

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND MEASURING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Background Papers:-	Report to Cabinet – July 2007 – Best Value Performance Indicators – Satisfaction Survey Results Report to Cabinet – June 2008 – Corporate Improvement Plan 2008/2009
Financial Implications:-	None at this stage
Equalities Implications:-	None
Legal Implications:-	None
Options:	None
Risks:	Failing to respond to the need to improve satisfaction ratings will lead to poor inspection results and reduced confidence in the Council by local communities.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the results of research which has been carried out in relation to public satisfaction with local government, to find out why satisfaction levels are generally low across the country and to identify how Braintree District Council needs to respond.

The main findings of the research were as follows:

- Throughout the UK, it is a common trend for local government services to be far more highly regarded than local government as an institution. While local council services throughout the UK generally attract high satisfaction ratings, local government as an institution tends to be far less well regarded.
- Research shows that there is **no** correlation between council tax levels and overall satisfaction
- Research shows that there is a **direct** correlation between how well informed residents feel about services and how satisfied they feel about the council generally.
- The biggest driver of resident satisfaction with councils is perceived value for money and the extent to which residents feel informed about what the council does for them and what they get for their money. Residents who feel that they are well informed about the council are more likely to be satisfied with its services and believe it to offer good value for money.

- Residents' perceptions of quality of services and value for money can be enhanced by improved direct communication from the council, as well as by more positive media coverage
- High-visibility services - such as street cleaning - are particularly important in determining public satisfaction with the local area and the local council
- Confusion about which public sector organisations provide which services results in inappropriate expectations and affects peoples' perceptions about their local authority.
- A range of demographic and attitudinal factors that are beyond the local authority's control also affect public evaluations of its services.

The research is supported by the results of a survey which was carried out in December 2007 which shows that - out of the 12 District and Borough Councils in Essex - Braintree District Council ranked:

- **3rd** in relation to the % of people who are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way the authority runs things
- **4th** in relation to the % of people who feel a great deal or to some extent that the Council provides good value for money.
- **4th** in relation to the % of people who feel very well informed or fairly well informed about how well the Council is performing and
- **5th** in relation to the % of people who feel very well informed or fairly well informed about what the Council spends its money on.

The results of the research have informed a review of the Council's marketing, campaigns, communications and public relations functions and the development of a short term Action Plan for 2008/09 both of which are currently the subject of consultation with staff and key stakeholders.

Further, it is proposed that a comprehensive longer term Marketing and Campaigns / Communication Strategy and Action Plan be prepared and reported to Cabinet in September. This will link communication, customer views, performance information and other improvements in order to increase awareness about what we do, shape and target services, improve customer satisfaction, and identify efficiencies.

This will also link into the development of a new Customer Access Strategy which will result in people being able to more easily access the Council's services - and proposals to further develop and improve our Customer Service Centre which will result in improvements to the way we respond to enquiries and interact with people who phone us. Details will be reported to Cabinet in July.

DECISION:

1. That Members endorse the report.
2. That Members note the results for the Braintree District of the Local Area Agreement Tracker Survey which was carried out in December 2007.
3. That Members endorse the short term action plan attached at Appendix 3.
4. That a comprehensive Marketing and Campaigns / Communication Strategy and Action Plan be prepared and reported to Cabinet in September. This will link communication, customer views, performance information and other improvements to increase awareness about our services, shape and target services, improve customer satisfaction, and identify efficiencies.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 Purpose Of Report

This report investigates public attitudes towards local government and satisfaction with council services. It draws on studies of local government in England.

It provides an overview of resident satisfaction with local council service areas and explores how demographics and differences in attitude can influence public opinion of local government services.

It goes on to outline key factors which drive satisfaction with local government and explores what local authorities can do to improve their public image.

Finally, and in light of the research findings, it proposes a series of actions for Braintree District Council.

2.0 Views about Local Government

'[...] there is a deep distrust of local government. It is widely perceived as inefficient, wasteful and unresponsive to citizens' wishes' (1).

"for many members of the public, local government – and their own council – remains a rather remote, low profile, bureaucratic and inefficient beast" (2).

The quotations above point to the poor regard in which local government is often held. Research carried out as part of the Lyons Inquiry has similarly demonstrated that local authorities in England are perceived to be *"bureaucratic, inefficient and wasteful of public money" (3).*

Research consistently demonstrates that individual local authority services are perceived more positively than local councils and local government in general. For instance, a report on public satisfaction with local government points out that: *"Ratings of individual councils remain low relative to the services they provide, highlighting key issues around image and reputation of local authorities. We see overall satisfaction among the public with some core services at around the 70-80% level among service users, but the institution much less well regarded" (4).*

This view is supported by other research, in which local authorities were frequently accused of not providing value for money, but the quality of local services – e.g. schools, libraries, fire service, leisure facilities, refuse collection, parks, street lighting – was consistently praised (5).

There is therefore a clear challenge for local government in managing this disparity between satisfaction with specific council services and local government in general.

3.0 Satisfaction With Services

Ipsos MORI argues that unsurprisingly, of all individual service areas, high visibility services relating to the local environment - street cleaning and road maintenance, for example – are the most significant drivers of residents’ satisfaction with the local authority.

