

# The Highland Council

27 October 2016

Agenda Item	
Report No	

## Results from the Citizens' Panel 2016 Performance and Attitudes Survey

### Report by the Chief Executive

#### Summary

The results from the Annual Performance and Attitudes survey to the Citizens' Panel provides information on satisfaction with Council services, Council qualities and perceptions of community life in the Highlands. There is high confidence that the results are representative of the Highland population and the maturity of the survey means we have information on performance trends over several years. The report highlights more work is needed to understand the views of different user groups within Highland.

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Each year we survey our Citizens' Panel on their views on performance and attitudes and the 2016 results are now provided for members' consideration. The information will be useful in informing Council redesign and continuous improvement activity across the organisation.
- 1.2 Overall, while the survey provides a mixed picture of performance it also demonstrates that we continue to deliver quality services which are valued by the public. As indicated in last year's report, it was anticipated that the current period of fiscal austerity, which has seen annual reductions in the Council's revenue budget, would impact on public perceptions and this is the first year there is evidence of this. Going forward there are further significant challenges facing the Council with continuing reductions in revenue budgets anticipated, it will therefore continue to be particularly challenging to improve or maintain positive public perceptions on the quality of our Services.
- 1.3 In keeping with previous survey analysis, we have considered if there are any differences in view among different groups in our community, namely by age, gender and disability. While the citizen's panel membership is balanced, the profile of survey respondents is less so and this is reflected in more detail in paragraphs 10-18 of the full UHI report with a link provided at 2.1 below. A consequence of this is that survey responses are less representative of the views of young people.
- 1.4 While we have consistent trends with a similar profile over a number of years, more work is needed to understand the views of a range of users groups which this survey cannot provide including age, gender, disability, ethnicity and tenure. The Council has in the past ran focus groups and Services have also surveyed their service user groups achieving a more robust and relevant sample of views. Going forward all available information, supplemented by further surveys and focus groups, will be needed to inform our approaches to continuous improvement, the prevention agenda and to support the redesign of the Council.
- 1.5 This year we received 1084 responses from our Citizen's Panel of just over 2,340 adults, including 480 electronically, providing a 46.3% response rate. This number of responses along with the sampling method used provides good validity in the results; a 95% confidence level is achieved with a confidence

interval of + or - 3.0%. In other words where this level of responses was received, we can be 95% confident that the response we would get if we surveyed all adults in Highland would be within + or – 3.0% of the results from the survey<sup>1</sup>.

- 1.6 The annual survey represented a set of questions the core of which had been sustained over a 10+ year period. This year we produced a shorter survey focusing on the key performance indicators we draw from the results each year. This was due to consistent trends in the responses to questions on areas such as customer contact over a number of years. We will survey in more details every three years in order to ensure past trends are being maintained.

## 2. Key findings

- 2.1 The full 2016 survey report, provided by the UHI Centre for Remote and Rural Studies, can be accessed on our the performance web pages at:  
[http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/407/how\\_we\\_are\\_performing-public\\_performance\\_reports](http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/407/how_we_are_performing-public_performance_reports)

This provides further details on trends over time and graphics, including tables and pie charts. As this is a long report, running to 92 pages, a summary including highlights and areas for improvement is provided below. This year we also asked new questions on involving and developing communities.

- 2.2 Key results and trends in performance and attitudes include:

### Council Qualities

Our values are: listening; being open; valuing; improving; supporting; partnering and delivering. Many of the qualities scored by respondents are reflective of our values. Results in this section include:

- a) 57% of the panel believe the Council meets or exceeds their general expectations, (69% the previous year).  
 b) Ranking of qualities in order of importance:

Qualities as Ranked in Order of Importance by Respondents in 2016 Survey	Respondents Mentioning Quality in Their Top 5 (2015/16) %	Respondents Mentioning Quality in Their Top 5 (2014/15) %	Respondents Mentioning Quality in Their Top 5 (2013/14) %
1. Maintains good quality local services	75	68	69
2. Listens to local people	61	62	58
3. Provides value for money	60	54	51
4. Is efficient	46	38	38
5. Treats all residents fairly	42	36	38
6. Is aware of people's needs	36	35	40
7. Involves people in how it spends its money	34	35	35
8. Tells local people what it is doing	30	29	32
9. Is environmentally friendly	28	27	28
10. Is approachable	19	22	20
11. Is helpful	17	21	21
12. Represents your views	16	19	22
13. Is a fair employer	12	14	10

<sup>1</sup> While this is a very small margin of error, not all respondents answered every question, especially when the questions were about using specific services, so results need to be treated accordingly.

