

# Are you being served?

Consultation on benchmarking residents' perceptions of local government



## Acknowledgements

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# Introduction to the consultation

## Purpose

This consultation seeks the views of councils on a proposed set of resident satisfaction questions.

The intention is that these questions will be used on a voluntary basis by authorities in their own local surveys and, providing the methodology meets certain quality criteria, that they could then be used by the sector for benchmarking.

This consultation therefore also seeks the views of councils on the proposed guidance on quality criteria and methodology.

## Background

In July 2011, the Local Government Association (LGA) launched Local Government Inform (LG Inform). LG Inform is a new service to provide easy access for local authority staff and councillors and, eventually, the public, to key data about their council and its area, and to enable comparison to other councils.

Included among around 800 pieces of data within LG Inform are a number of items that were previously part of the National Indicator Set. However, with the cancellation of the Place Survey in 2010, there is currently no up to date comparable data on resident satisfaction contained within LG Inform.

Understanding resident or customer views is a key element of assessing the effectiveness of an authority, alongside cost and performance information. Furthermore, understanding resident satisfaction and being able to make informed comparisons can strengthen local accountability and be a key part of the sector's approach to managing its own performance.

Resident perceptions of crime and cohesion have also been identified by members of London Councils and the London Councils Self Improvement Board as key areas where benchmarking would be beneficial.

However, although there is demand for some comparative data, there is no appetite within the sector for another fully prescribed survey. As such, the LGA and the London Councils Self Improvement Board commissioned Ipsos MORI to undertake a review to help develop a set of questions and accompanying guidance that councils can choose to use in their own local surveys. These questions will collect general resident satisfaction data, as well as data on resident views of crime and cohesion.

This review, conducted between October 2011 and February 2012, consisted of:

- a rapid literature review of key technical issues
- interviews with senior stakeholders to gain insight into the needs of the sector

- a review of the questions that could form core benchmarking data – including cognitive testing of existing questions.

This was supplemented by an informal consultation whereby local authorities were invited to submit their viewpoints, along with information about their current research methods and benchmarking practices for satisfaction data. Responses were used to assist evaluation of current practice and to identify key priorities. The entire review is described in more detail in *Are you being served? Benchmarking residents' perceptions of local government – Technical review of perception measures*, which can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.local.gov.uk/about-lginform>.

LGA and the London Councils Self Improvement Board have drawn on the results of this review to produce a set of questions and accompanying guidance that councils can choose to use in their own local surveys. Should authorities use these, it will enable them to input their local results into LG Inform, and make reasonable, 'fit for purpose', comparisons of their results with those of others.<sup>1</sup> For more information about LG Inform please see: <http://www.local.gov.uk/about-lginform>

## How to take part in this consultation

The closing date of the consultation is **Thursday 19 April**.

The document outlining the proposed questions and guidance is laid out in full below.

Please read this document and then complete the questions which can be found in the accompanying Annex B.<sup>2</sup>

If you would prefer to answer a smaller set of high level questions, these can also be found in the accompanying Annex C.

Please email your response to: [research@local.gov.uk](mailto:research@local.gov.uk)

## Next steps

The findings from this consultation will be used to develop a document containing a final set of questions and guidance on their use, which will be published on the LGA website by summer 2012.

The document will then be disseminated by various routes, and all consultees will be sent a copy.

We would encourage all authorities to start using these questions in their local surveys at the next available opportunity. Authorities will be able to upload their results to LG Inform from autumn 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition, councils within London will be able to share their results with London Councils for benchmarking purposes.

<sup>2</sup> Please visit <http://www.local.gov.uk/about-lginform> to access the annexes.

# Uploading resident satisfaction data to LG Inform: a checklist

## Introduction

This document outlines a set of resident satisfaction questions and guidance that we are considering, to be used by councils on a voluntary basis in their own local surveys. This would enable councils to make reasonable, 'fit for purpose' comparisons of their results with those of others.<sup>3</sup>

**Three core benchmarking questions** are recommended as a priority for benchmarking. In summary, these are:

- Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?
- Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way [name of council] runs things?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree that [name of council] provides value for money?

A set of **second tier questions** are worthy of inclusion. These are:

- How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?
- How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?/  
How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day?
- Overall, how well informed do you think [name of council] keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

**A set of third tier questions** might be of interest to some authorities which cover: advocacy, council responsiveness, trust, community cohesion and anti-social behaviour.

