Residents Survey 2017: Introduction & Methodology

During the months of July – August 2017 a residents survey was sent out to 8,793 randomly selected households across Cheshire East. The aim of the survey was to gather information on a number of topics including the local area, how the council runs things and on current issues such as community safety.

In previous years (2011 -2016) similar surveys have been sent to members of the council’s citizens panel however this year we changed the methodology as guidance suggests that a randomly selected sample gives a more statistically representative view of the population. Respondents were able to respond via an online link or return a paper questionnaire. One reminder letter was sent out to maximise response rate. In total 3,706 residents aged 18 + completed the survey within the deadline date (3,215 paper, 491 online) equating to a response rate of 42%.

An achieved sample of 3,706 yields a confidence interval of between +/-0.8% to +/-1.8% at the 95% level.

Please note: results have been ‘weighted’ by gender, age and geography (spatial planning settlement areas) to ensure that results accurately matches the known profile of Cheshire East’s overall population by these characteristics, base sizes quoted are un-weighted.
Satisfaction with ‘the local area as a place to live’ is less than it was in 2016. Satisfaction with ‘the way Cheshire East (CE) Council runs things’, those agreeing that CE ‘provides value for money’ and that they can ‘trust CE to spend money wisely’ also seem slightly less than in 2016 but not significantly so.

Those agreeing that the council ‘is working to improve local area’ and ‘is doing a good job’ seem to be significantly less than in 2016. However, more respondents in 2017 ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’ for these particular questions. If we take those who ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’ out of the equation then overall agreement for ‘is doing a good job’ is only slightly less than in 2016 (59% compared to 60% respectively). Overall agreement for ‘is working to improve local area’ changes to 54% for 2017 compared to 60% for 2016.
One third of respondents (33%) spoke positively of the Council. Just over one third had no views one way or another and just under one third spoke negatively. The results are the same as those received in 2016.

One half (50%) of respondents felt that CE kept residents informed about the services and benefits it provides whereas the other half did not. The amount of residents feeling informed has gone down slightly from 2016 (when 54% felt well informed).
Around one half of residents disagreed that CE Council listens to the concerns of local residents (47%), takes account of residents views when making decisions (50%) or that they can influence decisions affecting their local area (57%).

Just under one half (44%) of respondents felt that CE acts on the concerns of local residents whereas just over one half (56%) did not.

The pie chart shows the proportion of respondents who think Cheshire East Council acts on the concerns of local residents, with 41% indicating a great deal, 45% indicating a fair amount, and 11% indicating not very much or not at all.

The table shows the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with statements about CE Council. For example, 19% agree, 34% neither agree nor disagree, and 47% disagree that CE listens to concerns of local residents. Similarly, 16% agree, 34% neither agree nor disagree, and 50% disagree that CE takes account of residents views when making decisions. Finally, 13% agree, 30% neither agree nor disagree, and 57% disagree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area.
Satisfaction with the waste services has been steadily increasing since 2008. In 2016 satisfaction levels seemed to significantly increase however figures now seem back in line with past year-on-year trends.

85% were satisfied with the waste collection service overall.

This year we also asked about levels of satisfaction with the garden waste collection service, and 85% were satisfied with this particular part of the service.
The majority of residents felt safe walking around their local area during the day (92%) whilst (67%) felt safe walking around their local area after dark.

Levels of safety during the day are the same as in 2016 (92% felt safe) however, levels of safety after dark have decreased (71% felt safe after dark in 2016).
Main Themes Headline Results

Quality of life: Ideal versus needs improving

Overall priorities
Seven issues were considered as having higher importance in making somewhere a good place to live and higher priority for needing improving in the local area:

- Health services (60%, 30% respectively)
- Public transport (39%, 36%)
- Condition of roads & pavements (34%, 69%)
- Clean & tidy streets (31%, 29%)
- Affordable decent housing (30%, 30%)
- Level of traffic congestion (28%, 54%)
- Shopping facilities (25%, 29%)

The level of crime was 2nd important in making somewhere a good place to live but not as high of a priority for most needs improving locally.
Whilst satisfaction with ‘local tips/household waste recycling centres’ has decreased (from 84% in 2016 to 81% in 2017), satisfaction with ‘cemeteries’ and with ‘keeping the land clear of litter and refuse’ has increased (‘cemeteries’ from 66% in 2016 up to 72% in 2017 and ‘keeping land clear of litter and refuse’ up from 55% in 2016 to 65% in 2017.