In being asked to rank qualities in order of importance, 'maintains good quality services' is ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with a notable increase from 68% to 75% in 2015/16.

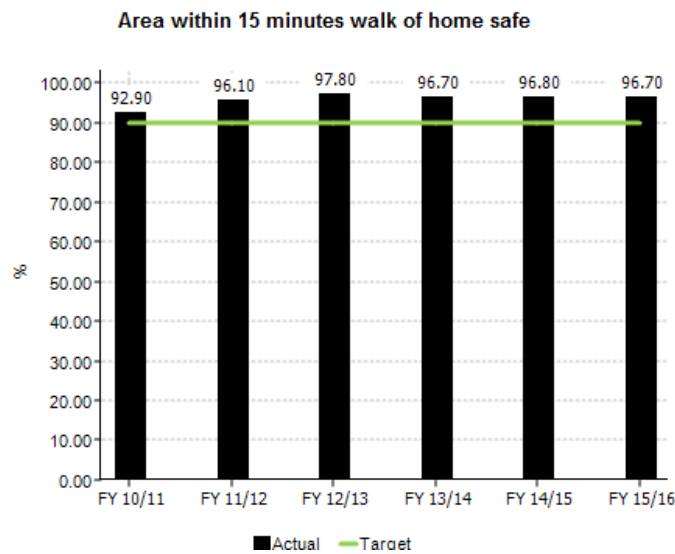
- c) In the table below there are 3 qualities where over half the panel agree or strongly agree with the statements that the Council: 'maintains good quality local services' 'is environmentally friendly' and 'is approachable'. On balance, the Council is viewed positively in demonstrating all of these. However, there were notable changes in 5 qualities where on balance more disagreed rather than agreed (net satisfaction score) with statements on 'listens to local people' (-3); 'provides value for money' (-10); 'is efficient' (-11); 'represents your views' (-13) and 'involves people in how it spends its money' (-28). These are also some of the most important qualities to respondents as outlined in the table at (b) above.

Qualities	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	2016 Neither Agree nor Disagree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	Difference between % who agree and % who disagree in 2016	Difference between % who agree and % who disagree in 2015	Difference between % who agree and % who disagree in 2014
Is approachable	8	46	34	9	3	42	49	57
Is environmentally friendly	8	48	32	9	3	44	44	49
Maintains good quality local services	6	51	22	19	2	36	47	57
Is helpful	6	42	36	12	4	32	43	47
Is a fair employer	6	29	60	4	1	30	29	30
Treats all residents fairly	5	33	37	18	7	13	14	11
Is aware of people's needs	4	31	36	22	6	8	11	15
Tells local people what it is doing	5	33	31	25	6	7	4	11
Listens to local people	3	28	35	26	8	-3	12	11
Provides value for money	3	23	38	28	8	-10	4	10
Is efficient	3	24	35	30	8	-11	-2	10
Represents your views	3	19	43	27	8	-13	-5	-1
Involves people in how it spends its money	2	18	32	36	12	-28	-17	-18

