

**Report for: Cabinet**

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Date of Meeting:	4 March 2025
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Mid Devon Residents' Survey 2024</b>
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Luke Taylor, Leader of the Council
Responsible Officer:	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive/Section 151
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1

**Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)**

To provide Cabinet with an update of the results of the Mid Devon residents' survey which was undertaken from 30 October to 11 December 2024 and included questions in relation to statutory consultation on the budget.

**Recommendation(s):**

**That Cabinet note the survey results.**

**Section 2 – Report**

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council conducted a combined residents' and budget setting survey from 30 October to 11 December 2024 (six weeks). Whilst it was an online survey, paper copies were also available and this was publicised. Customer Services staff were also able to assist anyone who was unable to complete the form, but wanted to have their say.
- 1.2 We would like to thank all of the residents who took the time to engage with our survey.
- 1.3 The survey was shared as far as possible using in-house communication team resources. This included sending posters, social media graphics and the survey link to:
  - All parish clerks
  - All members
  - Council staff

- All primary schools within the district
- The local press
- Social media - including local Facebook groups such as Positive Cullompton, Crediton Community Noticeboard, What's on Tiverton, etc.
- Our 6,500+ e-bulletin topic subscribers
- Posters at Phoenix House, Tiverton Pannier Market and the three Mid Devon Leisure centres

1.4 There were 433 respondents to this year's survey - compared to last year; 810 responses.

1.5 This year the Council ran the survey through its new engagement platform, [Let's Talk Mid Devon](#).

1.6 These results are only a sample of our residents who choose to engage. The population of Mid Devon is 82,800 (Census 2021), hence we don't record any demographics as it is not a representative sample.

1.7 Many of the questions used were from surveys carried out by the LGA in order to have a level of benchmarking. The LG Inform results shown in brackets are from the Local Government Association resident satisfaction telephone survey, conducted in October 2024. <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Resident%20Satisfaction%20Polling%20Round%2039%20281124.pdf>

1.8 A comparison to the previous residents' survey results (2023) is also shown.

1.9. Many of our responses, and those for the LG Inform survey, have seen an improvement in their scores/feedback.

## 2.0 Summary responses

2.1 Percentage of residents that are very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023	LG Inform 2024
75.2%	74.2%	74%

2.2 Percentage of residents that are very or fairly satisfied with the way the Council runs things:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023	LG Inform 2024
51.8%	41.1%	56%

Percentage of residents that are fairly or very dissatisfied:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023

26.6%	30.6%
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2.3 Percentage of residents that are very or fairly satisfied with the Council's customer service towards residents and/or businesses:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
42.3%	33.7%

2.4 Percentage of residents that strongly agree or tend to agree the Council provides value for money:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023	LG Inform 2024
41.1%	36.4%	36%

Percentage of residents that neither agree nor disagree:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
26.2%	27%

While those that tend to or strongly disagree:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
31.3%	35%

NB – Mid Devon households pay on average £232.16 in Council Tax per year (£4.46 per week) in 2024/25.

2.5 Percentage of residents that feel the Council acts on their concerns:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023	LG Inform 2024
39.7	32.2%	53%

While those that think the Council does not:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
47%	55.9%

2.6 Percentage of residents that feel very or fairly well informed:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023	LG Inform 2024
59.6	52.8%	47%

While those that don't:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
36.7%	35%

NB – The Council uses a number of channels to keep members of the public informed. These include a free online newsletter subscription service which currently has 14,000+ subscribers. We also post council news stories on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Nextdoor. These news stories are also sent to local news organisations such as Radio Devon, Mid Devon Gazette, Crediton Courier and Tiverton Community Radio, as well as to all of the parishes in our communities. In 2024, the Council issued 81 news items, and in 2023, issued 78.

2.7 When asked “How much do you trust Mid Devon District Council?”

	Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
A fair amount or a great deal	51.2%	40%
Not much trust	30.6%	36%
Don't trust the Council at all	13.6%	17%
Don't know	4.7%	7%

2.8 When asked “Who do you trust most to make decisions about how services are provided in your local area?”

	Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
Trust their local council to make decisions about local services	51.6%	43%
Trust for the Government	3%	2%
Trust for neither	41.6%	50.4%

2.9 When asked “Which individuals do you trust most to make decisions about how services are provided in your local area?”

	Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
Trust their local councillor to make decisions for their local area	57%	49%
No trust in any of their councillors, MPs or government ministers	36.7%	46%

2.10 Percentage of residents that think the media has viewed local councils positively in the last few months:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
3%	3.8%

While those that think it's neither positive nor negative:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
54.4%	45%

### 3.0 Specific services

3.1 Percentage of residents that felt it fairly or very important to be able to comment on individual plans for all housing developments in your local area (planning decisions):

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents Survey 2023
93.9%	94.3%

3.2 Percentage of residents that felt it fairly or very important for the Council to tackle climate change:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
81.3%	80.1%

3.3 Percentage of residents that were fairly or very satisfied with the Council's waste collection service:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023	LG Inform 2024
74.8%	74%	76%

3.4 Percentage of residents that were fairly or very satisfied with the Council's street cleaning service:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023	LG Inform 2024
41.8%	40.6%	57%

3.5 Percentage of residents that were fairly or very satisfied with council leisure services:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023	LG Inform 2024

43.2%	36%	50%
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Percentage of residents that were fairly or very satisfied with council provision of parks and green spaces:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023	LG Inform 2024
54.5%	51.7%	74%

3.6 Percentage of residents that felt fairly or very safe after dark:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
66.1%	59.6%

3.7 Percentage of residents that felt fairly or very safe in the day:

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
90%	86.6%

3.8 In areas where we have scored below the LG Inform data we will look to review these services in order to establish, why and importantly how we can improve.

#### 4.0 Council Key Prioritisations

4.1 The table below is in response to the question: 'Which, if any of the following do you think it is important for the Council to do?'

	Very important	Fairly Important	Not Very Important	Not Important At All	Don't Know
Delivering housing for local people	228 (53.8%)	148 (34.9%)	31 (7.3%)	13 (3%)	4 (0.9%)
Support local businesses and high streets	290 (68.4%)	118 (27.8%)	11 (2.6%)	4 (0.9%)	1 (0.2%)
Introduce measures to encourage more walking and cycling	140 (32.7%)	153 (35.7%)	96 (22.4%)	34 (7.9%)	5 (1.1%)

Support people who lose their jobs	140 (32.8%)	205 (48%)	59 (13.8%)	12 (2.8%)	11 (2.6%)
Support parks and open spaces	197 (46.3%)	203 (47.8%)	20 (4.7%)	2 (0.5%)	3 (0.7%)
Promote activities that improve the public's health	176 (41.2%)	175 (41%)	62 (14.5%)	11 (2.6%)	3 (0.7%)
Provide off-street parking	160 (37.6%)	178 (41.9%)	60 (14.1%)	21 (4.9%)	6 (1.4%)

N.B. Some percentages for the same figures are different as the number of respondents changed between each section and decimal places are rounded up/down so may not exactly add up to 100%.

## 5.0 Spending and budget setting

5.1 When asked about what was the most important priority when making spending decisions, residents said:

	Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
Providing basic statutory services	46.5%	45.2%
Seeking to support and development the economy	18.5%	16.8%
Delivering affordable housing	15.4%	16.8%
Tackling climate change	7.9%	10.5%
Social wellbeing	7.9%	7.2%

5.2 Percentage of residents that said 'when making spending plans the Council should protect services even if it means it will need to increase council tax and fees and charges':

Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
47.4%	42%

Percentage of residents that said ‘the Council should share services with other organisations’:

Residents’ Survey 2024	Residents’ Survey 2023
26.9%	30.6%

NB – the Council currently operates its Building Control Service in partnership with North Devon District Council and has a shared procurement arrangement with Devon County Council.

5.3 Percentage of residents that think the Council should seek to generate additional income from planning and building control:

Residents’ Survey 2024	Residents’ Survey 2023
58.6%	57.5%

36.7% said from licensing.

5.4 Of the discretionary services provided by the Council there was an even balance about which services should be protected:

	Residents’ Survey 2024	Residents’ Survey 2023
Public toilets	53%	56.9%
Parks and open spaces	51.4%	54.6%
Town centre regeneration	50.7%	52.3%

5.5 Of our statutory services, residents felt that the most important services were:

	Residents’ Survey 2024	Residents’ Survey 2023
Waste and recycling service	93.2%	92.2%
Food and water sampling	65.4%	68.3%
Street cleaning	57.5%	57.8%

5.6 The above prioritisation feedback has been considered when setting the 25/26 budget and decisions have been made taking these preferences into account.

## 6.0 Digital

6.1 Percentage of residents that would like to see more services delivered digitally via telephone, webchat or the internet:



	Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
Yes	54.1%	49.6%
No	45.9%	50.4%

6.2 Percentage of residents that have listened to an audio recording of any of our council committee meetings on our website, viewed live meetings via video recording, or attended a meeting in person:

	Residents' Survey 2024	Residents' Survey 2023
Not accessed any	53.9%	54.4%
Not aware of these options	33.3%	37.3%
Attended in person	12.2%	9.9%
Video recording	8.2%	6.5%
Audio recording	5.9%	5.7%

## 7.0 General comment questions

7.1 We asked four open ended questions. The comments were wide ranging but a summary of these are below, categorised by common themes.