The amount of residents feeling that fly tipping on public land is a problem has decreased significantly since 2016 (42% felt it was a problem in 2016 compared to 33% in 2017).
Satisfaction with Council services: 2017

- 69% Satisfied with their local green space/park
- 74% Satisfied with parks and open spaces
- 78% Agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

Agreement/disagreement that CE Council should introduce a kerbside food waste collection:

- 33% Agree
- 42% Disagree
- 25% Neither agree nor disagree

Base for % = 3,276

One third of respondents (33%) agreed that CE should introduce a kerbside food waste collection, 42% disagreed.
The majority (70% or over) felt that the listed anti-social behaviour issues were not a problem in Cheshire East.

The biggest perceived problem of anti-social behaviour was 'people using or dealing drugs' at 28%, followed by groups hanging around the streets at 22%.
Almost one third (32%) of respondents recalled receiving a copy of the ‘Your Cheshire East’ booklet that was included with all council tax bills that were sent out to residents in 2017. 61% of respondents (without a citizen’s account) were either unsure that they had received one or stated that they hadn’t received one.

Of those that did receive the booklet 86% (out of 1,216) report reading some or all of it, representing a good level of initial engagement.

74% Agreed the booklet was well laid out
70% Agreed the purpose of the booklet was clear
66% Agreed they feel better informed about how Council tax is spent
52% Agreed they feel better informed about why Council tax has increased
Local Communities

To what extent do you agree or disagree that, in your local area there are enough:

**Employment Opportunities**
- Agree: 34%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 31%
- Disagree: 35%

Base for % 2,740

**Training Opportunities**
- Agree: 36%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 22%
- Disagree: 42%

Base for % 2,442

Respondents were generally split when it came to agreeing/disagreeing that there were enough employment opportunities within their local area with all answers receiving roughly around a third of response (31% to 35%).

Respondents were less split when it came to training opportunities with more neither agreeing nor disagreeing that there were enough within their local area (42%).
Almost one half (48%) of respondents agree that there is enough ‘access to general information and advice’ within their local community when and if required whilst, almost one third (31%) agree that there is enough ‘debt, loan, banking and money advice/support’.

Both ‘employment support’ and ‘opportunities to enhance skills’ can be identified as needing improvement as more respondents disagree that they have access to these than agree (29% and 31% respectively).

Please note: Those who answered ‘don’t know’ were excluded from the overall results. However, of note there seemed to be more awareness of ‘general information and advice’ compared to the other services as those answering don’t know was lower for this (18% stated don’t know for ‘general information and advice’ compared to around 36%-39% for the other advice/support services stated).
Results indicate that respondents feel there is a need for youth clubs the most in their local area (24% disagreed there were enough), followed by Arts and Crafts (16% disagreed).

Respondents were also able to select a ‘don’t know’ option in this question which could indicate a lack of awareness of clubs in their local area. The percentage of respondents selecting this was relatively consistent across clubs and groups (31 to 37%) other than exercise/dance (23%) and sports clubs (21%) which seem to have a slightly greater sense of awareness around them.

Please note: those who stated they were ‘not interested’ in a group were excluded from the total analysis. This generally was around 20% of all given responses to this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of respondents disagreeing there are enough of the following community groups/activities in their local area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Clubs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts and Crafts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book/Reading Clubs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports Clubs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise/Dance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre/Singing Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coffee Mornings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mums ‘n’ Tots</td>
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Base for % = 2,494 to 2,999

24%

Would consider volunteering their time to help with community groups, activities or projects in their local area.
85% of respondents report having either adequate or as much social contact as they would like with people.

4% (143) respondents report feeling socially isolated, further analysis is required to identify if this is more prevalent in specific locations or for individuals with certain characteristics.
Digital Inclusion

Whereas

80%
Access the internet once a day or more

11%
Access the internet hardly ever or never

Main barriers to accessing the internet

- Don't own a computer, smart phone or tablet: 70%
- No interest: 54%
- Don't have the knowledge or skills: 36%
- Concerned about privacy or security: 33%
- Costs too much: 16%
- No/poor internet service: 5%
- Physical or sensory disability: 4%

Base for % = 527

Agreement/disagreement feel excluded from society

- Agree: 22%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 37%
- Disagree: 42%

Base for % = 482

Those who accessed the internet ‘hardly ever’ or ‘never’ were asked what if anything prevents them from accessing the internet more often. The barrier most commonly reported was not owning a computer, smart phone or tablet (70%), just over half (54%) were simply not interested in accessing the internet.

In terms of exclusion from society 22% of those who accessed the internet ‘hardly ever’ or ‘never’ agreed that not having access to the internet made them feel excluded while 42% disagreed.