REPORT TO: **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 11 MARCH 2013**

REPORT ON: **ANNUAL CONSUMER SURVEY 2012**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

REPORT NO: **104-2013**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report summarises the main findings from the 2012 consumer survey and explains their use.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that members:

(i) note the results contained in this report and agree that the issues raised should continue to be addressed as part of the Council's commitment to continuous improvement using the Public Sector Improvement Framework model

(ii) remit the Chief Executive to investigate the reasons for any significant decline, defined as those results where 2012's score is more than 5% lower compared to any of the previous years, as highlighted in the body of the report

(iii) remit the Chief Executive to disseminate the customer contact results to departments for use in staff training on customer care

(iv) invite each Local Community Planning Partnership to consider the key results for their area

(v) authorise officers to publish the full survey report on the Council's website and make available copies on request as part of the Council's commitment to Public Performance Reporting

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4. INTRODUCTION

4.1 The Council commissions an annual consumer survey to help evaluate progress towards achieving the objectives set out in the Council Plan. The main purpose of the survey is to track over time a core set of questions related to customer satisfaction and the public's overall perception of the Council as an organisation. Graphs showing the long term trends on the core questions are presented in **appendix one**. In addition, the survey asks about crime; the way in which respondents access, or would like to access Council services; and about satisfaction with local facilities, environment and quality of life.

4.2 The survey is conducted by an independent market research company, currently Research Resource. As in the past 5 years, the city-wide survey was based on a sample of 2002 citizens, which allows some analysis at ward level for use by Local Community Planning Partnerships. Respondents were interviewed in their homes during October and November 2012.

4.3 Key results from the survey are summarised below. A full copy of the research report has been passed to the Group Leaders and the Conservative, Liberal Democrat and

Independent members. There is significantly more detail than can be summarised here and this report focusses on those questions that have been used as Council Plan performance indicators.

4.4 To achieve efficiency savings through economies of scale, this year's consumer survey was again carried out in conjunction with a wider Citizen Survey on behalf of the Dundee Partnership, which covers issues such as neighbourhoods, housing, community involvement, health, employment, community safety and money matters, and focuses in particular on community regeneration areas, although city-wide results are also analysed for comparative purposes. Results of this will be reported through the Dundee Partnership, and are included in the full copy of the research report referred to above. A summary of key results for each ward will be sent to each Local Community Planning Partnership.

5. KEY RESULTS

5.1 Customer Contact

5.1.1 A key objective of the survey is to gauge the levels of customer satisfaction perceived by people who contact a Council service, either by phone or by visit to an office. Tables 1 and 2 below show the results on a range of satisfaction indicators in 2012 compared to previous years. The % figures shown represent those who said they were very or fairly satisfied.

Table 1 Satisfaction with Telephone Contacts

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Overall Friendliness/Courtesy of Staff	78%	84%	92%	93%	87%	93%	86%	95%	97%	98%
How Quickly Phone Was Answered	84%	85%	91%	91%	94%	94%	98%	99%	99%	99%
How Well Staff Understood What Was Wanted	80%	79%	90%	93%	92%	91%	83%	89%	97%	97%
Overall Helpfulness of Staff	78%	84%	92%	93%	87%	93%	86%	95%	97%	98%
Ease of Getting Someone Who Could Help	74%	76%	80%	89%	88%	93%	93%	97%	98%	98%
Outcome of Contact	64%	71%	77%	82%	72%	77%	71%	72%	88%	91%
Average	76%	80%	87%	90%	87%	90%	86%	91%	96%	97%

Table 2 Satisfaction with Office Visits

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Ease Of Getting To Office	94%	96%	98%	100%	94%	96%	98%	98%	99%	97%
Suitability of Office	82%	75%	92%	97%	91%	89%	93%	94%	99%	96%
Overall Friendliness/Courtesy Of Staff	79%	85%	92%	81%	89%	82%	93%	91%	99%	91%
Overall Helpfulness Of Staff	79%	85%	92%	81%	89%	82%	93%	91%	99%	91%
How Well Staff Understood What Was Wanted	83%	82%	92%	87%	94%	86%	91%	89%	99%	89%
Outcome of Contact	66%	62%	88%	80%	76%	56%	77%	75%	90%	71%
Average	81%	81%	92%	88%	89%	82%	91%	90%	97%	89%

5.1.2 Satisfaction with telephone contacts is very high. Satisfaction with office visits has gone down compared to the exceptionally high figures in 2011, but is comparable to the average for the 5 years prior to that.

