

**Subject:**  
Rossendale General Household Survey  
Results

**Status:** For Publication

---

**Report to:**  
Performance Overview and Scrutiny

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> August 2007

---

**Report of:** Head of Community and Partnerships

---

**Portfolio**

**Holder:** Health and Wellbeing

---

**Key Decision:**

NO –

Forward Plan  General Exception  Special Urgency  "X" In  
*Relevant Box*

---

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform members about the results of the general household survey 2006/7 and the actions being taken by the Council to ensure quality services are delivered to all of our customers.

**2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 2.1 Delivering quality services is a priority for the council and the General Household Survey enables us to monitor our progress towards achieving this.

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Failure to recognise the impact of the survey could lead to a failure to improve services across the Borough.

**4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Every three years councils are required to carry out a survey of households in their Borough to ask a series of questions set by the audit commission. The approach to the survey is determined by the commission and councils have limited leeway in the format and any additional questions – being allowed to ask only 5 additional questions each time.

- 4.2 The council has to receive a minimum of 1100 completed surveys in order for it to be considered valid.

This year the five East Lancashire Councils agreed to undertake this work collectively through the East Lancashire e Partnership (ELEP) consultation partnership. Rossendale received back 1411 surveys well exceeding our target and the response makes the survey statistically valid +/- 3%.

- 4.3 The survey results are interesting to the Council as it demonstrates where we are as a local authority against the rest of the UK and in particular against neighbouring councils in East Lancashire.

As a result of the findings heads of service have been asked to demonstrate within this report how they are reacting to the survey results in order to achieve service improvement.

#### 4.4 **Satisfaction with services**

Members will see at **Appendix 1** that satisfaction with Council services is at 35% which is significantly lower than the national average. However members should note that this is a considerable improvement to three years ago when the result was 27% and this 8% increase in satisfaction is the face of a national downwards trend in satisfaction. (Nationally there is a 2% decrease in overall satisfaction).

- 4.5 Members may also wish to note that the council has managed to shift a substantial number of people away from dissatisfaction and towards a more neutral stand point: 35% of those surveyed were neutral and only just under 30% were dissatisfied with council services overall. It is recognised that it is substantially harder to move people from a point of dissatisfaction to a point of neutrality, than from a point of being neutral to a point of satisfaction. Therefore there are strong prospects for an increase in satisfaction in future years.

- 4.6 Of interest is the fact that the over 60s and the BME community were generally more satisfied with the council than those in other groups.

76% of respondents were of the opinion that over the past three years the way the authority runs things have got better, compared to 50% in the last survey.

#### 4.7 **Council Performance Overall**

Levels of satisfaction with the Council's performance are broadly positive. 68.8% of residents agreed that 'the Council treats all types of people fairly', 65.8% say the Council 'is working to make the area cleaner and greener' and 59.3% say Rossendale Borough Council 'is making the local area a better place to live'. 50.4% of residents agreed that the Council 'is working to make the area safer and 48.4% agreed the Council 'is trustworthy'.

- 4.8 However 60.5% of residents expressed some agreement with the comments that the Council 'is remote and impersonal', only 40.8% agreed that it was 'efficient and well run' and less than a third of residents (31.6%) agreed that the Council 'provides good value for money'

- 4.9 Clearly as a Council we need to consider these issues and how we can ensure that we are seen as more personal, more efficient and better value for money.

The strategic approach to achieving value for money in service delivery, approved by the Cabinet in June this year, includes specific actions targeting improved perceptions of value for money amongst residents. Largely these will be about better communication about how the Council is improving performance and efficiency to stakeholders, residents and customers.

#### 4.10 **Complaints**

The performance on complaint satisfactory has increased considerably since 2003 with 31.5% of people being satisfied with the outcome from their complaint. To try and improve this figure, Rossendale have revamped their complaint management process and procedures, as well as making it easier for customers to complain and improving the speed of their response to customers.

4.11 By the very nature of the complaint's process, customers will tend not to be happy but we have set challenging targets to improve our complaint satisfaction to 50% by 2010.

#### 4.12 **Keeping Land Clear of Litter and Refuse**

This is a significant improvement from 2003/04, with satisfaction going from 40% to 54%. In the last two years we have increased the number of mechanical sweepers and introduced town centre caretakers and manual sweeping rounds in outlying areas. As a result we have almost doubled the number of street cleansing operatives and increased the outturn for BVPI 199a - % of streets at B or above standard from 72% to 88%. We are in the process of digitising all our street cleansing rounds and have introduced vehicle tracking to enable us to monitor our performance and make improvements as and when necessary.