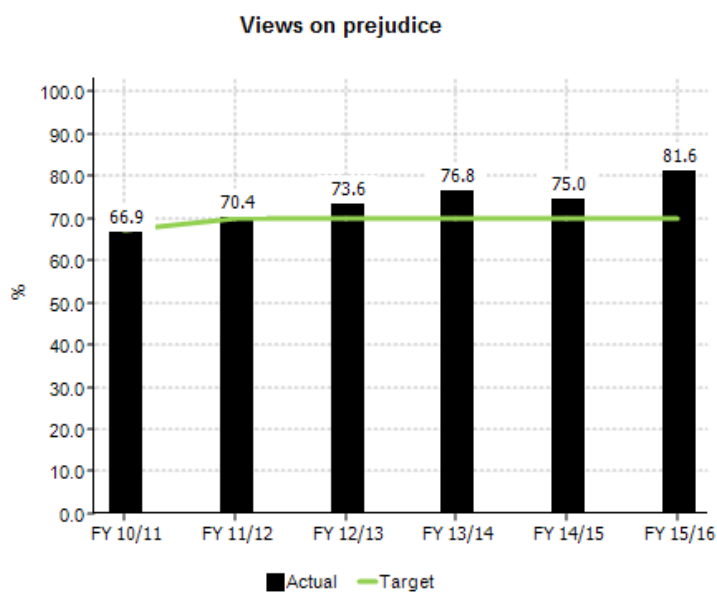
### Community Life

- d) 76% feel we have strengthened the profile of the Gaelic language to a great or some extent (76% in 2014/15).
- e) Community safety - the top 3 areas of concern remain the same and are road safety (80%), alcohol abuse (70%) and drug misuse (65%).

- f) When asked about awareness of the impact that hate incidents or crimes have on people in Highland 70.9% said they were aware (73.4% in 2014/15) with 29.1% saying they were not aware (26.6% in 2014/15).
- g) Community safety - 96.7% of respondents consider the area within 15 minutes' walk of their home to be 'very' or 'fairly' safe compared to 96.8% the previous year.



- h) Equalities – 81.6% agree that Highland should do everything it can to get rid of all types of prejudice compared to 75% in 2014/15. An improving trend can be demonstrated from 66.9% agreeing when the question was first asked in 2010/11.



- i) When asked if people would rather live in a place with lots of different kinds of people or where most people are similar to you. 55.7% of respondents answered with lots of different people (57.6% in 2014/15).

#### Satisfaction with Council services

- j) As outlined at 1.4 above, more work is needed in order to understand more fully a range of user group's views in Highland. Appendix 1 of this report provides a table with more detailed information about the percentage of the panel that used key Council services and their satisfaction with them. There are a number of positive and negative movements in satisfaction but this needs balanced with how many people's views this represents. Key movements of 5% or more in net satisfaction are:

### Improved performance

- Pre-school services (used by 19% of panel) has increased by 23% from 53% to 76%;
- School Transport (used by 19%) has increased by 16% from 53% to 69%;
- Breakfast and after-school clubs (used by 13%) has increased by 37% from 23% to 60%;
- Service to protect children from harm (used by 17%) has increased by 24% from 35% to 59%;
- Council Service Centre (used by 26%) has increased by 6% from 53% to 59%;
- Cycle Paths (used by 39%) has increased 9% from 47% to 56%;
- Trading Standards (used by 15%) has increased 16% from 32% to 48%;
- Community Learning/adult education (used by 18%) has increased 7% from 40% to 47%;
- Gaelic pre-school services (used by 9%) has increased 30% from 15% to 45%;
- Gaelic Primary Education (used by 10%) has increased 22% from 20% to 42%;
- Gaelic Secondary Education (used by 9%) has increased 20% from 5% to 25%;
- Gaelic community learning/adult education (used by 10%) has increased 14% from 9% to 23%;
- Housing Information & advice (used by 15%) has increased 27% from 17% to 44%;
- Community Occupational Therapy (used by 19%) has increased 18% from 23% to 41%;
- Care at Home services (used by 21%) has increased 19% from 4% to 23%;
- Services to reduce offending (used by 11%) while still a negative score has improved 6% from -7% to -1%.

### Declining Performance

- Road repairs & pot holes (used by 97% of the panel) has decreased 9% from -65% to -74%;
- Payment of Council tax (used by 68%) has decreased 7% in net satisfaction from 83% to 76%;
- Council Service Points (used by 42%) has decreased by 13% from 83% to 70%;
- Swimming Pools (used by 45%) has decreased by 5% from 72% to 67%;
- Countryside Ranger Service (used by 28%) has decreased 8% from 72% to 64%;
- Street Lighting (used by 91%) has decreased 6% from 68% to 62%;
- Street cleaning (used by 92%) has decreased 8% from 43% to 35%;
- Services to protect adults at risk of harm (used by 13%) has decreased by 16% from 28% to 12%;
- Planning applications & building warrants (used by 37%) has decreased 13% from 21% to 8%;
- Planning for future use of land (Local Plan) (used by 36%) has decreased 7% from 13% to 6%.

k) Of the 46 service areas surveyed, there were more positive views than negative views for 43 of them (net satisfaction rate). Highest positive scores

are found for refuse/bin collection (79%), walking routes (79%), parks and open spaces (77%) and libraries (77%).

