

Title: Place Survey Replacement Update

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1 Summary and context

- 1.1 The Place Survey is a city-wide statutory satisfaction survey which was scheduled to be undertaken every two years. However, the survey was cancelled by the Coalition Government when it came into office in 2010. The last Place Survey was undertaken in the autumn of 2008. The purpose of the Place Survey was to capture the perceptions and attitudes of local residents to their local area and their views of services delivered by the city council and partners. It provided data for National Indicators and Brighton & Hove's Local Area Agreement.
- 1.2 The Place Survey was prescriptive in that all local authorities in England were required to ask the same questions of their residents. There was no opportunity to ask questions designed locally with more relevance to the city and local service delivery. Given that there is no statutory requirement to retain the Place Survey, we now have the opportunity to decide whether to conduct a city-wide survey, and to if appropriate take the opportunity to ask questions that are more in line with local objectives and local service needs.
- 1.3 The city Council's Policy, Performance and Analysis Team are currently consulting with partners and appropriate officers from council services on:
 - Their attitude to the Place Survey and their need for a city-wide survey
 - The usefulness or otherwise of the current Place Survey questions and if there are alternative questions that they would consider more appropriate
 - How valuable longitudinal / trend data is
 - How important is comparative authority data
 - Their requirement for small area data
 - The preferred methodology.
- 1.4 This paper outlines initial findings, issues for discussion and requests agreement in principle on whether to conduct a city-wide survey. A copy of the Place Survey questionnaire is attached for information.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 LSP agrees in principle whether it supports a city-wide survey to replace the Place Survey. Field work would take place in Autumn 2011 or early in 2012.

3 Background

- 3.1 Surveying the views of residents contributes to providing the voice element in needs analyses, essential in the context of the council's move to commissioning services in partnership.
- 3.2 Despite the cancellation of the Place Survey as a statutory undertaking, measuring satisfaction and gaining service user feedback remains a critical element of performance management.

- 3.3 Regardless of the Place Survey being cancelled, there remains the statutory duty for councils, health bodies, the police and fire and rescue forces to inform, consult and involve local people about public services.
- 3.4 The methodology used for the Place Survey is a paper based self completion postal questionnaire sent to 6,000 randomly selected households evenly distributed across the city. Responses are weighted for gender, age, ethnicity and single person households.

4 Initial views

- 4.1 A high level of support for undertaking a city-wide survey branded under the LSP amongst partners consulted.
- 4.2 An interest has been expressed for keeping the majority of questions in the 2008 Place Survey. The link here is to the importance of having robust trend data covering a number of years.
- 4.3 It has not been identified as a priority to compare results with other local authorities
- 4.4 The importance of keeping most demographic and all equalities questions has been emphasised.
- 4.5 Interest has been expressed by some services for including extra questions.
- 4.6 Issues concerning cost have been raised. Services would like to keep / add questions but there are concerns that if they had to pay then identifying funds could be problematic
- 4.7 The Public Health Intelligence Unit intend to undertake a Health & Wellbeing city-wide survey in the 2011. The survey will be similar to surveys undertaken in 1999 and 2003 and have a methodology similar to the Place Survey. If practical The Public Health Intelligence Unit can see the logic in the two surveys to be combined.
- 4.8 There has been mixed views about the methodology to be used.

5 Issues to address

- 5.1 If a replacement survey is to be conducted, funding will need to be identified.
- 5.2 The timing of the research – city-wide surveys have normally been undertaken during October and November. The timeframe for designing, agreeing and signing off a questionnaire and methodology is short. Linking the survey to the objectives of the administration post the May elections and to the City Performance Plan (formal approval June 2011) will be critical. Field-work could be conducted at the start of 2012.
- 5.3 'Business case' for inclusion of questions – The last Place Survey contained 40 questions and covered 12 A4 pages. Any new questionnaire should be limited to a maximum of 16 pages therefore decisions will need to be made about the priority of new questions and/or retaining old questions. A clear case for how the information from each question will be used should be made before agreement to include in the survey.
- 5.4 Indicators are included in the City Commissioning Plan which were included in the Place Survey. These would be removed if no city-wide survey was conducted.