

EVALUATION OF CONSULTATION PROGRAMME 2007

1. Members will recall that we have examined the results of our major consultation work that ran during August to October 2007 on two occasions. At our meeting on 4th December it was agreed that a final report would be brought to this meeting to evaluate the success of the consultation and to identify lessons learned.
2. We did increase the overall response rate to over 4,000 however some of the forms were not completed correctly and were therefore voided. Many of the void responses were due to people not being able to identify issues that should not be priorities. We did explain that all issues were important but that we needed to prioritise some over others however as in previous surveys some residents struggled with this. It is difficult to know how to overcome this concern other than to do more face to face consultation and that would require additional people from partner agencies to undertake this. We also know that surveys through the web were lower than anticipated however a number of people contacted us to say that the Council's fire wall blocked responses from some servers such as AOL. We can ensure that this glitch is rectified in the future.
3. We did maintain the BME response rate to the representative level of the Borough however we saw a decrease in the number of actual responses. In future years we may need to identify community members from minority communities who can assist with consultation or commission a bespoke Viewpoint survey however this would incur additional costs to partners.
4. Robbery and Mugging was identified as the sixth priority and this could indicate that fear of crime remains high for some groups. Notably over 75s identified this as the third key priority even though we reported that figures were low for our Borough. The Community Safety Team will attend the bus pass issue and promote the work of the Partnership. By producing a summary of the Community Safety Plan and making this available widely and conducting Face the People sessions we may make some inroads to reduce fear of crime.
5. We did not achieve our target to obtain at least 10 responses per thousand population in each ward. We did achieve the target in 22 of the 26 wards and in two wards we missed the target by three or four responses. We achieved the target in wards with higher levels of crime and it is notable that the wards where the target was below that set were areas with low crime levels. For future consultation we will analyse responses more thoroughly as they come in so that we can identify areas with a shortfall and concentrate resources into those areas whilst the consultation is ongoing.
6. Responses obtained by partners were patchy, with the bulk coming from the Council's Community Safety Team and the only other notable contribution coming from the DAT who submitted 250. The Council issued a number of messages of the day to encourage employees to complete the form on line

and this is something that could be emulated by partners. For future consultation it may be an idea to colour code the survey form with a different colour for each partner agency to identify the source of the response.

7. A number of lessons can be learned from this latest consultation exercise and they will be incorporated into future plans for consultation that will be brought to the partnership in time to ensure that partners can incorporate them in sufficient time before the consultation commences.

Community Safety Manager
17th January 2008