Given the importance of high visibility services in determining resident satisfaction ratings, many studies suggest that there is a strong correlation between how residents perceive their local environment and how they perceive their local authority.

To put this into perspective at a local level, Table 1 outlines those environmental factors which people think should change if quality of life in a local area is to improve, and compares the situation in the Braintree District with the national average (source: Best Value General Survey 2006).

TABLE 1: Things that should change to improve quality of life in the area

	Nationally	Braintree District
1	Activities / facilities for teenagers	Activities for teenagers
2	Levels of Crime	Level of traffic congestion
3	Level of traffic congestion	Road and pavement repairs
4	Road and pavement repairs	Levels of crime
5	Clean streets	Public transport
6	Affordable decent housing	Health services
7	Public transport	Affordable decent housing
8	Activities for young children	Clean streets
9	Health services	Job prospects
10	Local cost of living	Facilities for young children
11	Job prospects	Shopping facilities
12	Traffic noise / level of noise	Wage levels and local cost of living
13	Level of pollution	Sports and leisure facilities
14	Cultural facilities	Cultural facilities (eg cinemas, museums)
15	Parks and open spaces	Parks and open spaces
16	Sports and Leisure facilities	Community activities
17	Shopping facilities	Education provision
18	Community activities	Level of pollution
19	Education provision	Not provided
20	Wage levels	Access to nature
21	Street lighting	Other
22	Childcare provision	Don't know
23	Access to nature	None of these
24	Race relations	Race relations

It can be seen that of the top ten environmental factors listed above, the District Council is only directly responsible for delivering services in relation to two - affordable decent housing

and cleaning the streets - although it plays a contributory part through partnership working or lobbying in relation to all the others

This issue is drawn out in another survey where respondents were asked who they felt should be responsible for making improvements. The results are shown in Table 2 below.

‘The council’ (no differentiation was made between County and District Councils) was widely held to be responsible for those aspects which were most frequently reported as being in need of improvement, with 23% reporting that the council should be responsible for reducing crime levels, 65% reporting that it should be responsible for improving access to good public transport and 83% reporting that it should be responsible for improving facilities for young children.

‘The council’ is therefore **perceived** to have a key role in improving those services that are linked to evaluations of quality of life regardless of whether it is responsible for those services or not.

TABLE 2: Perceptions of aspects in need of improvement and who should be responsible for making those improvements

Area in need of improvement	Most common choice	Second most common choice
The level of crime	Police (44%)	Council (23%)
Access to GPs/health services	Health authority (46%)	Government (30%)
Amount of good quality affordable housing	Council (48%)	Government (35%)
Facilities for young children	Council (83%)	Government (11%)
Quality of jobs	Government (48%)	Council (26%)
Access to good public transport	Council (65%)	Government (24%)
The sense of community spirit	Local people (71%)	Council (26%)

4.0 Demographic Factors Affecting Satisfaction With Public Services

In analysing surveys which measure satisfaction with public services it has been found that:

- the young are more satisfied than the middle-aged and old
- men are more satisfied than women
- owner-occupiers are more satisfied than council tenants
- higher social groups are more satisfied than lower
- those living outside metropolitan England are more satisfied than those in the conurbations.

These results are hardly surprising and lead to a conclusion that using surveys to establish overall satisfaction with the local council presents a number of difficulties: most notably, the fact that evaluations of public services tend to be influenced by a range of demographic and attitudinal variables that are beyond the council’s control. For instance, high dissatisfaction

ratings for a local authority's roads may be less a reflection of poor road condition, and more the result of high car ownership within the area.

In a report prepared by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 1997 '*New Perspectives in Local Governance: Reviewing the research evidence*' it was concluded that '*Those with power, hope, opportunity, and a better quality of life appear more satisfied with their local councils – and doubtless much else besides. Such questions may tell us no more than who is happy, and who is not*' (6).

Breaking down results by respondent can however be useful in certain circumstances for example, when asking certain service specific or geographically focused questions or when aiming to target specific audiences.

5.0 Drivers Of Satisfaction – What Can The Council Do To Improve Its Image?

In research conducted for the Local Government Association (LGA), Ipsos MORI investigated which factors and attributes correlate most closely with overall satisfaction with councils.

It identified a number of important factors that determine, or 'drive', public satisfaction with the local authority and which the council can influence in order to improve its public reputation. These 'drivers' of satisfaction are listed below with the most important driver listed first. They are all discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs:

- Perceived quality of services
- Perceived value for money
- Satisfaction with the local area
- Media coverage
- Direct communication
- Visible services
- Positive experiences of contacts with staff

5.1 Perceived quality of services

The strongest driver of overall satisfaction, according to this model, is *perceived* quality of services, a factor that is unlikely to be enhanced simply by improving service delivery. Rather, in order to enhance the perceived quality of services, it is important to also address the other factors in this model.

5.2 Perceived Value for Money

Those who think the council provides good value for money are more likely to be satisfied with the way the council runs thing (4).

The perception of value for money is more important than actual levels of council tax in determining levels of satisfaction: residents are more interested in knowing what they get for their council tax and whether they think it is value for money (4).