## Background

In July 2011, the Local Government Association (LGA) launched Local Government Inform (LG Inform), a new free service to provide easy access for local authority staff and councillors and, eventually, the public, to key data about their council and its area, and to enable comparison with other councils. For more information about LG Inform and to register please see: <http://www.local.gov.uk/about-lginform>.

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<sup>3</sup> LG Inform allows comparisons on a national and regional basis, as well as by type of authority, and also allows creation of bespoke comparison groups.

Included among around 800 pieces of data within LG Inform are a number of items that were previously part of the National Indicator Set. However, with the cancellation of the Place Survey in 2010, there is currently no up to date comparable data on resident satisfaction contained within LG Inform.

Understanding resident or customer views is a key element of assessing the effectiveness of an authority, alongside cost and performance information. Furthermore, understanding resident satisfaction and being able to make informed comparisons can strengthen local accountability and be a key part of the sector's approach to managing its own performance.

Resident perceptions of crime and cohesion have also been identified by members of London Councils and the London Councils Self Improvement Board as key areas where benchmarking would be beneficial.

However, although there is demand for some comparative data, there is no appetite within the sector for another fully prescribed survey. As such, the LGA and the London Councils Self Improvement Board commissioned Ipsos MORI to undertake a review to help develop a set of questions and accompanying guidance that councils can choose to use in their own local surveys. These questions will collect general resident satisfaction data, as well as data on resident views of crime and cohesion.

This is a flexible approach designed to suit local circumstances and minimise the cost to councils of collecting the data by allowing them to slot the questions in with existing survey plans, whilst also helping to maximise the benefit and insight that can be gained from this data, by making it broadly comparable.

### **Consultation questions**

**Q1a)** Do you see this as a worthwhile exercise? Would the ability to benchmark on these issues be of use to your authority?

**Q1b)** Do you agree with the approach of allowing local flexibility by enabling authorities to include these questions in their own local surveys rather than requiring authorities to conduct a full, nationally agreed survey?

## **The checklist**

The checklist below outlines the criteria that need to be fulfilled in order for the data from this set of questions to be uploaded to LG Inform to be used for benchmarking purposes.

The criteria are based on the findings of the review by Ipsos MORI, which identified a set of conditions that would need to be met to ensure that any comparisons being made are robust, fair and valid, and that each council's data is of a good quality that will stand up to scrutiny. The full detail of the review is outlined in *Are you being*

*served? Benchmarking residents' perceptions of local government – Technical review of perception measures.*<sup>4</sup>

It will be important to refer to this document right at the outset of planning any local survey activity, as some of the requirements will influence early decisions about issues such as sampling and data collection method.

## Data quality criteria

### Data collection methods

Telephone, face to face, postal and online methods of data collection can be used; the advantages and disadvantages of each are discussed in *Are you being served? Benchmarking residents' perceptions of local government – Technical review of perception measures*. However the mode of data collection can have a marked impact on results, meaning that intra-mode comparisons are not desirable. Therefore, data included for comparison in LG Inform will be displayed grouped into common methods to ensure that only like-for-like data is compared across councils.

### Was one of the following methods of data collection used?

Telephone

Face to face

Postal and/or online

**When uploading your results to LG Inform, you will be asked to specify which method of data collection was used.**

### Postal and online data

One form of intra-mode comparison that can be valid is online and postal, as long as the respondent experience is the same for both.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, any online results submitted must ensure that, for the questions to be benchmarked, they meet the criteria listed below.

**Are respondents to online surveys allowed to choose not to answer the questions if they wish (in the same way as they could leave a postal survey question blank)?**

**Are the online questions presented in a simple way, that is, they do not include any graphics, routing or methods for answering that would not be available in a postal survey?**

### Sampling

Two types of sampling are permitted, in addition to a census approach:

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.local.gov.uk/about-lginform>

<sup>5</sup> This includes the situation where postal surveys give the respondent the option to respond online.

- Random sampling (whereby all population members/households have a random one in 'n' chance of being selected) is favoured for all methods of data collection.
- In addition, a census approach, where every member of the target population is contacted, would also be permitted.
- For self completion methods (postal or online) a random sampling or census approach must be used.
- For telephone and face to face surveys, quota sampling is also permitted.

When uploading data to LG Inform you will be asked to specify which sampling approach was used.

Authorities that have obtained satisfaction data through resident panels will not be able to upload this for benchmarking purposes. This is because there is strong evidence to suggest a considerable response bias among panel members, which makes it inadvisable to compare data collected via this method with general population data.

**If the method of data collection is postal or online, has either:**

- a random sample been used?
- a census approach been used?