5.1.3 Of those who had recently contacted the Council, 61% of respondents said that their last contact was to request a service and 97% of these were satisfied. 32% said the contact was to seek information and 91% of these were satisfied. The proportion saying it was to make a complaint was 7%, compared to 41% in 2008, 29% in 2009, 19% in 2010 and 10% in 2011. Of those who did contact the Council to make a complaint, 41% said they were satisfied or very satisfied that the Council responded reasonably to the complaint compared to 40% in 2011.

5.1.4 Respondents were asked if they got what they needed in one contact. The percentage saying they did so, in 2012 and the previous years in which this question has been asked, are:

Received what customer needed in one contact.			
2009	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
65%	66%	85%	91%

5.1.5 The survey asks respondents whether they receive enough information about the Council and the services it provides. Results for 2012 and the previous years in which this question has been asked are:

Receive enough information about the Council and the services it provides									
2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
60%	64%	69%	70%	64%	71%	66%	69%	97%	89%

5.1.6 The survey also asks about use of, and satisfaction with, the Council's website. Results for 2012 and the previous years in which this question has been asked are:

Used website?					
2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
32%	22%	31%	27%	18%	18%

Satisfaction with website	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
How easily you managed to find information wanted	87%	93%	99%	94%
Amount of information provided on the website	87%	93%	99%	92%

There is no comparable data available on the usage of other local authority websites but the Steering Group which manages the development of the Council's website intends to carry out a survey of comparable Councils to see how our usage figures compare.. Feedback is sought on satisfaction with every page of the site using the GovMetric system. A strategy is in place to increase the number and range of online transactions and an advertising campaign is planned for the launch of the 'secure authentication' service which will expand the range of services we can offer online.

5.2 **Crime**

5.2.1 2012's survey asked a new question - 'Taking everything into account, how safe do you feel your neighbourhood is as a place to live?'. Results were that 57% felt very safe, 41% felt fairly safe and only 1% said they felt a bit unsafe.

5.2.2 The survey also included a question first used last year, which asked respondents to say if they felt the crime rate in their local area had changed in the last 2 years. Results were:

	2011	**2012**
More crime	6%	8%
About the same	70%	73%
Less crime	9%	2%
Don't know	15%	16%

5.2.3 Asked about the factors which contribute most to the level of crime in their neighbourhood, 40% of respondents said 'don't know' and the only other sizable response was Alcohol/Drugs at 27%.

5.3 <u>Public Image Profile</u>

5.3.1 The questionnaire includes a list of eleven factors which seek to assess respondents' overall impression of the Council. The full list of factors is shown in Table 3 below, along with the percentage of interviewees who responded positively in 2012 and previous years. Some factors have changed over time but the main aim was to use the overall index number of the average of all of the factors. This is shown also as a three year rolling average to smooth out blips potentially caused by timing and change of factors.

Table 3 Public Image Profile

Public Image Profile	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
Good Range of Services	64%	63%	69%	81%	72%	77%	74%	77%	85%	77%
Friendly Employees	67%	68%	75%	76%	73%	77%	77%	80%	82%	63%
Good Quality Services	55%	60%	64%	72%	66%	74%	67%	74%	81%	73%
Efficient Services	54%	58%	63%	66%	62%	70%	65%	67%	81%	66%
Communicates Well	49%	47%	53%	61%	57%	67%	55%	61%	66%	52%
Promotes Services Well	44%	47%	55%	58%	54%	70%	58%	61%	71%	55%
Receives Fair Press Coverage	45%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Value For Money	45%	49%	50%	56%	51%	65%	48%	58%	74%	57%
Listens to Complaints	53%	53%	55%	64%	61%	68%	64%	68%	63%	46%
Has Sufficient Resources	53%	55%	55%	68%	60%	69%	64%	71%	66%	57%
Tackles Important Issues for the Future of the City	N/A	41%	44%	55%	55%	65%	53%	54%	68%	55%
Ensures Sustainable Use of Resources and Care for the Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	66%	59%	63%	65%	56%
Average	53%	54%	58%	66%	62%	70%	62%	67%	73%	60%
Three year rolling average			**55%**	**59%**	**62%**	**66%**	**65%**	**66%**	**67%**	**67%**

5.3.2 The average score for the public image of the Council across all indicators in 2012 was down compared to 2011, reflecting lower scores on all the individual factors rather than any one single issue. In many cases the results are comparable to 2009 and 2010. However, the factor which received the lowest rating is ‘listens to complaints’ which has fallen below 50% for the first time and is more than 5% worse than in any previous year. It is proposed that the Chief Executive be remitted to investigate reasons for this result and to bring forward proposals aimed at improving this score in future years.