Perceptions of value for money are therefore connected to how well an authority communicates to residents exactly what it is providing and how money is being spent (2).

5.3 The Local Area

The local area is highlighted as the next most important factor, with Ipsos MORI research demonstrating that satisfaction ratings with the local council will tend to be lower amongst more deprived and ethnically mixed communities, than among more affluent and homogenous ones.

This and the other environmental factors have been discussed earlier in this report.

5.4 Media Coverage

Press coverage of a council's activities, and direct communication from the council, have both been shown to influence residents' perceptions of the authority.

Studies frequently identify press coverage as a key - and often negative - influence on public attitudes to local government.

National research has established that the most common method of finding out about the council is the local media, with 37% of survey respondents citing this as their primary source of information. Information provided by the council was the second most common source, at 33% (7). This compares with the views in the Braintree District which shows that information provided by the Council is the most common way in which people find out about the council (41%).

Research carried out for the Lyons Inquiry noted that people's largely negative perceptions of local government were strongly shaped by the local media: "Local newspapers, in particular, appeared to be the main source of people's knowledge of what their local council was doing and the main forum for holding local authorities to account" (3).

Table 3 below shows a national / district comparison in relation to how people find out about the Council and what it is doing:

Table 3 – Sources of information about the Council

	Nationally	Braintree District
1	Local media	Information provided by the council (newspaper / magazine / leaflets, posters) (41%)
2	Information provided by the Council	Local media (newspapers, tv, radio)
3	Word of mouth	Direct contact with the Council
4	Council website / internet	Council website / internet
5	Direct contact with the Council	None of the above
6	From local councillor	Other source
7	Other source	From local councillor
8	None of these	

According to Ipsos MORI, there is a tendency in the press towards writing about individual councils rather than about local government as a whole, and a bias towards negative, rather than positive, stories. Research, which the Braintree District Council Public Relations Section carries out on an ongoing basis, holds this theory out.

Reporting on the results of a media analysis of how local government issues are covered in the press, Ipsos MORI claimed that some 39% of stories were negative compared to only 10% that were positive (with 51% being considered neutral) (2). As a result, the national initiative '*Connecting with Communities*' emphasises the need for councils to build positive working relationships with the media (8).

5.5 Communication

Many of the other drivers of satisfaction identified here – notably, the perception that the authority provides good quality services, value for money and good customer care – can all be enhanced by effective communications.

The fact that perceived value for money is influenced less by actual council tax levels, but more by how well informed residents feel about how their council is spending that council tax is therefore linked to effective communication.

Communication is frequently identified as a key determinant of resident satisfaction with the local council. Survey respondents are more likely to give their council high satisfaction ratings if they feel well informed by council literature and the local press.

National research shows that 68% of respondents who felt well informed about their local authority and the services it provided were satisfied, as opposed to only 26% of those who did not feel well informed. Equally, those who feel well informed were more likely to think the council is doing a better job than a year ago (18% compared to 4%) (7).

More specifically, in order to positively affect satisfaction ratings, communications must focus on those issues that have been shown to impact on residents' perceptions: namely, quality of services, value for money, and efficiencies (4).

5.6 Visible Services

The visible services which affect quality of life in neighbourhoods are judged to have the next most significant impact in driving resident satisfaction. These have also been discussed previously in this report.

5.7 Customer Care

Finally, positive experiences of customer contact with council officials can play a significant role in enhancing residents' perceptions of the authority.

National research identifies effective customer care as a key determinant of satisfaction ratings, revealing a strong correlation between residents' dissatisfaction with customer service received and their dissatisfaction with the council as a whole (7).

More specifically, when a resident contacts their local council with a query or complaint, both the *handling* and the *outcomes* of customer contacts are significant in driving customer satisfaction (4).

Of those people who are happy with the **outcome** of their contact with the council, 59% will be positive about the authority in general, whereas (and unsurprisingly) this will fall to about 30% amongst those who are unhappy with the outcome of their contact (2).

According to the LGA's *Reputations* project, however, the **handling** of the contact is of even greater importance than the outcome: 70% of those who are happy with the handling of the contact will be happy with the council as a whole, whereas only 24% of those who are unhappy with the handling of the contact will be satisfied with the council in general.

6.0 The Situation in the Braintree District

We have collected data over a number of years which helps to inform our response to these findings and measure our position nationally and across Essex.

A summary of key indicators and results is shown in **Appendix 1** and the results of the Essex Local Area Agreement (LAA) Tracker Survey carried out in 2007/08 is attached at **Appendix 2**. For additional information, the full results of the LAA Tracker Survey 2 are also included in Appendix 2.

The figures generally bear out the findings of the research outlined above. The key measures are set out in Figure 1 below.

Using the LAA Tracker Survey it can be seen that, compared with the 12 other Essex District and Borough Councils, Braintree District Council ranks:

- **3rd** in Essex in relation to the % of people who are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way the authority runs things
- **4th** in relation to the % of people who feel a great deal or to some extent that the Council provides good value for money.

Bearing out the research findings outlined above, we rank:

- **4th** in relation to the % of people who feel very well informed or fairly well informed about how well the Council is performing and
- **5th** in relation to the % of people who feel very well informed or fairly well informed about what the Council spends its money on.