**If the method of data collection is telephone or face to face, has either:**

- a random sample been used?
- a quota sample approach been used?
- a census approach been used?

**Please confirm the data has not been collected via a panel survey**

## Weighting

Where a random sampling or census approach has been used, data should then be weighted to the known profile of the local population.

Variables that are typically used for weighting in residents' surveys include age, gender and social grade (or work status as a proxy for social grade), although other variables such as household size are sometimes used as well. We have not specified exactly which variables the data should be weighted on as this will vary by population and dataset.

The impact of weighting is to reduce the effective sample size. In order to ensure that comparisons are meaningful, only data with an effective base of 500 or greater should be uploaded to LG Inform for comparison.

**Has randomly sampled or census data been weighted to the profile of the local population?**

Is the effective sample size 500 or greater?

## Seasonality

We do not require you to conduct the survey at any particular time of year. However when uploading your results please give a brief explanation of the time of year that the survey was conducted. If there was a significant national or local event (such as bad snowfall or the riots) close to the period of fieldwork which may have impacted on results, you can record this in the same place.

Has any contextual information about the time of year the survey was conducted been uploaded to LG Inform?

Has any relevant information concerning potentially influential local or national events or circumstance been uploaded to LG Inform?

## Don't know and refuse to answer

It is important that the 'don't know' and 'refuse to answer' options for each question are dealt with consistently within each data collection method. The requirements below reflect the most common approach to dealing with these answer options for each of the different methods.

### Telephone

Do not include an explicit reference to 'don't know' or 'refuse to answer' in the answer option list.

The interviewer can however code these answers if they are given spontaneously.

### Face to face

Show cards should be used. These should not include an explicit reference to 'don't know' or 'refuse to answer'.

The interviewer can however code these answers if they are given spontaneously.

### Postal and online

'Don't know' should be included as an explicit option in the answer list.

In postal surveys, respondents will have the option to refuse to answer by simply not filling in the question. In order to remain consistent, respondents should be allowed to leave the question blank when completing online.

Have the 'don't know' and 'refuse to answer' options been treated correctly, as outlined above?

## Reporting percentages

In order to ensure that comparisons are valid, there must be consistency in the inclusion of people that answered 'don't know' and people that did not answer each question in the reporting of percentage results.

In line with the approach taken in the Place Survey and Best Value Performance Indicators, please exclude respondents that answered 'don't know' when calculating percentages and also exclude respondents that did not answer.

**Have respondents that answered 'don't know' been excluded in the numerator and denominator for the calculated percentages?**

**Have respondents that did not answer been excluded in the numerator and denominator from the calculated percentages?**

### **Consultation questions**

We understand that, for some authorities, following these criteria will mean changing current practice; however we hope that the benefits of being able to benchmark performance against consistent, good quality data from other authorities and, in turn, contributing to this resource for the benefit of the whole sector, will outweigh this. We are keen to ensure that the criteria strike the right balance between ensuring that valid comparisons can be made against any burden that this might put on authorities.

**Q2a)** Would your authority be able and willing to comply with the criteria specified in this section on 'data quality criteria'?

**Q2b)** Are there any criteria that you disagree with or that would be problematic for your authority? If so, please outline which ones and why.

**Q2c)** Are all the criteria clear? Do any need further information or explanation?

## The three core questions

The three questions outlined below are the core set that have been identified as being of strategic and practical importance in terms of helping councils understand the extent to which their residents are satisfied with their performance. Whilst participation is entirely voluntary, we would encourage all councils to include the full set of questions in their local surveys should they want to make comparisons through LG Inform. This will provide a consistent and robust set of benchmarking data for the benefit of the whole sector.

### Full question text

This section outlines the full text and answer options of the three core questions, as well as guidance on the modifications needed in two tier areas. This is followed by guidance on question ordering.

### Definition of local area

Many of the questions in this set ask respondents about their 'local area'. Please include the following text at the start of your survey to ensure that this is being interpreted consistently:

*“Throughout this survey we ask you to think about ‘your local area’. When answering, please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home.”*

**Has the definition of local area been included at the start of the survey?**

### **Question A: Satisfaction with the local area**

*Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?*

Response codes:

Very satisfied

Fairly satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Fairly dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Don't know

### **Consultation questions**

**Q3a)** Do you agree with the inclusion of this as a core question?

Please note that our review has identified that in some cases authorities use slightly different variations of the questions we tested. In each case we have recommended the wording that strikes a balance between being most consistently used and methodologically most correct.

