

How we did it...

When planning the 2015 survey the council's Corporate Executive Team considered several options for the conduct of the survey each with different cost and methodological implications. In these times of austerity and tight budgets it was agreed to scale back the expensive paper and postage elements of the previous approach and to emphasise digital collection of data through the website. It was hoped that a sample size of around 1000 would be achieved but we were disappointed to only achieve 711 responses despite two extensions of the collection period. Due to the small sample and uneven geographical distribution of responses we have some concerns about how representative the responses were compared to previous surveys. This is the percentage of responses from each town:

Respondents nearest town	Percentage of total responses
Denbigh	23%
Rhyl	21%
Ruthin	17%
Prestatyn	14%
Llangollen	13%
St Asaph	4%
Rhuddlan	4%
Corwen	3%
Grand Total	100%

The resident's survey will return in 2017 and steps will be taken to increase the number of participants.

Wellbeing

Respondents of the survey appear to have high levels of wellbeing. Wellbeing measure are on a scale of 1 to 10. The average scores were;

Wellbeing Question	Average score out of 10
Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	7.46
Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?	7.59
Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?	7.46
Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?	2.89

This may stem from strong community networks, families and friends. We found that 70% said they hardly ever felt isolated from others, 69% hardly ever felt they lacked companionship, and 65% felt they hardly ever feel left out.

The wellbeing of residents and of future generations is a key focus for the council and our partners in other agencies. Look out for consultation and engagement events on the new Wellbeing Plan for Conwy and Denbighshire, which is being developed throughout 2016-17.

Your Local Area

81% of respondents were happy with their local area as a place to live. 54% of respondents felt there had been no major change, however, 34% felt their local area had got worse in the previous 12 months.

We hope to engage local residents in the development of their neighbourhoods and will be launching a new approach to local development during 2017 which will involve the council providing support to communities to develop their own plans looking at land use and economic development, parks and open spaces and even housing and social services.

Clean and Tidy Streets

The majority of residents surveyed (68%) were satisfied with the overall level of cleanliness of the streets in their local area.

When asked specifically about dog fouling 46% of residents surveyed were satisfied with their local area. Other concerns raised were about physical condition / appearance of buildings and shop fronts and of cigarette litter in town centre areas.

The council has engaged a contractor to issue fixed penalty fines to people who drop litter (including cigarette butts). We are proposing to introduce control areas to extend the use of penalty fines to other forms of anti-social behaviour within specific areas. Tackling dog fouling and untidy buildings are priorities in the council's Corporate Plan.

Improving our Roads

Every year an independent company scans the surface of all the roads in Wales and produces measures of the quality of the roads in each local authority area. Denbighshire's roads have been improving in recent years and the latest figures show 71% of A roads, 64% of B roads and 53% of minor roads in overall good condition.

Despite these results satisfaction with the quality of our roads remains lower than we would wish. In the 2015 survey 57% were satisfied with the maintenance of main roads, 54% with streets in towns and villages and 39% with rural roads.

Investment in our roads is a priority of the council and a key feature of our Corporate Plan.

Town Centres

Two thirds of respondents visited their nearest town centre more than once per week. 59% of respondents were happy with their town centres in general. 79% were satisfied with the range of services and 50% with the range of shops on offer in their nearest town centre. However, less than half of the respondents were happy with the availability (48%) and price (44%) of car parking and 42% felt satisfied with the level of traffic congestion.

Residents are clearly disappointed with job opportunities (12% satisfaction) and entertainment for young people (16% satisfaction) in their town centres.

We have developed a project, called Vibrant and Viable High Streets, to help improve town centres. This includes work following on from a major review of parking.

Community Safety

In common with other areas, and previous survey results, we found that 24% felt unsafe after dark, 4% felt unsafe during the day and 8% felt unsafe on public transport.

The Community Safety Partnership, with membership from North Wales Police and the Fire and Rescue Service as well as the Local Authority, is taking several steps to increase safety and improve perceptions, particularly after dark. This includes the use of Taxi Marshalls on key holiday nights to prevent altercations at taxi ranks and a robust licensing regime- taking poorly run premises to review and closing if standards aren't met.

The partnership has also begun publishing regular safety messages via social media (Prevention/Alerts) and continues to work together to find long-term solutions for a sustainable CCTV service following decreases in funding.

This in addition to targeted, ongoing work, to support victims of domestic abuse.

Consumer safety is also taken seriously with trading standards acting on cold callers, illicit tobacco and illegal sales of all kinds.

In most of the county there are few community safety issues associated with public transport. Nevertheless, the council's passenger transport and public protection services are working in partnership with North Wales Police to monitor and respond to any issues that do arise, including at known hot spots such as Rhyl Bus station.

The number of recorded offences in Denbighshire increased by 413 between 2013/14 and 2014/15. Nevertheless, the longer-term trend is down with almost 3000 fewer recorded crimes than in 2006/07. The rate of recorded crime per 1,000 population in Denbighshire in 2014/15 was 57, which is similar to the all Wales rate.

Opinions about the council

We asked people what we thought about the council. 41% felt the council provided good value for money, 36% felt the council was efficient and well run, 31% felt the council did act on the concerns of residents and 45% felt the council treats all types of people fairly.

We are proposing several initiatives to engage residents more directly in the work of the council and our public sector partners. Major engagement events are taking place throughout 2016-17 to ensure residents shape the Wellbeing Plan which will be the key strategic plan for all public service organisations throughout Conwy and Denbighshire.

As mentioned we intend to involve people more fully in their local community by supporting them to development plans in their local areas.

Also a new equality participation forum has been established to ensure that all types of people are treated fairly. The forum will review council decisions by participating in Equality Impact Assessments. The forum is seeking participation from those representing characteristics protected

by the Equality Act 2010. These characteristics are; Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation, so anyone can join.

Customer Service and Keeping you informed

We asked people how their last interaction with the council went, with the following results:

	% satisfied
Satisfied that they were able to speak with the right person	60%
Satisfied with the time it took to deal with their issue	57%
Satisfied with the information they received	53%
Satisfied with the level of customer service overall	60%
Satisfied that they were able to communicate in their preferred language	71%

We also asked how well informed residents were about the council with the following results:

	% who said that they were fairly or very well informed
How well the council was performing	39%
How the council spends its money	33%
The standards of service that should be expected	36%
How to get involved with local decisions making	27%

Since then we have re-organised the way in which the council communicates with the public and established a Customers, Communication and Marketing service, which brings together Customers Service and Communication under a new single Head of Service. This will improve the customer experience and modernise access to council services. Specifically we are:

- Introducing a new telephony system to reduce delays and speed up customer interaction
- Developing a new customer feedback tool including gathering feedback via the website
- Increasing the range of information that can be accessed via the website
- Revising our approach to reviewing customer feedback to ensure it informs decisions about changes to services
- Expanding our use of social media for engagement with residents

Contacting the Council

The survey identified that people's preferred method of contacting the council was shifting. The survey found 30% preferred to contact the council by telephone and almost as many (29%) preferred to contact the council by email. Many other methods, including in person, by letter, through local councillors, by text message and through the website are used by smaller numbers of people.

Next steps

Although the sample size and the distribution of responses has raised some questions about the validity of the survey, the council has accepted its key messages as one indicator of how our residents are feeling about Denbighshire as a place and the council. In addition to the specific

improvement to customers, communication and marketing services, every other service of the council is considering these messages, along with intelligence from other sources, as they develop their new service plans. The council is also raising these issues for further discussion and clarification at the 'county conversations' the outcome of which will help to determine the key priorities for the council and its partners over the next few years.