#### 4.13 **The waste service we provide overall**

We are disappointed with the drop in the % of people satisfied with waste collection. However, it is due in the main to the introduction of alternate weekly collections in 2003/04. We have made considerable improvements in our operations which have resulted in a significant downturn in the number of missed bins in the borough, with an average missed bin rate of less than 0.045% in 2006/07. As a result of the alternate weekly collections our recycling rates have increased from 15.3% in 2003/04 to 28.9% in 2006/07. We have also bucked the national trend by reducing the amount of waste collected in the borough by 5%.

#### 4.14 **The provision of recycling facilities overall**

We have introduced recycling for 6 materials and garden waste. In recent years we have also made more wheeled bins available for paper and garden waste which have proved very popular with residents. The increase in our recycling rates clearly demonstrates our customers commitment to ensuring Rossendale is 'doing its bit' for the environment.

4.15 **Satisfaction with sport and leisure facilities**

60% of those surveyed had used sports, leisure and recreational facilities in the Borough and overall 53% of the population say that they are satisfied with sport and leisure facilities in the Borough. In the Council's own culture survey in Summer 2006 the satisfaction with individual facilities varied between 27% satisfaction (Bacup Leisure Hall) to 70% satisfaction (Haslingden Sports Centre). Only 20% felt that these services had improved over the past 3 years and this gives further justification to the council's drive now to improve the leisure facilities across the borough as part of its target to improve health and well being within the Borough.

4.16 **Satisfaction with museums and galleries**

Members will be aware that the Council is responsible for only one of the four museums which exist in the Borough. However, the survey does not allow for differentiation within the question. 41% of those surveyed say they are satisfied with the galleries and museums in the Borough compared to 44% in 2003/4.

4.17 **Satisfaction with parks and open spaces**

Whilst we would have liked to see an increase in the overall satisfaction rates, we are happy to maintain the level from 2003/04. We have produced our Open Spaces Strategy & Play Strategy in 2006 which have been well received by residents. These strategies enable us to develop plans and work with residents to provide good quality open space in Rossendale by 2020.

4.18 **Other highlight issues**

When asked what factors were most important in making somewhere a good place to live respondents said that low crime and clean streets were the most important things. (58% and 45% respectively) However, when asked what things needed most improvement, 45% said that activities for teenagers needed improving and 33% said crime levels and 32% said cleaner streets. It is interesting to note that those under 25 were much less likely to feel that there was a need to increase the number of activities for teenagers than those over 25.

4.19 We have the best performing CDRP in the county and we have created a new approach to multi agency working with our partners through implementing Neighbourhood Management throughout Rossendale. We have made dramatic increases in cleanliness at the same time as decreasing crime levels, which clearly demonstrates we are making an impact by working in partnership.

4.20 The Borough Council will continue to work with partners across the LSP including the new children's trust arrangements to ensure that not only are the numbers of activities appropriate within the Borough, but that they are also publicised and promoted properly so that as many young people as possible are able to access activities and facilities.

60% of the population are at least fairly satisfied with Rossendale as a place to live.

#### 4.20 **Respect and cohesion**

A series of questions are contained within the survey which relate to the Government's 'Respect' agenda and community cohesion issues. These cover issues such as perceptions about antisocial behaviour, drunk and rowdy behaviour and people respecting one another.

	2003/4	2006/7	
High levels of perceived anti-social behaviour	50	35	↓
Noisy neighbours and loud parties	17	19	↑
Teenagers hanging around on the streets	68	66	↓
Rubbish and litter lying around	54	55	↑
People being drunk and rowdy	60	43	↓
Abandoned cars	25	10	↓
Vandalism and graffiti	69	53	↓
People using and dealing drugs	74	56	↓
Parents not taking responsibility for their children's behaviour	n/a	70	
People not treating one another with respect	n/a	52	
People feel very or fairly well informed about what the council is doing to tackle anti-social behaviour	n/a	20	

4.22 Generally it can be seen from these results that over the past 3 years there has been an improvement in these respect indicators which would suggest that the Council's efforts to deal with the cleaner and greener and community safety agendas is working and delivering improvements to people's quality of life.

#### 4.23 **Top Priorities for the Council**

Respondents were asked to consider what the priorities for the Council should be.