**Q3b)** Would you be happy to use the proposed wording and response scale in your local surveys?

### **Two tier issues**

The following preamble should be inserted before the first question that asks specifically about a named local authority.

A slightly adjusted preamble will be used depending on which scenario your survey fits:

- In the case of a questionnaire designed to understand perceptions of a single tier authority.

*“Your local area receives services from [name of council]. [Name of council] is responsible for a range of services such as refuse collection, street cleaning, planning, schools, social care services and road maintenance.”*

- In the case of a questionnaire in a two tier area, designed to understand perceptions of a district only, or a county only.

*“Your local area receives services from two councils, [name of district council] and [name of county council]. EITHER This survey asks about [name of district council], which is responsible for services such as refuse collection, street cleaning and planning OR This survey asks about [name of county council] which is responsible for services such as schools, social care services and road maintenance.”*

- In the case of a questionnaire designed to understand perceptions of both the district and county.

*“Your local area receives services from two councils, [name of district council] and [name of county council]. [Name of district council] is responsible for services such as refuse collection, street cleaning and planning. [Name of county council] is responsible for services such as schools, social care services and road maintenance.”*

**Has the appropriate preamble been placed before the ‘satisfaction with the local authority’ question?**

#### **Consultation questions**

**Q4a)** Cognitive testing of the questions contained in this guide highlighted that respondents found the descriptions contained in the suggested preamble very useful in helping them to answer the subsequent questions.

It should be noted that some respondents did focus more on the services listed when answering the subsequent questions as a result of the preamble, but based on the cognitive testing our judgement is that overall this is balanced by the purpose it serves to remind respondents of the types of services that different types of councils provide. Are you happy to include this preamble? If not, why not?

#### **Question B: Satisfaction with the local authority**

*Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way [name of council] runs things?*

Response codes:

Very satisfied

Fairly satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Fairly dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Don't know

**Two tier areas:** If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, repeat the question. Ask first for the district and then the county.

### **Consultation questions**

**Q5a)** Do you agree with the inclusion of this as a core question?

**Q5b)** Would you be happy to use the proposed wording and response scale in your local surveys?

**Q5c)** Are you happy with the approach of repeating the question in two tier areas?

### **Question C: Value for money**

*In considering the next question, please think about the range of services [name of council] provides to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all of the services [name of council] provides to the community. We would like your general opinion.*

*To what extent do you agree or disagree that [name of council] provides value for money?*

Response codes:

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

**Two tier areas:** If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, please use this slightly different introductory text:

*In considering the following two questions, please think about the range of services that both [name of district council] and [name of county council] provide to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all of the services [name of district council] and [name of county council] provide to the community. We would like your general opinion.*

Then ask 'To what extent do you agree or disagree that [name of council] provides good value for money?' twice. Ask first for the district and then the county.

### Consultation questions

**Q6a)** Do you agree with the inclusion of this as a core question?

**Q6b)** Would you be happy to use the proposed wording and response scale in your local surveys?

**Q6c)** We have added some explanatory text to this question because cognitive testing revealed that respondents found the question much easier to answer with this. Are you happy to include the suggested explanatory text?

### Question ordering

Testing has identified that respondents' answers to the questions in this section may be influenced by questions asked earlier in a survey (this is known as 'context' and 'position' effects). For example, if a question about general satisfaction with an area is asked after a series of questions about crime, this is likely to elicit a more negative response than for a different authority that preceded this with questions about parks and leisure.

The core set of three satisfaction questions must therefore be placed at the beginning of the survey and in the order specified to ensure that any position or context effect is the same for each council. This will help ensure that any comparisons between councils are robust and fair.

Have the three core questions been placed at the start of the survey?

Have all three questions been asked?

Have the questions been asked in the required order?

### Consultation questions

**Q7a)** Would your authority be able and willing to place all three questions at the start of your surveys, in return for the flexibility of being able to put the questions into any local survey?

**Q7b)** Would this pose any challenges? If so, please explain.

### The three second tier questions

The three questions outlined below have also been identified as being of strategic and practical importance in terms of understanding council performance and resident satisfaction. However, we recognise that the issues covered are not priorities for all councils. Therefore, we would encourage all councils who think this data would be useful to them to include these questions in their local surveys, in order to provide a consistent and robust set of benchmarking data for the good of the sector.

## Full question text

This section outlines the full text and answer options of the three second tier questions. This is followed by guidance on question ordering.

### **Question D: Community identity**

How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?

