

Cabinet – 9 September 2020

Impact of COVID-19 Residents' Survey

Portfolio: Councillor Bird, Leader of the Council

Related portfolios: All

Service: Communications, marketing and brand (consultation)

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: No

1. Aim

- 1.1. This borough wide residents' survey aims to gain a better understanding of how communities in Walsall have been impacted by COVID-19 and explore their concerns and priorities for the future to inform the council's reset and recovery plans, plus other strategic activity and service delivery.

2. Summary

- 2.1. Residents are likely to be facing a range of concerns about the impact of COVID-19 and have been affected and continue to be affected in many different ways.
- 2.2. The survey will provide a wealth of up to date information and insight that the council will use to inform its ongoing response to the crisis.

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet agrees to a Borough wide residents' survey, its purpose, topics to be included and associated methodology and timeframe.

4. Report detail – know

Context

- 4.1. Many local authorities have conducted residents' surveys specifically with the purpose of understanding how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected and impacted communities in their area.
- 4.2. The council's current reset and recovery plans, which continue to evolve and develop, already take into account and have been informed by a wide range of information, data and insight. However in order to provide greater insight and understanding, a large scale borough wide survey is proposed.

4.3. The overall purpose of the anonymous survey is to identify and understand a number of critical issues, including:

- community, volunteering and support needed / received
- accessing council support services now and in the future
- finances, employment and the local economy
- health and wellbeing
- communications
- concerns and priorities for the future.

4.4. The survey will be conducted using online and postal methods. Whilst an online survey offers a quick and cost effective way of reaching residents and gathering their views, it is recognised that there are many people in the borough for whom responding online is not suited or possible.

4.5. As a result, and in order to reach as wide an audience as possible, the survey will also be posted to a random sample of c10,000 households and several thousand more distributed via community and voluntary organisations and via council officers whom have direct contact with residents. All paper surveys will be sent with a freepost reply envelope.

4.6. Alternative formats and support to complete the survey will be made available to those who request it. Local community and voluntary organisations will be encouraged to work with us to promote the survey and support people to respond.

4.7. To support the delivery of the survey a detailed communications plan will be developed, particular focus will be paid to encouraging seldom heard communities to respond.

4.8. The survey will take place during October 2020 with results available in late November / early December. It is anticipated that a follow up residents' survey will be conducted in the 2021.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

4.9. Results from the survey supports many of the council's corporate plan priorities. Survey questions cover contact and support from the council, community and volunteering, health and well-being, jobs and the economy and will help inform our corporate priorities.

Risk management

4.10. There are no specific risks associated with running the survey.

Financial implications

4.11. It is anticipated that the survey will incur a one off cost in the region of £10,000 to conduct, with the majority of costs relating to postage. The cost of the survey will be covered by the corporate consultation budget.

Legal implications

- 4.12. There are no specific risks associated with running the survey.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.13. There are no direct procurement implications from this report.

Property implications

- 4.14. There are no direct property implications from this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.15. A number of questions in the survey cover aspects of health and wellbeing and data gathered will be used to inform ongoing public health activity and communications, as well as the updated Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Health and Lifestyles Needs Assessment.
- 4.16. Analysis of the survey results will assist the council in its statutory duty to promote health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities between groups.

Staffing implications

- 4.17. There are no direct staffing implications from this report.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.18. The survey features a voluntary 'About you' section which includes a number of key socio-demographic and equality questions which will be used to conduct sub-group analysis and provide greater understanding and insight.

Consultation

- 4.19. Officers from a wide range of Council services have been engaged in the development of the questionnaire and proposed approach including Equalities, Legal and Finance. Feedback and input has also been sought informally from Cabinet members and the Corporate Management Team.

5. Decide

- 5.1. The survey results will provide a wealth of valuable insight and understanding to aid decision making in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on local communities.

6. Respond

- 6.1. Following approval, working with a range of key officers, the survey will be finalised for approval (see 7.1) after which it will be prepared for print, distribution and publication online.

6.2. A detailed communications plan will be developed and used to direct and support all stages of the survey.

7. Review

7.1. The Executive Director for Children's and Customer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, will have responsibility for signing off the final survey.

7.2. To ensure oversight and assurance of delivery, regular progress reports on the survey response rate and emerging findings will be provided to the Corporate Management Team.

7.3. Survey results will be shared and reported via the council's Corporate Management Team and Cabinet. Results will also be published on the council's website and shared with community and voluntary organisations.

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Sally Rowe
Executive Director

9 September 2020



Councillor Bird
Leader of the Council

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