

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE
8 DECEMBER 2009**

WAVELENGTH 20 - SURVEY RESULTS

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present the main findings of the Wavelength 20 survey to SMT

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 There were **623** forms returned from **901** sent out. This is a return rate of **69%**

2.2 The Wavelength panel is representative of the city for gender and for ward population but is under-represented in the younger age-groups and over-represented among the older groups. To compensate for this a weighting has been applied to ensure the percentage figures reported are reflective of the city's population.

2.3 Wavelength 20 covered three topics:-

- **Refuse recycling:** This was a part of the consultation and involvement plan for the proposed changes to the refuse collection which also included an online survey, focus groups, a Community Forum and community meetings.
- **Environmental health:** To gauge public support for the proposed introduction of a rating scheme for food safety and hygiene standards in catering and restaurants.
- **Online services:** To gauge public opinion and attitudes to the Council website and online services since the introduction of the new website and gather data on levels and patterns of internet use.

2.4 Online services have previously been covered in Wavelength 17 in 2008. The questions were re-run to identify changes in perception since the launch of the new council website and to identify trends in usage as this is an area of which is quickly changing.

2.5 This Executive Summary only provides a commentary on the figures returned for Wavelength 20. For a full comparison with previous Wavelengths, please see the main report.

3.0 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

3.1 Refuse and recycling

Panellists were asked a range of questions about the refuse collection and recycling services. These included broad questions on principles around recycling and climate change, questions around current recycling behaviour, the type of property and collection that people had. They were then asked a range of attitudinal questions around the proposed changes to the refuse collection service.

3.2 The results showed that:

- Large majorities in favour of the Council improving it's recycling rates and reducing it's carbon emissions
- Significant quantities of some recyclable materials being disposed of by the incorrect method
- Most respondents have external storage at their property
- Respondents in flats are less likely to have external storage
- The percentage of respondents on a weekly collection is in line with the percentage across the city
- Respondents on a weekly collection are more sceptical about the proposed switch to a fortnightly collection
- Respondents on a back alley collection are quite sceptical about the switch to a front of property collection
- Respondents in the affected groups (weekly collections and back alley collections) are more likely to feel that the proposed changes will affect the way that they deal with their refuse and recycling

3.4 **Environmental Health**

The questions in this section looked at the proposed introduction of a star rating scheme for food premises, the range of premises it could apply to and whether the results should be made public either on the website, on the premises or via the Exeter Citizen.

3.5 The results showed that the vast majority of respondents were in favour of the scheme and in having the results reported on the website and in the Exeter Citizen.

3.6 **Online services**

The online services section asked people to indicate their use (and that of their children) of the internet. This covered everything from e-mail to online shopping and search engines to social networking. People were also asked about how they find out Council information and how they use the Council website.

3.7 The results showed that:-

- The vast majority of respondents use the internet
- There is a slight upward trend in internet use
- The most popular uses were for e-mail and search engines
- Use of mapping services has greatly increased
- There are some significant differences in patterns of use between male and female respondents for both general internet use and Council specific use
- The most popular way to get Council information is via the Citizen, leaflets/publications and the website. This has not changed since the last time this was asked (Wavelength 17, 2008)
- Very few older people (65+) use the Council website compared to the percentage of older people who use the internet generally
- The website is generally well regarded but there are specific areas which would benefit from improvement
- Although the information on the website was generally regarded as good, there were some areas which scored less highly
- Respondents were not overwhelmingly positive towards the website although relatively few were negative
- The Living In Exeter feature is not well known at the moment but respondents suggested that they would make more use of it in the future

4.0 NEXT STEPS

4.1 Results from Wavelength 20 have been passed to the commissioning Directorates. The Refuse and Recycling results were reported to the Refuse Collection Working Party in early November.

4.2 The issues identified in 3.7 are being addressed by the Web Development Team. Customers provide regular feedback on areas of the website through GovMetric. This is monitored daily by the Web Development Team to identify where areas of the website require immediate improvement. In addition to this, at Service Level Agreement meetings held by the Customer Service Development Officer with Services, GovMetric feedback is provided to help them understand where they need to review and improve their content on the website. To improve awareness of Living in Exeter, it has been suggested to the GIS Officer that it can be promoted through the use of the website's 'adspots', as well as services being encouraged to embed the postcode finder into their content where it is relevant.

4.3 Results from the survey will be posted on the Council's website, a summary will be sent to Wavelength panellists and produced in the Citizen.

5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no resource implications

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive are asked to approve the report

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

23/11/09

Background papers used in this report:

- Wavelength 20 full report