

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 12 SEPTEMBER 2023  
title: 2023 PEOPLE'S SURVEY REPORT – LIFE IN RIBBLE VALLEY  
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### 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform committee of the findings of the 2023 People's Survey – Life in Ribble Valley.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives - The survey has been used to gauge perception and monitor
- Corporate Priorities - the levels of satisfaction with the Council's services and life
- Other Considerations - in Ribble Valley. The data collected can be used to help inform the development of Council strategies.

### 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The survey can be used to help make decisions about where limited resources should be targeted, and gathers residents' views on the local area, public services, specific council services and the local community.

2.2 The specific objectives of the survey were to:

- understand current views of the local area
- better understand usage of, and satisfaction with, Council services
- understand views on specific services (refuse collection and recycling, communication, customer service, and climate change), and
- to gather views on the local community.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Over the last ten years, the methodology of the council's resident survey has gradually changed. An online survey was launched on 30 January and closed on 13 March 2023, with paper copies made available at the council offices. Promotion included: media and press releases to local newspapers and on the council website; emails sent to councillors, staff and town and parish clerks; contact with local colleges and sixth forms; social media posts on Facebook groups and council accounts for Facebook, twitter, and Instagram.

3.2 In total just over 800 responses were received. 770 responses from local residents, plus over 30 responses from people working in and visiting the borough. This is up from 608 responses in 2018, and 417 in 2015 when a Citizens' Panel-only methodology was used. In addition, there was a greater spread of age groups represented in the latest survey. In 2018, over half of responses were from residents aged 65 or over (down to 33% in this survey).

3.3 In order to understand whether the survey reached people in all sections of the community, respondents were asked to provide some demographic information including

their gender, age, disability, and ethnicity.

- 3.4 The data is weighted by age and gender to be representative of the borough. More 45- to 64-year-olds, and females responded compared to the actual population.
- 3.5 Due to the open-access nature of resident surveys in Ribble Valley over recent years, caution should be applied to comparisons and benchmarking over time. Whilst the overall methodology is the same as 2018, the sample is likely to vary significantly depending on who sees and completes the survey when promoted. In 2015, the survey was delivered predominantly through a paper-based Citizens' Panel.
- 3.6 The respondent's postcode was matched to wards and then grouped into six Ribble Valley 'areas' to ensure a more reliable sample sizes for analysis. For additional analysis within the report, the six areas were further grouped into four broad areas as follows:
  - Clitheroe - 36% of responses were received.
  - North (including East and West) and Central - 11% of responses.
  - South (including East and West) - 19% of responses.
  - Unknown, a third of respondents were unknown as they did not provide a postcode - 34% of responses.

## 4 FINDINGS

4.1 Initial results have been presented to Corporate Management Team (CMT). The full report of the 2023 People's Survey – Life in Ribble Valley, as prepared by PS Research, is attached at Appendix A. A summary of the findings is provided below:

### 4.2 Views on the local area

- 78% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (a similar level to the 79% reported in 2018) – this is lower in Clitheroe (69%) than in other areas.
- Living in and around countryside is by far the thing residents of all ages like most about their local area.
- Beyond that, different age groups valued different things, for example:
  - 25- to 44-year-olds are more likely to value the variety of shops in their area
  - 45- to 54-year-olds are more likely to comment on the quiet, village/town feel
  - Residents aged 65+ are more likely to value access to shops and services.
- There are, however, a wide range of things that residents would change about their local area – the focus was mainly on roads, the level of housing developments and cleanliness of streets / public spaces (including litter, and dog fouling).
- Most feel their area is a safe place where people get on well together, but some felt there were a number of anti-social behaviour issues, for example, a third of people feel taking or dealing drugs in their local area is a problem. More than one in five feel teenagers hanging around streets, vandalism and deliberate damage or people being drunk / rowdy in public is a problem in their area.

### 4.3 Local public services

- 40% are satisfied with the way the Council runs things. Whilst 32% are dissatisfied and were more likely to feel they can't influence decisions, highlighting a range of issues in their area such as cleanliness of streets, crime levels and anti-social behaviour.
- 40% also agreed that the Council provides value for money, down from 60% in 2018. This compares to the Local Government Association (LGA) survey of 46% taken from a national sample during February 2023.