		% saying it is a priority
1	Improving the way we collect bins and clean the streets	55.1
2	Regenerating Rossendale	54.8
3	Promoting the Borough as a place to live, work, visit or invest	53.2
4	Ensuring that you can contact the council quickly & that when you do you are dealt with quickly	43.7
5	Improving leisure facilities in the Borough	42.3
6	Improving Council Tax collection and benefits services	17.8
7	Other Priority	13.2

- NB: The following numbers refer to the links to the above Priorities of the Council
- 1 We have introduced alternate weekly collections which has seen our recycling rates rise in excess of 28.9% by 2006/07. Rossendale now collects seven different materials for recycling.  
We have also procured a new refuse fleet and extra street cleansing vehicles; this has significantly increased the reliability of our vehicles, which in turn has led to improved performance.  
We have reduced the amount of waste collected per household year on year for over 3 years, which bucks the national trend of increasing waste arisings.
  - 2 A joint Rossendale Regeneration Delivery Team has been established through combining resources from both the Borough and County Councils and the North West Development Agency to facilitate the delivery of an ambitious regeneration programme for the Borough.
  2. The council has continued to work with the owners of the Valley Centre in Rawtenstall to secure a redevelopment scheme that is capable of transforming the town centre.
  - 2/3 We are developing a 'regeneration' brand for the Borough to provide a very visual statement of where and how we are working with our partners to invest in the economic, environmental and social fabric of the Borough.
  - 2 The Borough Council actively supports PEER to deliver enterprise and business support across the Borough. PEER has recently won the north west 'Enterprising Britain' competition and has been put forward as the region's representative in the national competition.
  - 3 Brighter Business Solutions were appointed in November 2006 to take forward the Tourism Marketing Action Plan and improve both the visitor offer in the Borough and how the Borough promotes and markets itself to visitors and tourists.
  - 3 We have continued to work with our partners to take forward the Adrenaline Gateway proposal and £330,000 has recently been secured to support the next phase of the project, including the creation of a number of bike trails.
  - 2/3 The Housing Market Renewal Programme in Bacup and Stacksteads has continued to deliver housing and other improvements for local people. By the end of March 2008 almost £3 million will have been invested in the refurbishment of 411 properties, complimented by £800,000 of improvements to communal open spaces, public parks and play areas.

- 3 A private sector landlord accreditation scheme has been introduced which aims to improve standards in both the condition and management of privately rented properties in the Borough.
- 4 Rossendale has developed a Customer Access Strategy and is currently in the process of consulting with customers. From the initial responses the preferred method of contacting the Council is by telephone this is also backed up by the results of the survey 74.9%. As a result of these findings Rossendale have already implemented the following:
- Extended opening hours for contact concerning Council Tax, Revenues, Recovery, and Fraud customers can contact the Council up to 19.00 hours and the service is available Monday to Friday.
  - A new Council 24 hour emergency telephone contact number is being set up.
  - The use of Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) is either being removed or minimised as a result of customer responses.

Although contacting of the Council by the internet is still only 8.7%, additional electronic services are being provided because this method of contact is increasing in popularity.

- 5 The council have already committed through the white paper on leisure and its close working relationship with the Rossendale Sports and Physical Activity Alliance (RSPAA) to investing in the improvements in Council owned leisure facilities, including improving open spaces as places to undertake leisure activities. It continues to fund the Leisure Trust to deliver high quality leisure facilities across the Borough.
- 6 With regard to improving the collection of Council Tax and NNDR we have introduced the following measures:
- Implementation of a clear and robust recovery process that deals with offenders, the new process includes:
    - Reminder letters.
    - Summons
    - Court lists
    - Bailiff actions
    - Committal hearings
  - The Contact Centre and One Stop Shop (OSS) also provides recovery chasing functions and resourcing is planned to meet all the recovery deadlines.
  - A second Bailiff has been procured to increase and support the existing Bailiff activity.
  - Inspectors are being used to visit customer premises to identify and resolve any phantom tenant problems.
  - In the future we are going to use the Experian database to cross reference the SX3 application to identify offenders who are claiming 25% discount when there is more than one person living at the property.

- Promoting the use of direct debit payment methods to aid the collection and are offering financial prize draws as an incentive for customers to sign up to this method of payment.
- Implementing BACS electronic refund service so that any customers who pay via direct debit will be refunded electronically rather than wait for a cheque.
- Setting automatic direct debit facilities so that when a call agent contacts a customer they can set the direct debit up straight away without having to go via a bank.