Figure 1

However - at present it is difficult to draw entirely reliable comparisons between the surveys given the differences in sample sizes between the three-yearly Best Value (BV) Surveys (which run into the thousands) and the LAA Tracker Surveys which only measures a few hundred responses.

In addition, the BV Survey focuses specifically on peoples' views about the District Council and its services whereas LAA Tracker Survey 1 did not differentiate between County and District Councils although LAA Tracker Survey 2 did!

We need to adopt a robust and consistent approach to our general surveys which ensures that we can measure views on a consistent basis and in a way which can reliably inform how we move forward. We also need to use the results to shape our services, put improvements in place and identify efficiencies.

7.0 Moving Forward

7.1 Marketing / Campaigns and Communication

Proposals to improve communications and customer services are set out in the Corporate Improvement Plan which is covered in a separate report to Cabinet.

In December 2007 independent reviews were carried out of the Council's internal and external marketing and communications. Following those reviews a proposal to develop a true marketing, campaigns and communications function has been developed and is currently being consulted upon. Short-term actions (to be achieved between now and March 2009) have also been proposed. Details are attached at **Appendix 3**.

This will result in co-ordinated service specific and corporate marketing techniques being put in place across the organisation which will include:

- linking of communication, customer views, performance information and other improvements to shape and target services, improve customer satisfaction and potentially identify efficiencies.
- a proposal to develop a robust Marketing, Campaigns and Communications Strategy which will be reported to Cabinet in September

A corporate Customer Access Strategy is also currently being developed and will be reported to Cabinet in July.

7.2 Measuring Satisfaction with the Council

The Government is currently developing proposals for a 'Place Survey' which will replace the three-yearly Best Value Survey and will measure those indicators set out in **Appendix 4**. It is proposed that the first such survey will be carried out in each local authority area in the country – probably starting in autumn this year.

The majority of questions will be mandatory but others can be added according to local preferences and priorities (for example, other questions that we will include will relate to satisfaction with the District Council, our visible services and the effectiveness of our communications).

County-wide discussions are underway in Essex between District and Borough Councils and Essex County Council to identify how best the surveys can be carried out across the County and to ensure that:

- the best use is made of available resources
- the results can reliably inform and measure progress on the targets and priorities in the Essex Local Area Agreement
- a local focus is retained which will be meaningful to local people and will help to inform development of services and partnership working at a District level
- across Essex we can respond fully to the requirements of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment performance framework which will be replacing the Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework with effect from 2009.
- Improved reliability can be guaranteed through the development of consistent questions and by increasing the sample sizes of surveys at District level

Braintree District Council needs to carry out a robust District-wide survey this year in order to inform the budget setting process for 2009/2010 and to assess views about the extent to which people feel we provide value for money. If the negotiations with ECC are sufficiently advanced to meet the required timetable then it is suggested that we participate in the county-wide approach but if they are not then we will move forward with our own survey this year and participate in the county-wide approach next year. Further information will be available over the next few weeks.

Sara Moutard
Head of Corporate Policy
May 2008

APPENDIX 1
Survey results relevant to this research
Braintree District Council – Best Value General Survey (weighted results 2006/2007) and Local Area Agreement Tracker Surveys 2006/07 and 2007/08

PI No.	Description	00/01 quartile and %	03/04 quartile and %	05/06 quartile and %	06/07 quartile and %	2006/07 ECC Tracker 1	2007/08 ECC Tracker 2	Improvement in % compared with 2003/04	Improvement compared with 2005/06
BV3	The percentage of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by the authority	2 nd (72%)	3 rd (58%)	3 rd (59%)	2 nd (55%)	N/A	N/A	▼	▼
BV4	The percentage of complainants satisfied with the handling of their complaint by the authority	Top (45%)	Bottom (28%)	2 nd (36%)	Top (38%)	N/A	33%	▲	▲
BV89	The percentage of people satisfied with the standard of cleanliness in their area	N/A	3 rd (61%)	Top (67%)	3 rd (68%)	N/A	N/A	▲	▲
BV119e	The percentage of residents satisfied with parks and open spaces	3 rd (57%)	Bottom (64%)	Bottom (61%)	3 rd (68%)	73%	71%	▲	▲
LAA**	% of respondents who are satisfied or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	83%	80%	▼*	N/A
LAA**	% of people who are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way the authority runs things	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	62%	58%	▼*	N/A
LAA**	% of people who feel a great deal or to some extent that the Council provides good value for money	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	62%	63%	▲*	N/A
LAA**	% of people who feel very well informed or fairly well informed about each of the following:								
LAA**	What the Council spends its money on	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	47%	N/A	N/A
LAA**	How well the council is performing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	37%	N/A	N/A
LAA**	How well informed they are kept about the services and benefits the Council provides	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	34%	N/A	N/A

* = Compared with LAA Tracker Survey in 2006/07

** - see also the more detailed analysis of the LAA Tracker Survey 2007/08 at Appendix 2 and the comparison with other Essex authorities and nationally