- l) Road repairs and potholes (-74%), winter maintenance (-5%) and services to reduce offending (-1%) have more dissatisfaction than satisfaction. There are relatively small numbers of respondents using services to reduce offending with 11 responses and this must be taken account of when considering the results.
- m) Overall there are 8 services with net satisfaction of 75% or above and an increase from 21 to 25 for those with 50% or above.

Number of Services in the Various Net Satisfaction Rate Bands

Net Satisfaction Rate Bands (%)	Number of Services in Each Year					
	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
75 to 100	8	9	6	7	3	7
50 to 74	17	12	16	12	16	13
25 to 49	11	10	12	16	11	14
0 to 24	7	12	11	9	12	3
Lower than 0	3	3	1	1	3	3
<b>Total Number of Services</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>41</b>

- n) The top four most important services for the public are also the top four used by most people; road repairs and potholes, winter road maintenance, refuse/bin collection and parks & open spaces. High satisfaction also continues to be found with refuse (79%) and parks & open spaces (77%). The table below highlights the most important services to respondents where at least 10% of the panel placed them in their top 10 most important:

Importance of services to respondents - appearance in respondents' top five

Services	2016 %	2015 %	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
<b>Road repairs and pot holes</b>	<b>66</b>	63	57	57	61
<b>Winter road maintenance</b>	<b>43</b>	50	43	48	50
<b>Refuse/bin collection</b>	<b>26</b>	45	47	41	48
<b>Public Parks and other open spaces</b>	<b>24</b>	20	21	19	18
<b>Primary education</b>	<b>23</b>	21	19	19	22
<b>Secondary education</b>	<b>21</b>	17	18	18	18
<b>Recycling facilities</b>	<b>18</b>	28	30	32	32
<b>Swimming pools</b>	<b>18</b>	15	16	15	14
<b>Other sports facilities</b>	<b>16</b>	15	13	13	11
<b>Pavement maintenance</b>	<b>14</b>	15	16	12	14
<b>Libraries</b>	<b>14</b>	17	20	19	16
<b>Care at home services</b>	<b>13</b>	9	8	9	10
<b>Council Service Points</b>	<b>11</b>	10	11	6	7
<b>Residential homes for disabled/elderly people</b>	<b>11</b>	7	6	8	7
<b>Street cleaning</b>	<b>10</b>	14	15	16	17

- o) There are 7 services that 90% or more of respondents say they use:
- Refuse/bin collection (98%)
  - Recycling facilities (97%)
  - Road repairs/potholes (97%)
  - Winter road maintenance (96%)

- Street cleaning (92%)
- Street lighting (91%)
- Pavement maintenance (91%)

#### Using our online services

p) This year we asked new questions to gauge the panel's views on overall satisfaction with their online experience at [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) . Overall 75.1% said they were very or fairly satisfied with online services.

q) In relation to questions on the qualities of online services:

- 85% said they would use online services again;
- 75% agreed that online services were easy to use;
- 71% said they were able to find the online services they needed;
- 70% agreed that online services were quick to complete;
- 68% agreed that online services were easy to find.