From these it can be seen that the communities of the Borough are in broad agreement with the council's new priorities:

- Delivering quality services
- Delivering regeneration
- Keeping the Borough Clean and green
- Promoting Rossendale as a Place to Live
- Improving Health and Wellbeing

#### 4.24 **Financial Inclusion**

We asked a series of short questions about financial inclusion as members have raised this as a concern and we wanted to ensure a clear baseline for the issue across the valley.

Whilst 96% of respondents had a bank account in total only 65% of those who were unemployed had a bank account of any kind and none of them had a credit union account. Of those who were unemployed 17% had borrowed money from a doorstep lender and in total 10% of those asked said that they had debts other than a mortgage which are worrying them. These points will assist the Council and its partners in the development of a financial inclusion strategy for the Borough over the next 12 months or so.

#### 4.25 **Communications**

An important part of improving services relates to communicating with the public. 84% of the survey respondents knew how to pay bills to the council and how to register to vote but only 25% knew how well the council was performing and 21% knew whether we were delivering on our promises. This clearly indicates a knowledge gap between those services which have a significant impact on people and which are highly relevant to people's lives and issues around performance which are less clearly defined and with which fewer people may wish to engage. Nevertheless, there is a clear public interest for the Council to be as transparent and clear about its own performance as possible and for this to be communicated to residents in a meaningful way.

4.26 Further research is required to determine which areas of council performance are of most interest to residents and a communications plan can be developed once this is complete. In the meantime performance information will feature strongly in the Council's Rossendale Alive newsletter to residents three times per year and we will continue to build on our approach to public accountability which has been praised in the CIPFA/PricewaterhouseCoopers awards.



4.27 Performance information will also be updated on the Council's website regularly and we will continue to publish a full review of the Council's performance in the Annual Corporate Plan which is available on the website. There were clear disparities between age groups on these questions, with younger people feeling the least well informed, which will require action to be taken through our youth engagement work, particularly the annual Local Democracy Week events and closer work with the youth council.

## 5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

5.1 There are no immediate and additional direct financial implications arising from this report. The Council has already allocated its financial resources in line with its Corporate Priorities

## 6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

6.1 This is a very important report in the context of delivering quality services

## 7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

7.1 There no human resources implications

## 8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Overall it can be seen that whilst customer satisfaction headline remains lower than desired at 35% there has been significant progress against other key indicators and the councils' ambitions are now being translated into activity which is being noticed by the public as it begins to impact on their lives.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members note the report and the activity planned to deal with each of the areas

<b>Contact Officer</b>	
Name	Ilona Snow Miller
Position	Head of Community and Partnerships
Service / Team	Community and Partnerships
Telephone	01706 252412
Email address	ilonasnow-miller@rossendale.gov.uk

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Rosendale GHSS survey and full survey report	<i>Room 113 Futures Park</i>

## Summary

**Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the authority runs things?**

35% state they are **very** or **fairly satisfied** with the way the authority runs things. This compares to 27% in 2003 (CI = +/- 2%)



**How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way in which your complaint(s) was (were) handled?**

35% state they are **very** or **fairly satisfied** with the way their complaints were handled. This compares to 22% in 2003 (CI = +/- 5%)



**How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Rossendale Borough Council has kept this land clear of litter and refuse?**

54% state they are **very** or **fairly satisfied** that Rossendale BC has kept this land clear of litter and refuse. This compares to 40% in 2003 (CI = +/- 3%)



**Please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following elements of the service which we provide: *The waste collection service overall.***

64% state they are **very** or **fairly satisfied** with the waste collection service overall. This compares to 72% in 2003 (CI = +/- 2%)



**Please indicate whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following elements of the service which we provide: *The provision of local recycling facilities overall.***

68% state they are **very** or **fairly satisfied** with the provision of local recycling facilities overall. This compares to 69.7% in 2003 (CI = +/- 2%)



**Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the following services provided or supported by Rossendale Borough Council: *Sports/ Leisure facilities and events***

53% state they are **very** or **fairly satisfied** with the sports and leisure facilities provided by Rossendale BC. This compares to 52.7% in 2003 (CI = +/- 3%)



**Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the following services provided or supported by Rossendale Borough Council: *Museums & Galleries.***

41% state they are **very** or **fairly satisfied** with museums and galleries provided by Rossendale BC. This compares to 40.8% in 2003 and 44% (CI = +/- 3%)



**Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the following services provided or supported by Rossendale Borough Council: *Parks and open spaces.***

58% state they are **very** or **fairly satisfied** with the parks and open spaces provided by Rossendale BC. This compares to 58% in 2003 (CI = +/- 3%)