### 4.4 Waste collection and recycling services

- Satisfaction is high with waste collection services (83%) compared to the February 2023 LGA Survey (81%).
- 78% of residents are already or are willing to recycle more household waste.
- 69% of our residents are satisfied with doorstep recycling, and recycling is the biggest area in which people say they are doing something or are willing to do more - this was also an area residents felt the council could do more to support them so that they could recycle more.

#### 4.5 Being informed and customer service

- 39% of residents feel informed overall about the Council. In 2018, 47% felt less informed about the Council.
- 64% of residents who feel well informed agree that the council provides value for money.
- Three in five residents do not feel they can influence decisions in their local area - this group were more likely than others to highlight fewer housing developments as something that would improve their local area.
- Open-text feedback reveals residents want frequency of communication across different methods (social media, emails, in the community) and 'genuine engagement' for example, listening and consulting on changes that affect them.
- Age is a factor in the types of communication methods residents are more likely to engage with – younger residents prefer social media; the older the resident is, the more likely they are to prefer information from local news websites and newspapers.

Residents were grouped, based on their response to a set of key questions i.e., satisfaction with the local area, satisfaction with the way Ribbles Valley Borough Council runs things, agreement that the council provides value-for-money, and how well informed they feel the council keeps them about services. 18% gave a positive response to all questions, 9% gave all negative responses, and the majority (71%) gave a mix of positive and negative responses.

'Positive' respondents were:

- More likely to value the variety of shops in their area and small town/village feel.
- More likely to feel parks and open spaces, access to GPs/health services and low levels of crime are important.
- Less likely to feel improvements are needed in the cleanliness of streets and crime levels.
- But more likely than others to want improvements in public transport links.

'Negative' respondents were significantly more likely to raise issues with:

- Cleanliness of streets and the level of dog fouling,
- The condition of roads and pavements,
- Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

When residents contact the council, the method they use appears to impact on satisfaction:

- Two in five residents had contacted the council in the last six months.
- Residents were more likely to make contact if they were under the age of 65 and were not satisfied with their area.
- Three in five made contact by telephone, with a third using email, and 17% in-person.

- 35% of those contacting by email were dissatisfied with the experience, compared to 20% of those visiting in-person, and 25% using the telephone.

#### 4.6 Local community

Most feel their area is a safe place where people get on well together. However, different priorities and areas of improvement were highlighted by residents across the borough.

- North and Central – residents are more likely to feel community is important to an area, as well as low crime levels, they are also more likely than others to feel transport links need improving across the borough.
- Those dissatisfied with the council were more likely to feel they can't influence decisions and highlight a range of issues in their area such as, cleanliness of streets, crime levels and anti-social behaviour
- Some feel there are a number of anti-social behaviour issues. A third of people feel taking or dealing drugs in their local area is a problem, and more than one in five feel teenagers hanging around streets, vandalism/deliberate damage or people being drunk/rowdy in public is an issue in their area.
- 80% of respondents feel safe in their local area during the day and after dark (in 2018 90% felt safe in the local area during the day, and 70% felt safe in the local area after dark).
- There appears to have been some positive change around anti-social behaviour issues. 90% felt that noisy neighbours / loud parties are not a problem, 69% felt that teenagers hanging around streets are not a problem, 48% felt people using drugs is not a problem, and 73% of people being drunk or rowdy in public places is not a problem.

## 5 RISK ASSESSMENT

### 5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources - Analysis and report writing was done by Infusion and was covered by our annual contribution to the partnership. Printing and postage was an additional cost.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None identified.
- Political – None identified.
- Reputation – Positive results will be used in communications with borough residents and staff.
- Equality & Diversity - In order to ensure that the survey reached people in all sections of the community, respondents were asked to provide information about themselves including their gender, age, disability and ethnicity. For each question in the survey, comparisons were made between different sub-groups of respondents (namely gender, age, disability and geographic area) to look for statistically significant differences in opinion. Only statistically valid differences between sub-groups are described in the main body of the report. Some groups cannot be included in the sub-group analysis as there were too few respondents to allow statistically significant results.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The 2023 People's Survey is an important indicator of how our residents feel about living in the Ribble Valley and our Council services. We now have the opportunity to make the most of the data available and a chance to link the findings to our decision-making processes and our strategic planning including developing a new Corporate Strategy for

the next four years.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

REF:

- Final-version-life-in-ribble-valley-2023
- Summary-life-in-ribble-valley-2023
- Appendix A 2023 People's Survey Action Plan

For further information please ask for Jaqui Houlker, extension 4421