#### Involving and Developing Communities

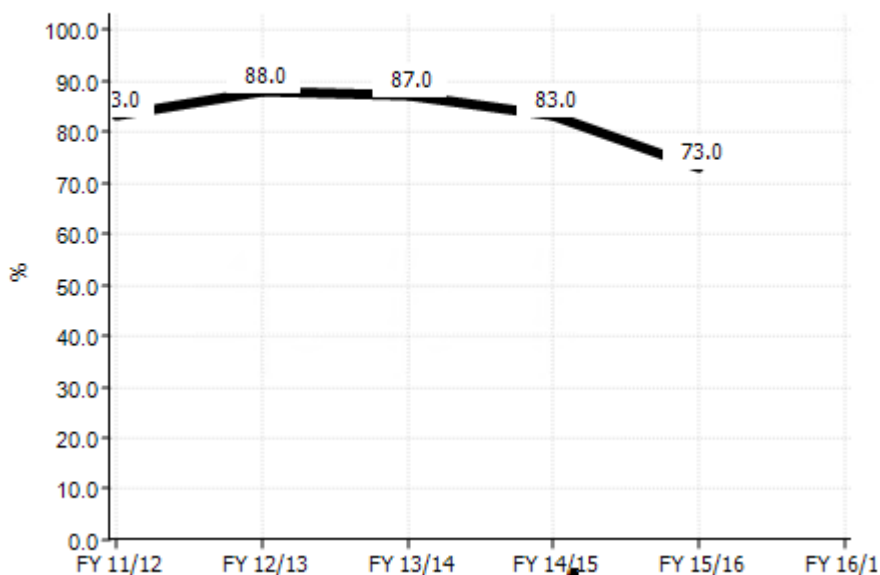
r) This is a new set of questions around a 'Community led Highland' which will be reported in more detail to the Communities and Partnerships Committee, and results include:

- 47% of the panel say that they have not engaged in community activity or with community organisations in the past year;
- 52% say they are interested to a great or some extent in being involved in discussion about development or improving their community;
- 50% of the panel agreed with the statement 'do you agreed that your community should get more involved in providing the services you and your community need?';
- 52% of the panel said they would be interested to some or a great extend in the delivery of the services their communities need.

### 2.3 Overall satisfaction with Council services

73% of the panel say they were satisfied overall with Council services in 2015/16 compared to 83% in 2014/15.

**Overall satisfaction with Council services**



## 2.4 Areas for service improvement

Services with higher levels of respondents and low satisfaction score, and where improvement actions are in place are road and winter maintenance. An update on both these services was provided in the annual performance report to Council on 8th September 2016. The report highlighted that a review of winter maintenance is held annually in order to provide the most effective service possible, and investment of an additional £24.3 million is planned over the next 9 years in roads, bridges and piers. This will help reduce the deterioration, however it will take a few years before the investment is reflected in the road condition survey results and improves public opinion.

## 3. **Follow up actions**

3.1 The results will be fed back to:

- Staff through 'In Brief', management briefings and service briefings;
- Citizens' Panel members to thank them for taking part in the survey, advising them of the key results and our follow up action;
- The general public when we feed back our performance results through our performance and press webpages.

## 4. **Continuously improving the survey process**

4.1 Each year we ask panel members how they find being a member. Feedback remains relatively consistent across the questions and this year:

- 62% said they felt their views have been listened to;
- 84% said they found it useful to be a panel member;
- 86% said they found it worthwhile;
- 22% said they found it time consuming and this is a notable improvement from 37% the previous year and may be reflective of the shorter length of the survey.

4.2 We refresh a third of the Citizens' Panel membership each year and ensure the overall panel membership is representative of the adult population profile (based on 2011 Census). Panel membership stands at 2,340.

### 4.3 Further analysis and reporting

We will analyse and feed back in more detail on a number of sections of the survey to strategic committees and working group meetings.

## 5. **Implications**

### 5.1 Resource implications

The survey costs around £15,000 in research fees, printing and postage. The recommendations for follow up actions will be contained within current budgets. The need for focus groups and further survey work identified at paragraph 1.4 will require costing and resources allocated to enable this work to be carried out with support from the Council's Policy Team. Through partnership working it may be possible to share approaches and cost.

### 5.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report, but using the information for understanding how our performance is perceived and being open about that, helps us to comply with our legal duties on public performance reporting.

### 5.3 Risk implications

There is a risk that our performance is judged solely on public perception. Credible performance reporting should also take into account performance



information from other sources as well and ideally combining results from a range of sources. This includes our statutory and local performance indicators, describing our performance against our Programme commitments, professional opinion gathered through self-evaluation and external scrutiny bodies as well as feedback to members from constituents.