APPENDIX 2
COMPARISON OF LAA TRACKER SURVEY 2 – ANALYSED FEBRUARY 2008 - WITH OTHER ESSEX AUTHORITIES AND NATIONALLY

	Braintree	Basildon	Brentwood	Castle Point	Chelmsford	Colchester	Epping Forest	Harlow	Maldon	Rochford	Tendring	Uttlesford	Essex Average	BDC is </> average?	BDC ranking in Essex (out of 12)	BDC's results for LAA Tracker Survey Wave 1	BDC Improving?
Number of respondents	512	660	308	298	509	531	383	208	261	291	477	302	395	+	3rd		
% male	46	43	47	50	48	46	53	45	44	48	47	47	47	-	=8 th		
% female	54	57	53	50	52	54	47	55	56	52	53	53	53	+	=4 th		
% aged 34 or younger	28	24	16	16	25	27	21	22	10	25	11	14	20	+	1 st		
% who have been living in this area for 6 years or longer	69	79	83	88	78	69	75	80	84	81	78	78	78.5	-	11 th		
INDICATORS RELEVANT TO THIS RESEARCH REPORT																	
% of people who are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way the authority runs things	58	49	61	52	59	50	46	43	54	51	49	53	52	+	3rd	62	NO
% of people who feel a great deal or to some extent that the Council provides good value for money	63	55	69	60	65	60	57	48	60	58	52	66	59	+	4th	62	YES
% of respondents who are satisfied or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live	80	72	88	74	83	79	76	69	92	88	83	90	81	-	7th	83	NO
% of people who feel very well informed or fairly well informed about each of the following																	N/A
▪ What the Council spends its money on	49	46	53	46	48	49	42	31	54	54	43	51	47	+	=5th	N/A	N/A
▪ How well the council is performing	37	30	40	36	36	37	34	25	34	42	33	41	35	+	=4th	N/A	N/A
▪ How well informed they are kept about the services and benefits the Council provides	34	35	44	41	42	43	36	29	41	43	35	42	39	-	11th	N/A	N/A

OTHER INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THE LAA TRACKER SURVEY

SECTION 1 - ABOUT YOUR LOCAL AREA

% of respondents who definitely agree or tend to agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	82	71	82	81	82	77	67	69	89	78	75	90	79	+	=3rd	N/A	N/A
% of people who think that parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children is not a very big problem or not a problem at all	52	44	59	48	57	51	45	47	61	48	46	62	52	=	5 th	53	NO
% of people who think that people not treating other people with respect and consideration is not a very big problem or not a problem at all	60	55	71	65	70	64	58	51	69	67	62	69	63	-	9 th	62	NO
% of people who think that noisy neighbours or loud parties is not a very big problem or not a problem at all	88	85	92	87	90	87	92	85	88	85	86	94	88	=	=5 th	86	YES
% of people who think that teenagers hanging around the streets is not a very big problem or not a problem at all	57	49	50	47	62	55	42	48	57	41	52	64	52	+	=3rd	51	YES
% of people who think that rubbish and litter lying around is not a very big problem or not a problem at all	65	51	71	56	58	54	60	47	77	67	65	69	62	+	=5 th	62	YES
% of people who think that people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces is not a very big problem or not a problem at all	74	77	74	75	77	71	77	72	80	75	79	82	76	-	=9th	81	NO
% of people who think that abandoned or burnt out cars is not a very big problem or not a problem at all	95	92	95	94	94	95	95	88	97	95	91	94	94	+	=2nd	92	NO
% of people who think that vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles is not a very big problem or not a problem at all	72	58	77	62	78	71	70	57	80	67	72	82	70.5	+	=5th	74	NO
% of people who think that people using or dealing drugs is not a very big problem or not a problem at all	73	59	73	68	79	62	59	63	74	67	59	71	67	+	=3 rd	84	NO
% of people who feel very safe or fairly safe when outside in Essex after dark	45	32	56	47	48	36	48	29	51	50	50	62	46	-	9th	54	NO
% of people who feel very safe or fairly safe when outside in Essex during the day	85	80	91	92	89	82	86	76	91	89	85	92	86.5	-	=8th	88	NO
% of people who are not very worried or not worried at all about burglary (having their home broken into and something stolen)	49	28	41	37	49	43	39	32	50	47	49	56	43	+	=3 rd	N/A	N/A

% of people who are not very worried or not very worried at all about car crime (having their car stolen or broken into and something stolen)	52	28	47	44	49	48	43	34	58	54	46	61	47	+	4 th	N/A	N/A
% of people who are not very worried or are not very worried at all about violent crime (being physically attacked, threatened or verbally abused by strangers)	60	44	61	55	59	53	54	42	65	57	55	71	56	+	4 th	N/A	N/A
% of people who are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the level of foot patrols in their area / neighbourhood	20	21	19	21	14	21	9	12	13	20	21	11	17	+	=5 th	N/A	N/A
% of people who know their PCSO by either name or sight or both	20	15	20	15	14	18	7	14	25	15	21	14	16.5	+	=3 rd	N/A	N/A
% of people who would know how to contact the police or the PCSO in their area	42	48	42	46	44	41	36	46	51	46	58	40	45	-	=8 th	N/A	N/A
% of people who are aware of how, when and where they can take part in agreeing the local priority issues in their area / neighbourhood	19	20	20	12	19	22	16	21	30	20	20	18	20	-	=8 th	N/A	N/A
% of people who think the police in their local area are doing an excellent or good job	27	21	32	26	29	23	22	16	29	28	30	32	26	+	7 th	N/A	N/A

