Citizens' Survey 2012
Executive Summary

Information by Design Ltd was jointly commissioned by the City Council and NHS Nottingham City to conduct the 2012 Nottingham Citizens' Survey. The field work was undertaken in December 2012 and involved face-to-face interviews with 2000 citizens (approximately 100 per ward, depending on relative population size). This is the same methodology as last year's survey so the results are directly comparable. Analysis of the results has been undertaken by researchers from Nottingham City Council and NHS Nottingham City.

The survey gathers citizens' perceptions on a variety of subjects including quality of life, health and wellbeing, community cohesion, feelings about Nottingham and satisfaction with the Council. This year's survey did not include questions relating to antisocial behaviour. These were included in the Crime and Drugs Partnership's Respect Survey.

Overall, results from this year's survey generally show little change compared to last year. This is very positive given the backdrop of the current challenging economic climate and the many welfare changes which we may have expected to lead to falling levels of satisfaction.

This year we have undertaken further analysis to investigate differences in views by additional population groups. This has resulted in some interesting observations with, in general, more positive views from those in full-time education and those who are retired and less positive views from those who are unemployed.

Perceptions about local area

84% of respondents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, no significant change from the 85% recorded in 2011. There is some variation by area but no correlation with the level of deprivation as measured by the most recent Index of Multiple Deprivation.[1]

The top five factors cited as being important in making somewhere a good place to live remain the same as last year. These are clean streets, level of crime, public transport, health services and shopping facilities.

Four of the five factors cited as being most in need of improvement have also stayed the same, though the ordering has changed. These factors are level of crime, clean streets, road and pavement repairs and activities for teenagers. Of these, clean streets and road and pavement repairs have moved up the rankings. The factor cited as the fifth most in need of improvement in this most recent survey is the level of traffic congestion; this was 8th in 2011.

Both the factors cited as important and those cited as being in need of improvement vary considerably by demographic group and socioeconomic group, reflecting people's different life stages and different priorities. For example the level of crime emerged as much more important in making somewhere a good place to live for those in private rented accommodation compared to owner-occupiers or those in social rented accommodation.

89% of respondents feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, no significant change from the 89% recorded in 2010 and 90% recorded in 2011.

New questions were added this year to try to establish an understanding of community resilience. 86% of respondents said that they can rely on friends, family and neighbours if they need help and just over 60% said they can rely on local groups (voluntary groups, faith groups etc.).

[1] Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2010, CLG

Perceptions about Council
70% of respondents believe the City Council provides value for money. This remains around the same as the 68% recorded last year. Results from the survey also suggest that levels of satisfaction with the Council have been maintained, 66% said they were very or fairly satisfied (68% in 2011). Once again there is a large variation between levels of satisfaction recorded in different areas. In this latest survey, satisfaction with the Council varies from 61% in Area 3 (Aspley, Bilborough, Leen Valley) and Area 6 (Mapperley, St Ann's, Dales) to 77% in Area 7 (Wollaton West, Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey). Providing value for money continues to correlate strongly with satisfaction with the Council.

The correlation identified in last year's survey between satisfaction with the Council and community cohesion is not apparent this year.

There has been a fall in the proportion of respondents who feel that the Council keeps them informed. In this survey, 71% said they feel the Council keeps them very or fairly well informed about the services and benefits it provides compared to 76% recorded in the last two years. This is likely to be symptomatic of the many changes being experienced by our citizens, many the result of Central Government decisions. Locally the reduction in the frequency of the Arrow publication may also have contributed to this fall as may proposals to change the school terms. Overall however we can still be confident that the information we provide to keep our citizens informed is useful with 83% saying they found Council information easy to understand all or most of the time and only 5% saying it was rarely or never easy to understand.

44% of respondents said they had contacted the Council in the last 12 months and of these, 65% said they were satisfied with the way the Council handled their enquiry. Levels of satisfaction are consistent with the 64% recorded last year. New questions were added this year to measure the Council's customer service. 92% of those contacting the Council said that those people they spoke to were polite. There is a strong correlation between satisfaction with the Council and satisfaction with the handling of a previous enquiry.

Perceptions about Nottingham
The proportion of respondents who said they would speak highly of Nottingham remained the same as last year (66% compared to 67% in 2011). This varies considerably by area from 57% in Area 5 (Sherwood, Berridge) to 72% in Area 4 (Arboretum, Radford & Park, Dunkirk & Lenton) and Area 8 (Bridge, Clifton North, Clifton South). Compared to last year, the gap between the lowest and highest areas has widened.

Health and wellbeing (self reported)
The proportion of respondents who said they smoke has risen very slightly to 30.5% from 27.5% in 2011 but remains below the results recorded in all surveys prior to 2011 and significantly below the 2008 baseline of 39%. Performance therefore continues to suggest that the Nottingham Plan target of 20% by 2020 remains achievable. However, smoking prevalence remains significantly higher than the England average of 20%[2].

Data from those who have reported their height and weight suggest levels of overweight and obesity remain unchanged from last year. However, the results indicate that there continues to be significant underreporting of weight amongst citizens with higher BMIs.

The proportion of respondents who indicated that they drink alcohol (61%) and the proportion of these who are drinking at levels that could lead to health problems (12%) remain consistent with the levels recorded last year.

Results from the survey suggest that, on average, the mental wellbeing of citizens, as measured by the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, is comparable with the England average but locally there are groups with significantly lower scores, particularly those who are unemployed.

[2] Integrated household survey, 2011/12