Response codes

Very strongly

Fairly strongly

Not very strongly

Not at all strongly

Don't know

### **Consultation questions**

**Q8a)** Do you agree with the inclusion of this as a second tier question?

**Q8b)** In the past a variety of different phrases have been used to describe the geographic area being referred to in this question. We have suggested 'local area' to keep the question consistent with the other questions in this set. Would you be happy to use the proposed wording and response scale in your local surveys?

### **Question E: Community safety**

*How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?*

Response codes:

Very safe

Fairly safe

Neither safe nor unsafe

Fairly unsafe

Very unsafe

Don't know

*How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day?*

Response codes:

Very safe

Fairly safe

Neither safe nor unsafe

Fairly unsafe

Very unsafe

Don't know

### Consultation questions

**Q9a)** Do you agree with the inclusion of this as a second tier question?

**Q9b)** Would you be happy to use the proposed wording and response scale in your local surveys?

### Question F: Informed about the council

*Overall, how well informed do you think [name of council] keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?*

*By benefits we mean any positive impacts it has had on the local area.*

Response codes:

Very well informed

Fairly well informed

Not very well informed

Not well informed at all

Don't know

**Two tier areas:** If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, repeat the question. Ask first for the district and then the county.

### Consultation questions

**Q10a)** Do you agree with the inclusion of this as a second tier question?

**Q10b)** Would you be happy to use the proposed wording and response scale in your local surveys?

**Q10c)** We have suggested the addition of some extra explanatory text as the cognitive testing revealed that there was some variety in the way the term 'benefits' was understood by respondents, with many interpreting this in a very narrow way as state or welfare benefits rather than wider community benefits. Are you happy with the addition of this text?

### Question ordering

The second tier questions are less impacted by position effects; therefore their positioning within a questionnaire is not as critical as for the core set of questions. As a result they can be placed in the most convenient place for each questionnaire, subject to Question D preceding any other questions about sense of community, Question E preceding any other questions about community safety, and Question F preceding any other questions about council communications.

**If there are any other questions about a sense of community or belonging in the survey, does Question D precede these?**

If there are any other questions about community safety in the survey, does Question E precede these?

If there are any other questions about communications in the survey, does Question F precede these?

### Consultation questions

**Q11a)** Would your authority be able and willing to place all three questions before more detailed questions on the respective subjects?

**Q11b)** Would this pose any challenges? If so, please explain.

## The third tier questions

The final set of third tier questions are of particular interest to many, but not all councils. We would encourage those councils that do want to collect information on these topics to follow the wording and guidance outlined in this document, as this will enable those councils to benchmark against others who are facing the same issues.

### Full question text

This section outlines the full text and answer options of the third tier questions. This is followed by guidance on question ordering.

### Question G: Advocacy

*On balance, which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about [name of council]?*

Response codes:

- I speak positively of the council without being asked
- I speak positively of the council if I am asked about it
- I am negative about the council if I am asked about it
- I am negative about the council without being asked
- I have no views one way or another
- Don't know

**Two tier areas:** If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, repeat the question. Ask first for the district and then the county.

### **Consultation questions**

**Q12a)** Do you agree with the inclusion of this as a third tier question?

**Q12b)** In the past, local government and other sectors have used a slight variation of this question wording and response scale. We have suggested this revised version because cognitive testing revealed that the standard response scale did not reflect the responses that respondents wanted to give, whereas what we have suggested was much more effective. Would you be happy to use the proposed wording and response scale in your local surveys going forwards?

### **Question H: Council responsiveness**

The purpose of including this question is to provide a complete picture of the extent to which residents feel empowered to influence decisions in their local area. Research has revealed that the most effective way to gauge this is to look at three factors: the extent to which residents feel informed (question F), overall satisfaction with the local authority (question B) and the extent to which it is felt the local authority listens to local residents' views and acts on them (this question).

*To what extent do you think [name of council] acts on the concerns of local residents?*

Response codes:

A great deal

A fair amount

Not very much

Not at all

Don't know

**Two tier areas:** If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, repeat the question. Ask first for the district and then the county.

### **Consultation questions**

**Q13a)** Do you agree with the inclusion of this as a third tier question?

**Q13b)** Would you be happy to use the proposed wording and response scale in your local surveys?

**Question I: Trust in the local authority**

*How much do you trust [name of council]?*

Response codes:

A great deal

A fair amount

Not very much

Not at all

Don't know

**Two tier areas:** If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, repeat the question. Ask first for the district and then the county.