SECTION 2 - YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY

	Braintree	Basildon	Brentwood	Castle Point	Chelmsford	Colchester	Epping Forest	Harlow	Maldon	Rochford	Tendring	Uttlesford	Essex Average	BDC is </> average?	BDC ranking in Essex (out of 12)	BDC's results for LAA Tracker Survey Wave 1	BDC Improving?
% of people who have used the local tip / household waste recycling centre in the last 12 months and who were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the service provided	87	90	92	82	88	87	80	87	93	81	90	86	87	=	=6th	83	YES
% of people who are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the local bus service overall (whether they have used it or not)	53	62	40	64	70	66	41	63	47	63	63	40	56	-	8th	59	NO
% of people who use the local bus service about once a month or more frequently	24	39	26	52	40	46	33	39	27	38	35	15	34.5	-	11th	N/A	N/A
% of people who are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the information provision of public transport information	40	54	37	52	57	51	42	52	50	56	54	37	48.5	-	10th	N/A	N/A
% of people who have received or seen any of the information provided on local transport services	23	38	26	32	46	43	31	49	36	39	38	28	36	-	12th	N/A	N/A
% of people who were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the following services (whether they had used it or not):																	
▪ Libraries	75	79	72	76	77	75	66	70	77	80	75	68	74	+	=6th	76	NO
▪ Parks and open spaces	71	74	81	67	85	81	70	78	84	84	68	76	77	-	9th	73	NO
▪ Planning	39	23	32	26	29	33	26	22	34	28	30	30	29	+	1st	N/A	N/A
▪ Personal social services	25	26	22	26	27	27	21	25	23	23	32	26	25	=	=7th	N/A	N/A
▪ Fire and rescue service	55	55	47	57	54	60	53	72	63	49	67	57	57	-	=7th	N/A	N/A
▪ Local authority education service	43	43	42	48	49	46	32	42	47	44	41	40	43	=	=6th	N/A	N/A

SECTION 3 – YOUR COMMUNITY

	Braintree	Basildon	Brentwood	Castle Point	Chelmsford	Colchester	Epping Forest	Harlow	Maldon	Rochford	Tendring	Uttlesford	Essex Average	BDC is </> average?	BDC ranking in Essex (out of 12)	BDC's results for LAA Tracker Survey Wave 1	BDC Improving?
The % of people who responded that they had not felt isolated or cut off from society in the past year	63	60	68	*	57	59	59	57	69	73	58	70	58	+	5th	N/A	N/A
% of people who feel that it is very easy or fairly easy to get to the following using their usual form of transport:																	
▪ Local shop	95	94	94	93	95	94	92	96	96	93	94	90	94	+	=3rd	N/A	N/A
▪ Shopping centre / supermarket	88	90	84	85	92	89	83	89	89	90	56	82	85	+	7th	N/A	N/A
▪ Post office	81	89	88	88	84	88	89	86	91	90	91	86	88	-	12th	N/A	N/A
▪ GP	88	89	90	89	92	87	87	91	87	93	88	89	89	-	=8th	N/A	N/A
▪ Chemist / pharmacy	91	93	90	95	94	90	85	92	86	93	91	82	90	-	=6th	N/A	N/A
▪ Shop selling fresh fruit and vegetables	85	87	83	83	82	84	73	82	85	92	86	82	84	+	=4th	N/A	N/A
▪ Local hospital	47	66	44	46	65	63	48	81	43	57	66	61	57	-	9th	N/A	N/A
▪ Publicly accessible green space	89	88	85	80	90	91	84	82	91	92	86	92	87.5	+	6th	N/A	N/A
▪ Public transport facility	79	84	74	82	84	85	78	82	75	83	81	69	80	-	8th	N/A	N/A
▪ Library	84	89	82	91	81	77	78	86	84	86	86	80	84	=	=6th	N/A	N/A
▪ Sports / leisure centre	74	66	70	75	76	66	72	68	79	69	71	77	72	+	5th	N/A	N/A
▪ Cultural / recreational facility	61	63	72	59	73	65	56	67	75	67	67	58	65	-	9th	N/A	N/A
▪ Bank / cash point	81	86	83	89	88	86	83	88	84	87	80	80	85	-	10th	N/A	N/A
▪ Council / neighbourhood office	64	61	73	74	62	62	64	68	66	73	64	73	67	-	=7th	N/A	N/A
▪ Pub	89	82	92	95	92	88	92	91	93	93	92	92	91	-	10th	N/A	N/A

SECTION 5 – INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNCIL AND ITS SERVICES

