

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 4th February 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Halton 2000 Survey on the Council's Budget

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to draw the Board's attention to the results of a recent Halton 2000 Survey. In November 2007, the 2367 members of Halton's citizens' panel were sent a questionnaire on their opinion about a range of Council services. 992 people responded – a response rate of 42%. The full results are attached to this summary page.

2.0 RECOMMENDED that:

- (1) the Board notes the results of the survey;**
- (2) draws it to the attention of the Policy and Performance Boards; and**
- (3) takes the results into account when considering the 2008/09 budget proposals.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Attached to the report is a full copy of the survey results. Outlined below is a summary of the findings.

3.2 Question 1

Asked respondents to select **THREE** areas of priority spending (from a list of eleven). The top three areas of priority spending were selected by over 30% of respondents:

- Community safety and crime prevention 55.3%
- Development of activities for teenagers 32.4%
- Provide more opportunities to recycle and manage waste in a sustainable way 32.1%.

3.3 Priority spending areas that were ranked Fourth - Seventh showed minimal differences and all fell between 29.4% and 26.7% these are listed below:

- Making our streets cleaner and disposing of waste and litter 29.4%
- Creating employment opportunities through investment in regeneration/economic development 28.8%
- Improve education standards by investing in our schools 27.6%
- Develop more services for elderly people 26.7%

3.4 Question 2

Asked respondents about levels of Council Tax and ways of increasing or introducing charges for services. Answers were evenly split and no firm conclusions can be made in relation to these areas. However the more detailed results from Question 3, which asks about individual services, show that for some services an increase in spending is the preferred option.

3.5 Question 3

Asked respondents about levels of spending for 34 individual services that the Council provides.

Of these 34 services respondents stated that:

- 30 services should have the **same amount** of money spent
- 3 services should have **more money** spent
 - Crime Prevention (70.3%)
 - Community Safety (56.9%)
 - Services for Older People (49.9%)
- 1 service should have **less money** spent
 - Tourism Promotion (48.5%)

3.6 Question 4

Asked respondents if they have previously seen information regarding how the Council spends its money, 70% of respondents stated that they had seen information in 'Inside Halton'. However, when asked in Question 5 if respondents had seen the summary of how the Council spends its money, (which is available on the Council website, in Libraries and Direct Link), 80.2% of respondents stated that they had not seen this publication.

3.7 Following on from this over 70% of respondents stated that they would like to see a brief summary of Council accounts (Question 6) and 66.7% of respondents stated that this should be available in 'Inside Halton', 64.7% of respondents stated this should be made available with the Council Tax Leaflet and 44.6% of respondents stated it should be available via 'Local Press' (Question 7).

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are many factors the Council needs to consider when setting its budget. The views of the public are a key issue in those deliberations. The survey provides a helpful picture of public opinion.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 How the Council uses its resources is key to delivering the priorities contained in the Corporate Plan.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Considering the views of the public is an important factor in delivering the improved outcomes described in the Council's Corporate Plan.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Considering the views of the public is an important factor in delivering the improved outcomes described in the Council's Corporate Plan.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Considering the views of the public is an important factor in delivering the improved outcomes described in the Council's Corporate Plan.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Considering the views of the public is an important factor in delivering the improved outcomes described in the Council's Corporate Plan.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Considering the views of the public is an important factor in delivering the improved outcomes described in the Council's Corporate Plan.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no direct risks associated with this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Halton 2000 provides the views of a wide cross section of the Halton community.

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D
OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Survey results	Municipal Building	R. Stevens