7.2 345 comments were received in response to the question:

*What is the single most important thing the council could do to improve quality of life in your community?*

7.3 Recurring themes and some examples were:

### 7.3.1 Leisure

- Consider a swimming pool in Cullompton.
- More cycle paths.

### 7.3.2 Housing:

- More affordable housing for local people.

### 7.3.3 Street scene and recycling:

- Improve street cleaning.
- Provide more dog poo bins.
- Change the way recycling is stored and collected.
- More frequent recycling and waste collections.
- Enforcements for dogs.
- Tackle ASB and littering.
- Maintain overgrown footpaths, verges, etc.
- Re-open all public toilet facilities.

- Reduce parking fees.

#### 7.3.4 Planning:

- Review your planning process – quicker decisions, cheaper costs and more considerations for locals.
- Address issues facing Cullompton Town Centre. Traffic, parking, only housing (no additional doctors, schools, etc.) and relief road. Stop building without infrastructure.
- Protect and provide green spaces.
- Enhance town centres. Empty shops.
- Improve planning enforcement.

#### 7.3.5 Finance:

- Invest in areas other than Tiverton.
- Spend less on corporate services.
- Support for businesses.

#### 7.3.6 Corporate; customer services and communication:

- Be more transparent.
- Listen to the public.
- Serve rural areas better.

#### 7.3.7 Non-Council remit:

- Mend roads (potholes) and maintain signage and drainage.
- Car parking enforcement on roads.
- Replace 30mph with 20mph limit in villages.
- Streetlights lit throughout the night.
- Broadband, faster rural internet speeds.
- Maintain regular bus services.
- Social care, more buses, more police.
- Community resources for youth. Youth clubs, community centres, etc. Improve youth services, reduce ASB.

#### 7.4 204 comments were received in response to the question:

*Are there any particular services areas you feel should not reduce their expenditure?*

7.5 The majority of these comments focussed on waste and recycling. Leisure services, street cleaning and planning as well as affordable housing and support for the vulnerable (incl. elderly and homeless) appeared often, but also many answers focussed on suggesting road repairs, education and social care expenditure should not be cut, which are county council functions.

7.6 152 comments were received in response to the question:

*Is there anything else you think the Council should consider a priority when setting the budget?*

7.7 The key themes for these responses were – support for those who are vulnerable, affordable housing, climate change, council value for money/efficiency (cost of corporate services) and again a focus on a function provided by Devon County Council, road repairs.

7.8 96 comments were received in response to the question:

*If you have any specific issues not covered in this survey, please comment.*

7.9 Many of these comments were repetitions of comments to the previous open-ended responses and again included; infrastructure in Cullompton, serve rural areas better, openness and transparency.

## **8.0 Budget setting**

8.1 All of the budget feedback that we received, which is summarised in paragraph 5, was utilised in the Council's 2025/26 budget setting process. Our five policy development groups and the Cabinet all made their decisions with regard to how residents had prioritised our services, reflected on the level of our fees/charges and decisions around the associated level of Council Tax.

## **9.0 Next steps**

9.1 Resident and customer feedback is a powerful source of information that will enable us to ensure that we are directing our resources to the areas of highest priority and take remedial action in areas that our public are voicing concerns over.

9.2 Having this overarching resident feedback enables the Council to focus on the key concerns/messages, whilst also providing an important baseline, which we can utilise in order to measure feedback against in future years and assess our direction of travel.

9.3 Where we have received feedback relating to specific service areas, we have included a focused update, Appendix 1, showing what we have done during the previous financial year and our plans for the future.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

10.1 It is very encouraging to see the positive increases in customer/resident feedback this year. Most categories have experienced a material percentage increase from the previous year's survey. One can only surmise that this indicates a positive direction in travel in the way our residents experience the

delivery/receipt of our services and the improved and more regular way we communicate our achievements.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications.

### **Legal Implications**

Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council has a statutory duty to consult ratepayer representatives on its annual spending proposals, ahead of setting its budget.

### **Risk Assessment**

There are no direct risk issues emanating from this report.

### **Impact on Climate Change**

Residents' comments on climate change are included in the report.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

No equality issues identified from this report.

### **Relationship to Corporate Plan**

Gaining insight from our residents enables the Council to understand how our residents value and prioritise the services that we provide.

### **Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks**

**Statutory Officer:** Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Officer

**Date:** 18.02.2025

**Statutory Officer:** Maria De Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

**Date:** 18.02.2025

**Performance and risk:** Stephen Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

**Date:** 18.02.25

**Cabinet member notified:** (yes/no)

**Report: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. (Yes/No)**

**Appendix: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. (Yes/No)**

#### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive/151  
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**Background papers:**