	Braintree	Basildon	Brentwood	Castle Point	Chelemsford	Colchester	Epping Forest	Harlow	Maldon	Rochford	Tendring	Uttlesford	Essex Average	BDC is </> average?	BDC ranking in Essex (out of 12)	BDC's results for LAA Tracker Survey Wave 1	BDC Improving?
% of people who said that they had contacted the authority with a complaint in the last 12 months	16	22	23	20	23	23	31	30	18	16	19	19	22	-	=1st	N/A	N/A
% of people who were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way in which their complaint was handled	33	33	49	30	25	32	39	22	30	26	25	28	31	+	=3rd	N/A	N/A
% of people who feel very well informed or fairly well informed about each of the following																	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What the Council is doing to tackle anti-social behaviour in their local area 	17	14	23	17	17	19	12	18	22	26	22	19	19	-	=8th	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How they can get involved in local decision making 	27	35	30	22	30	32	23	6	39	28	29	33	28	-	9th	36	NO

SECTION 6 – LOCAL DECISION MAKING

% of people who definitely agreed or tended to agree that they could influence decisions affecting the following:																	
Their local area	31	29	29	28	29	35	35	30	33	42	26	40	36	-	6th	32	NO
Essex County Council	20	18	17	17	13	19	18	18	12	15	17	17	17	+	1st	N/A	N/A
Their District	22	25	21	14	18	23	26	21	21	32	21	21	22	=	5 th	N/A	N/A
% of people who said that they would like to be more involved in the decisions made by public bodies that affect their local area	24	25	18	34	30	28	34	28	26	24	23	24	26.5	-	=8th	27	NO
% of people who said that they would like to be more involved in the decisions made by public bodies that affected their local area – but that it would depend on the issue	66	61	70	55	58	63	53	61	61	67	57	65	61	+	=3rd	N/A	N/A

**APPENDIX 3 – IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR MARKETING AND CAMPAIGNS / COMMUNICATIONS
2008/2009 (SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION)**

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS - TO BE IN PLACE BY 31ST JULY 2008		
External Focus		By
S1	Summer road-show, fete promotions and campaign programme started – involving Promotions Team, Cabinet and local ward councillors	31.07.08
S2	Public notice board outside Causeway House – improve appearance and use for promotional material	31.07.08
S3	Council Page revamped to raise awareness about the Council's services - focussing on what BDC does on a day to day basis and how much they cost – the difference we make to our local communities - and what people can do to help	31.07.08
S4	Causeway House Entrance Foyer and Reception Area, walls and notice boards – improved and used for BDC campaigns and publicity	31.07.08
S5	Leaflet racks and display areas in all public offices improved - ensuring only approved material is used	31.07.08
S6	TV screens in Causeway House Reception and Foyer – content improved and changed regularly	31.07.08
S7	Focussed publicity on the Chairman's activities - closer links developed with Civic function and team	31.07.08
S8	Summer 'Contact' preparation underway	31.07.08
S9	Braintree District Council Annual Report – produce and widely publicise an Annual Report which provides information to the public about the costs of our services, how we provide value for money, what we spent the council tax on last year and the difference it made in the District.	31.07.08
S10	Corporate Action Plan – District-wide publicity (promotions team, contact, council page and other means) about the Council's key projects for 2008/09 as outlined in the Action Plan	31.07.08
S11	Monthly press conferences scheduled and taking place	31.07.08
S12	Customer Access Strategy and Action Plan for improvement prepared and reported to Cabinet	31.07.08
Councillor Focus		
S13	'Bridging the Gap - The Councillor as a community leader' seminar to be held in June – work starts on developing an action plan to support Members in developing their representative role	31.07.08
S14	Review of communicate with Members - communications channels and methodologies – starts. Improvements identified – plan put in place for taking them forward	31.07.08
S15	Wide-scale promotion of the projects which have received funding from the Local Committees carried out	31.07.08
Staff Focus		
S16	'Re-connect' – new staff newsletter developed	31.07.08
S17	Using our walls and corridors – first and second floors used for positive staff focused displays based on team / individual achievements	31.07.08
Management Focus		
S18	Management of Change process underway	
S19	Environmental Promotions team takes on corporate community engagement and promotions role and moves to Policy team	31.07.08
S20	Weekly Communications Planning meetings held - to agree work programme for the coming week, highlight emerging issues and maintain focus on longer term planning. To include attendance by the portfolio holder for Community Support and Engagement whenever possible	31.07.08
S21	Work starts on developing long-term Marketing and Campaigns Strategy and Action Plan	31.07.08
S22	Corporate promotions, campaigns and public relations diary / programme developed – programmed activities implemented.	31.07.08
S23	Re-assess our response to the Local Government Association and IDEA's 'reputation' campaign – revisit our programme in light of the outcomes	31.07.08
S24	Improve our approach to dealing with press enquiries. Members and Senior Managers involved. Training programme developed	31.07.08
S25	Review all existing corporate publications (leaflets, newsletters, customer contracts etc) and identify opportunities to deliver consistent plan English messages and branding - Graphics Team to approve all leaflets before publication	31.07.08

S26	Work with Essex County Council to increase the sample size and range of questions in the Braintree District Section of the next Local Area Agreement Tracker Survey – commission District break down and analysis	31.07.08
S27	Develop a process and programme for a rolling programme of service specific satisfaction surveys and other initiatives aimed at identifying customer views and potential improvements	31.07.08
S28	Research the use of the 'Mosaic' marketing software or similar	31.07.08
S29	Communications becomes a standard agenda item on Management Board (informal and formal) and SMG agendas	31.07.08

