2008 and the 29% figure in 2009. Of those who did contact the Council to make a complaint, 59% said they were satisfied that the Council responded reasonably to the complaint. This is an increase compared to the 39% figure for 2009 and similar to the 60% result in 2008. Respondents were also asked if they got what they needed in one contact, and 66% said they did so in 2010, compared to 65% in 2009, with the remainder requiring more than one contact.

5.1.4 The survey asks respondents whether they receive enough information about the Council and the services it provides. Results for 2010 and the previous years in which this question has been asked are:

2002	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
59%	60%	64%	69%	70%	64%	71%	66%	69%

5.1.5 The survey also asks about use of, and satisfaction with, the Council's website. Results for 2010 and the previous years in which this question has been asked are:

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

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

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 showed improved results in 2010.

5.2 **Fear of Crime**

The fear of crime questions were changed in the 2009 survey to be consistent with those asked in the wider household survey being carried out on behalf of the Dundee Partnership, so this is the first year for which we have comparisons. 31% of respondents stated that they had felt fearful about becoming a victim of crime in the past year compared to 25% in 2009. 11% said that they or a member of their household had been a victim of crime in the past year compared to 9% in 2009. These questions will be repeated in future surveys to establish any long term 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 2010 and previous years. 2010's survey continued to use the new factor introduced six 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 sustainable issues, and this was again included in the 2010 survey.

Table 3

Public Image Profile	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Good Range of Services	68%	82%	64%	63%	69%	81%	72%	77%	74%	77%
Friendly Employees	64%	85%	67%	68%	75%	76%	73%	77%	77%	80%
Good Quality Services	63%	76%	55%	60%	64%	72%	66%	74%	67%	74%
Efficient Services	86%	70%	54%	58%	63%	66%	62%	70%	65%	67%
Communicates Well	31%	28%	49%	47%	53%	61%	57%	67%	55%	61%
Promotes Services Well	68%	64%	44%	47%	55%	58%	54%	70%	58%	61%
Receives Fair Press Coverage	37%	42%	45%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Value For Money	64%	67%	45%	49%	50%	56%	51%	65%	48%	58%
Listens to Complaints	23%	29%	53%	53%	55%	64%	61%	68%	64%	68%
Has Sufficient Resources	48%	23%	53%	55%	55%	68%	60%	69%	64%	71%
Tackles Important Issues for the Future of the City	N/A	N/A	N/A	41%	44%	55%	55%	65%	53%	54%
Ensures sustainable use of resources and care for the environment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	66%	59%	63%
Average	50%	57%	53%	54%	58%	66%	62%	70%	62%	67%

5.3.2 The average score for the public image of the Council across all indicators in 2010 was higher than in 2009, reflecting mostly small increases in the scores for all of the individual factors.

5.3.3 The survey also asked 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 six in terms of performance. However, it should be noted that:

- providing an efficient service ranked third in terms of priority but sixth in terms of performance
- providing value for money services ranked sixth in terms of priority but tenth in terms of performance
- tackling important issues for the future of the city ranked seventh in terms of priority 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 last year 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. 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.

Table 4

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

The most significant change from 2009 is a decrease in the % of respondents satisfied with public transport

Table 5

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

Table 6

Local Environment	% Satisfied			
	2007	2008	2009	2010
Shopping Facilities	85%	80%	87%	94%
Cleanliness of area around home	83%	79%	91%	93%
Cleanliness of streets	71%	78%	91%	94%
Quality and maintenance of open spaces	70%	80%	88%	91%
Condition of roads, pavements and streetlighting	49%	61%	80%	88%
Children's play areas	35%	33%	33%	18%

The results in Table 6 are largely positive, showing further welcome increases in the level of satisfaction with most aspects of the local environment. The low figure for children's play areas is partly because a significant percentage of those interviewed gave a 'don't know' response - of those who did have an opinion, 55% were satisfied (down from 68% in 2009).

Table 7

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

Table 7 shows that the % of respondents broadly satisfied or dissatisfied with the overall quality of life in their neighbourhood remains similar to 2009 results.

6. BENCHMARKING

Last year's report included results from the separate Scottish Household Survey on topics such as 'quality of Council services' and 'neighbourhoods'. These results are only available every two years, so will be reported again next year, with comparisons to the national average as part of the report on the Council's own 2011 survey.

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.

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 Chief Executive, 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 2010 - Report prepared for Dundee City Council by Ashbrook Research December 2010.

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