**Consultation questions**

**Q14a)** Do you agree with the inclusion of this as a third tier question?

**Q14b)** Would you be happy to use the proposed wording and response scale in your local surveys?

**Question J: Community cohesion (ethnicity)**

*To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together?*

*By getting on well together, we mean living alongside each other with respect.*

Response options:

Definitely agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Definitely disagree

Don't know

Too few people in local area (This should be treated the same as 'don't know' i.e. spontaneous only in telephone and face to face and removed when calculating results)

All the same ethnic background (Also treated the same as 'don't know')

**Consultation questions**

**Q15a)** Do you agree with the inclusion of this as a third tier question?

**Q15b)** Would you be happy to use the proposed wording and response scale in your local surveys?

### **Question K: Community cohesion**

*To what extent would you agree or disagree that people in this local area pull together to improve the local area?*

Response options:

Definitely agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Definitely disagree

Nothing needs improving (This should be treated the same as 'don't know' i.e. spontaneous only in telephone and face to face and removed when calculating results)

Don't know

#### **Consultation questions**

**Q16a)** Do you agree with the inclusion of this as a third tier question?

**Q16b)** Would you be happy to use the proposed wording and response scale in your local surveys?

### **Question L: Anti-social behaviour**

Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are....

- a) Noisy neighbours or loud parties
- b) Teenagers hanging around the streets
- c) Rubbish or litter lying around
- d) Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles
- e) People using or dealing drugs
- f) People being drunk or rowdy in public places
- g) Abandoned or burnt out cars

Response codes:

A very big problem

A fairly big problem

Not a very big problem

Not a problem at all

No opinion (This should be treated the same as 'don't know' i.e. spontaneous only in telephone and face to face and removed when calculating results)

### Consultation questions

**Q17a)** Do you agree with the inclusion of this as a third tier question?

**Q17b)** Would you be happy to use the proposed wording and response scale in your local surveys?

**Q17c)** Do you agree with the list of anti-social behaviours? Are there any you think should be removed and any you think should be added (note though that changing the list of behaviours will mean a loss of comparability with the British Crime Survey and the Place Survey)?

### Question ordering

Question G – advocacy – should be subject to as little bias as possible. Therefore, when an authority decides to include this question, it should be placed as the fourth question in the questionnaire, immediately after the three core questions.

Question H – council responsiveness – this question should also be subject to as little bias as possible. Therefore, when an authority decides to include this question, it should be placed as the fifth question in the questionnaire, immediately after the three core questions and advocacy (or fourth if advocacy is not going to be included).

The remaining questions are less impacted by position effects; therefore their positioning within a questionnaire is not as critical as for the core set of questions. As a result they can be placed in the most convenient place for each questionnaire, subject to the following conditions:

Question I – trust in the local authority – this should precede any more detailed questions about trust in the local authority.

Questions J and K – cohesion – the only requirement of these is that they are not asked before general satisfaction questions; however as the general satisfaction questions are part of the core set that must be asked first, this will automatically be the case.

Question L – anti-social behaviour – the issues raised in this question could impact on respondents' general perceptions about the area. The question therefore should not precede more general questions about attitudes to the area, satisfaction with local organisations, or community safety.

**Has Question G been placed fourth, immediately after the three core questions?**

**Has Question H been placed fifth, immediately after the advocacy question (or fourth if the advocacy question is not being used)?**

**If there are any other questions about trust in the survey, does Question I precede these?**

If there are any other questions about attitudes to the area, satisfaction with local organisations, or community safety in the survey, does Question L not precede these?

#### **Consultation questions**

**Q18a)** Would your authority be able and willing to place all the third tier questions in the manner outlined above?

**Q18b)** Would this pose any challenges? If so, please explain.

## Example questionnaire

An example of how a questionnaire that includes all of the questions and follows the guidance outlined in this document would look can be found in the accompanying document: *Are you being served? Annex A – example questionnaires.*<sup>6</sup>

## Overarching consultation questions

#### **Consultation questions**

Q19a) Is it likely that your authority will participate in this benchmarking?

Q19b) If it is unlikely that your authority will participate, are there any changes or clarifications that could be made, or other support provided, which would encourage you to do so?

Q19c) Are there any other resident satisfaction questions which you would have liked or expected to see in the core benchmarking set?

Q19d) Are there any issues which remain unclear or any other aspects of survey design and methodology where guidance would be useful to ensure consistent data?

Q19e) Is the guidance given above clear to understand? If you were using it in practice, would you have all of the information you need?

Q19f) Do you have any final comments you would like to make about the guidance or the overall approach we have taken?

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.local.gov.uk/about-lginform>



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