5.3.3 The survey also asks respondents to state which of the 'public image' factors are of most importance to them, and there is some correlation between the top priorities identified by respondents and the factors on which the Council scored most highly. The second and third highest priorities identified by respondents – good range of services and good quality services are in the top two in terms of how they perceive our performance. However, it should be noted that:

- providing value for money services was ranked first in terms of importance but fifth in terms of performance

- listening to complaints was ranked ninth in terms of importance but eleventh in terms of performance

5.4 **Local Facilities and Quality of Life**

5.4.1 The survey asks about satisfaction with a range of local facilities, ease of accessing those facilities, satisfaction with aspects of the local environment and how good the neighbourhood is as a place to live. Overall results are set out in Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7 below. Two additional facilities were added to the list in 2012 – access to free cash machine/auto teller and employment and advice services – so no historic comparisons available for these.

5.4.2 Note that the figures presented in Tables 4 and 5 exclude respondents who stated that the facility did not exist or they never used it - the figures show the % satisfied of those who expressed an opinion. This may account for the discrepancy between some figures in Tables 4 and 5 i.e. satisfaction with facilities is high when actually experienced, but ease of access to some facilities scores less highly.

5.4.3 Satisfaction with local facilities is shown in the table below.

Table 4 Satisfaction with local facilities

	% satisfied 2009	**% satisfied 2010**	**% satisfied 2011**	**% satisfied 2012**
Fire Service	100%	100%	100%	100%
Local schools	99%	96%	99%	99%
Local health services	97%	98%	99%	96%
Refuse collection	96%	99%	99%	98%
Community centres and libraries	96%	98%	98%	99% libraries 97% centres
Police service	94%	93%	98%	99%
Social care/social work	93%	88%	98%	97%
Street cleaning	92%	94%	97%	96%
Parks and open spaces	91%	88%	97%	95%
Public transport	90%	79%	96%	97%

	% satisfied 2009	% satisfied 2010	% satisfied 2011	% satisfied 2012
Local shops	89%	93%	96%	98%
Sport and leisure facilities	89%	91%	97%	97%
Community warden service	81%	74%	99%	99%
Local youth facilities	71%	65%	85%	93%
Local phone boxes	64%	76%	95%	94%
Access to free cash machine/auto teller	N/A	N/A	N/A	99%
Employment and advice services	N/A	N/A	N/A	89%

5.4.4 Satisfaction with the ease of access to the same facilities is shown in the following table:

Table 5 Ease of accessing local facilities

	% satisfied 2009	% satisfied 2010	% satisfied 2011	% satisfied 2012
Fire service	99%	100%	94%	89%
Local schools	99%	97%	86%	96%
Local health services	95%	98%	98%	95%
Refuse collection	98%	99%	99%	98%
Community centres and libraries	92%	96%	92%	92% libraries 83% centres
Police service	94%	95%	95%	89%
Social care/social work	93%	91%	58%	46%
Street cleaning	98%	97%	98%	96%
Parks and open spaces	90%	91%	94%	95%
Public transport	89%	90%	93%	94%
Local shops	90%	92%	97%	96%
Sport and leisure facilities	87%	94%	82%	81%
Community warden service	79%	77%	42%	44%
Local youth facilities	75%	72%	55%	58%
Local phone boxes	63%	80%	62%	54%
Access to free cash machine/auto teller	N/A	N/A	N/A	87%
Employment and advice services	N/A	N/A	N/A	54%

As shown by Table 4 earlier, satisfaction remains high among those who have experienced local facilities. However, Table 5 shows that scores for ease of access to the community warden service and local youth facilities are still around the levels in 2011, having been higher in 2009 and 2010, while the score for ease of access to social care/social work services has seen a further significant decline. It is proposed that the

Chief Executive be remitted to make contact with the relevant departments to try to account for these results and consider any action required.