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS – TO BE IN PLACE BY 31ST OCTOBER 2008		
External Focus		By
M1	Review of signage and BDC related information at all BDC owned facilities – car parks, public and community halls, public toilets - replacement programme developed with managers	31.10.08
M2	Where improvements are being carried out to any of our facilities – clear signage up and visible stating that it's being done by BDC with details and planned completion date	31.10.08
M3	Trial the use of 'Street Scene' banners encouraging people to call a dedicated number at BDC with information about litter and other issues	31.10.08
M4	Use of 'A' Boards or similar – ensure that when work is being carried out in the District it is clearly signed as being carried out by Braintree District Council	31.10.08
M5	Review our existing and prime 'message location' sites – make recommendations for future usage	31.10.08
M6	Customer Service Standards – update all of our customer standards and targets and publish them widely so that people can be clear about what to expect when they contact us and about the level of service they will receive when they need to use any of our services	31.10.08
M7	Our Telephone System - improve the telephone system to increase access to services and ensure that people have their queries answered by the first person they contact at the Council	31.10.08
M8	Web site content improvements carried out	31.10.08
M9	Web site satisfaction survey in place	31.10.08
M10	Local 'Contact' Newsletter – local or ward based newsletters replace the District wide publication. Includes promotion of the activities of the Local Committees, local news items and information so that people are aware of what is going on in their particular area and show an interest	31.10.08
Councillor Focus		
M11	Programme for taking forward the 'Councillor as a Community Leader' project approved and in place – actions underway	31.10.08
M12	'Leaders Blog' in place?!	31.10.08
M13	Improved methods of communication with Members being implemented	31.10.08
Staff Focus		
M14	Intranet improvements carried out	31.10.08
M15	Staff signed up to 're-connect' and contributing regularly	31.10.08
M16	Chief Executive's 'Captain's Blog' in place?	31.10.08
M17	Team performance related publicity on walls in service areas – showing performance issues for that quarter	31.10.08
Management Focus		
M18	Robust long-term Marketing and Campaigns Strategy / Action Plan approved and being put in place	31.10.08
M19	Dependent on the outcome of research, purchase (or procure the use of) the Mosaic marketing software or similar	31.10.08
M20	Draft programme for service specific targeted marketing prepared in conjunction with Heads of Service	31.10.08
M21	Implement the rolling programme of service specific satisfaction surveys and initiatives	31.10.08
M22	Feasibility study into creation of a Braintree District Focus Group completed	31.10.08
M23	Carry out a feasibility study into using the Customer Service Centre staff and system to carry out ad hoc satisfaction surveys	31.10.08
M24	Results of LAA Tracker Survey (Braintree Chapter) published and analysed – improvements identified and added to Corporate Improvement Plan	31.10.08
M25	New approach to dealing with press enquiries in place – training programme underway or completed	31.07.08

LONGER TERM ACTIONS – TO BE IN PLACE BY 31ST MARCH 2009 UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED		
External Focus		By
L1	Improve the appearance of our vehicles and street scene fleet – ensuring branding is clear and re-usable panels are used to maximise promotional opportunities	31.3.09
L2	Work with the Community Wardens to ensure that the best use is made of Parish Notice Boards in Villages – ensure relevant information is regularly posted and kept up to date	31.3.09
L3	'Welcome Guide' – review and reproduce the 'Welcome Guide' to provide useful information to people moving into the District	31.3.09
L4	Braintree District Focus Group (or similar) in place (dependent on feasibility study)	31.3.09
L5	Local 'Community' Award – develop an initiative aimed at recognising individuals or groups who make a valuable contribution to their local communities / areas	31.3.09
L6	Guide to the Council – produce an easy to read guide to the Council, what it does and how it works	31.3.09
Councillor Focus		
L7	Easier Contact with Councillors - improve the ways in which local constituents can contact their local Councillors by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the profile of local Councillors in their wards • Carrying out a feasibility study into other more innovative ways of holding councillor surgeries (including telephone and walkabout surgeries) • Identifying other improvements 	31.3.09
L8	Programme for taking forward the 'Councillor as a Community Leader' project approved and in place – actions underway	31.3.09
Management Focus		
L9	Service specific marketing taking place – market segmentation information available and being used - supported by Marketing and Campaigns Team - outcomes and efficiencies being measured	31.3.09
L10	Work with partners (police, PCT and ECC) to explore the feasibility of creating a joint approach to provision of public information in the District	31.3.09

APPENDIX 4
NEW NATIONAL INDICATORS WHICH WILL BE INFORMED THROUGH THE PROPOSED MANADATORY QUESTIONS WHICH
WILL BE ASKED IN THE PLACE SURVEY
(all are still subject to consultation and piloting of the Survey)
(others can be added at the discretion of each Local Authority)

National Indicator No.	Place Survey Measurement
1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
2	% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
3	Civic participation in the local area
4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
5	Overall/general satisfaction with local area
6	Participation in regular volunteering
10	Visits to museums or galleries
17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour
21	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
22	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area
23	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and dignity
27	Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area
41	Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem
42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem
119	Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing
137	Healthy life expectancy at age 65
138	Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood
139	People over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently
140	Fair treatment by local services

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