#### 5.4 Equalities implications

The report includes questions on public attitudes to diversity and equality which generally appear to show improving tolerance and acceptance of diversity in our community since 2010/11. Additionally, the Community Life section includes questions on awareness of, and understanding of, the impact of hate incidents and crimes, i.e. those motivated by malice and ill-will towards a social group on the basis of disability, sexual orientation, race, religion or faith. The trends shown in this information are used to inform and measure a number of the Council's equality outcomes. Monitoring information on the breakdown of the panel by age, gender, disability and ethnicity is available. While, the sample size is too small to provide statistical confidence that it is representative of all views this information can, however, provide a useful indication of areas where further investigation is needed.

#### 5.5 Climate Change/Carbon Clever implications

There are no climate change/carbon clever implications. There is scope to use the survey to help us to understand how we are perceived on a range of environmental services if this is required.

#### 5.6 Rural Implications

The survey collects data at Ward level, but the sample sizes of returns are too small to have statistical confidence, they are representative of the Ward as a whole. Additional work has been commissioned to analyse the results of the survey from a rural perspective and the findings will be used to inform service and policy direction.

#### 5.7 Gaelic Implications

As outlined at paragraph 2.2 (d) the survey supports the delivery of the Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) and allows us to assess public opinion on the extent to which they feel we have strengthened the profile of the Gaelic language.

### **6. Recommendations**

6.1 Members are asked to consider the key findings of the feedback from the Citizens' Panel from this year's survey.

6.2 Members are asked to approve the follow up action to communicate the results set out in paragraph 3.1.

6.3 Members are asked to await further analysis and reports as outlined in paragraph 4.3 above.

Date: 17 October 2016

Author: Evelyn Johnston, Corporate Audit & Performance Manager,  
Tel (01463) 702671

### Views on The Highland Council's services: Net Satisfaction Rate

Service	Respondents Using Service		Year			
	2016	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Refuse/bin collection	98	79	78	75	78	72
Walking routes e.g. Great Glen Way	47	79	83	84	84	80
Public Parks and other open spaces	80	77	78	80	76	73
Libraries	59	77	77	84	84	81
Primary education	26	77	75	68	59	65
Payment of Council Tax	68	76	83	81	87	82
Pre-school services	19	76	53	54	58	62
Recycling facilities	97	75	76	76	75	72
Museums	49	72	69	64	74	64
Other sports facilities	40	72	75	70	62	69
Registrars for Births, Deaths &	26	71	74	73	67	73
Council Service Points	42	70	83	73	79	74
School transport	19	69	53	54	41	33
Burials and cremations	23	68	66	63	61	68
Swimming pools	45	67	72	71	65	64
Secondary education	24	66	64	61	60	57
Countryside ranger service	28	64	72	69	69	67
Street lighting	91	62	68	67	67	64
Council website	57	62	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School meals	24	61	64	57	54	45
Breakfast and after school clubs	13	60	23	39	40	24
Council Service Centre	26	59	53	58	n/a	n/a
Services to protect children from harm	17	59	35	39	42	28
Cycling paths	39	56	47	45	44	50
Environmental Health Service	20	53	50	52	54	55
Trading Standards	15	48	32	38	46	41
Community learning/adult education	18	47	40	51	39	47
Gaelic Pre-school services	9	45	15	20	27	21
Housing information and advice	15	44	17	40	43	30
Gaelic Primary education	10	42	20	17	14	24
Community Occupational Therapy	19	41	23	39	32	30
Street cleaning	92	35	43	44	47	43
Dealing with flooding	61	33	30	34	27	18
Economic development / Business	14	33	29	30	31	35
Advice on Benefits	19	28	27	35	35	30
Gaelic Secondary education	9	25	5	8	7	14
Gaelic community learning/adult	10	23	9	12	1	15
Care at home services	21	23	4	11	33	23
Residential homes for disabled/elderly	21	22	0	19	24	21
Services to protect adults at risk from	13	12	28	36	30	28
Planning applications & building	37	8	21	23	19	-2
Planning for future land use (Local	36	6	13	8	14	3
Pavement maintenance	91	6	10	15	21	16
Services to reduce offending	11	-1	-7	18	7	-13
Winter road maintenance	96	-5	-8	17	14	0
Road repairs and pot holes	97	-74	-65	-56	-61	-59