5.4.5 Satisfaction levels with a range of aspects of the local environment are shown in the table below:

Table 6 Local Environment

	% Satisfied					
	2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
Shopping Facilities	85%	80%	87%	94%	97%	98%
Cleanliness of area around home	83%	79%	91%	93%	97%	98%
Cleanliness of streets	71%	78%	91%	94%	97%	97%
Quality and maintenance of open spaces	70%	80%	88%	91%	97%	97%
Condition of roads, pavements and streetlighting	49%	61%	80%	88%	89%	84%
Children's play areas	57%	52%	68%	55%	88%	88%

The results in Table 6 are very positive, showing high levels of satisfaction with aspects of the local environment, although there has been a reduction in the % satisfied with the condition of roads, pavements and streetlighting compared to the high scores achieved in 2010 and 2011.

5.4.6 2012's survey asked respondents to rate how good their neighbourhood was as a place to live in. 55% said very good, 42% said good and 1% said average. No-one said fairly poor or very poor. This question was worded differently than in previous years, when we asked people about satisfaction with the overall quality of life in their neighbourhood. Results on this question from previous years are shown below for reference until we can present trend information on the new question.

Table 7 Quality of Life / how good is your neighbourhood

Quality of Life in the Neighbourhood	% Satisfied				
	2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
Very satisfied	43%	31%	50%	40%	52%
Fairly satisfied	46%	55%	45%	54%	47%
Fairly dissatisfied	8%	9%	5%	4%	2%
Very dissatisfied	3%	5%	0%	2%	0%

How good is neighbourhood as a place to live?	**%**
	2012
Very good	55%
Good	42%
Average	1%
Poor/very poor	0%

6. BENCHMARKING

6.1 The Improvement Service for Local Government in Scotland is supporting the development of a benchmarking group for Councils and other organisations using the Public Sector Improvement Framework, which may provide opportunities to benchmark our customer satisfaction results with other authorities. Data from comparable Councils will be included in future reports if this becomes available.

6.2 Last year's report to Committee on the Council's annual survey also included results from the Scottish Household Survey which were published in August 2011. Data from this survey at Dundee level is only available every two years, so information expected to be published in August 2013 will be included in next year's report.

6.3 In September 2012, the Local Government Association published the results of a poll on resident satisfaction with local councils based on a random sample of 1,006 British adults contacted by telephone. Although the survey method and specific questions were different, some of the results may provide an interesting benchmark for the findings of the Dundee survey:

- the LGA poll found that 84% of people were very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This compares to 97% of respondents in our survey who thought their neighbourhood was a very good or good place to live

- the LGA poll found that 56% of people strongly agreed or tended to agree that their local council provides value for money. This compares with the figure of 57% for a similar question in our Dundee survey

- the LGA poll found that 66% of people felt very or fairly well informed about the services and benefits their Council provides. This compares with our score of 89% of respondents who felt they receive enough information about Dundee City Council and the services it provides

7. CONCLUSIONS

The Annual Consumer Survey continues to provide valuable information on residents' perception of the Council and satisfaction with local facilities and neighbourhoods, as well as the way people access our services. As in previous years, the issues raised by the survey results will continue to be addressed as part of the Council's commitment to continuous improvement through consultation with service users. The long term trends show that the council is improving in public perception for customer service and communication.

7.2 The survey provides important information on trends for self-assessment under the Public Sector Improvement Framework, which is a key part of the Council's performance management arrangements to ensure Best Value. The results will be distributed amongst officers and used in training courses in relevant areas. As highlighted earlier, attention will focus on those results where 2012's score is more than 5% lower than in any of the previous years.

8 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

9 CONSULTATIONS

The Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted on this report.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was relied upon in the preparation of this report:

Citizen Survey 2012 – Research Report prepared for Dundee City Council by Research Resource, February 2013

David K Dorward
Chief Executive 01/03/2013

Appendix one

Ten Year Trend analysis

The original purpose of the annual citizen survey was to provide a longitudinal measure related to citizens' perception of the Council as delivering customer service, good communication with citizens and their overall perception of the organisation.

The data is provided in the report and the graphs below show the long term improving trend in all of these main corporate performance areas at the same time as financial and efficiency savings have been delivered.