

New survey shows Edinburgh happier than ever with council services



An annual survey of Edinburgh residents has shown record levels of satisfaction with local services, which the council say shows a steady upward trend over the last five years. The most improved services include recycling, street cleaning, parks, pavement maintenance and community safety. However, the results also highlight areas for further work, including refuse collection, dog fouling and public engagement.

Overall, the report says that 86% of Edinburgh residents are satisfied with the way the Council is managing neighbourhoods, which is a 19% rise on 2008. At a local level, improvements can be seen in all neighbourhoods, particularly the South West, Forth, Leith and Portobello and Craigmillar. But the areas of Forth and Pentlands generally fall below the city average, although they have seen a significant increase in satisfaction since the previous survey.

The Reporter met up with the Council Leader and Deputy Leader to hear their reaction to the new survey:-

The survey also shows that satisfaction with how the Council manages the city overall has increased to 72% from a low of 35% in 2009. Commenting on the figure,

Councillor Burns added: "This measure has varied a lot in the last five years and the most recent change is so large we should be cautious about drawing conclusions based on this year's result alone. It may be that the progress with the tram

project is a factor. Our strong leadership and commitment to listening could equally have helped. Either way, it's something we need to understand better.

“Overall, while the results are encouraging there can be no room for complacency. We are ambitious for the city and there is much work yet to be done, so we simply need to continue delivering the pledges we made to Edinburgh residents and look for that to be reflected in future surveys.”

The public's top five priorities for improvement included road improvements and safety, street cleaning and refuse collection, activities for children/young people, tackling dog fouling, and more shopping facilities and entertainment.

Deputy Council Leader Councillor Steve Cardownie said: “Our recent budget clearly shows we have listened to residents, with an extra £12m going into doubling the budget for fixing potholes and pavements, as well as investment in other facilities and services that the public value. The continued improvements also underline the fact that we have been responding to concerns, but we will make sure that we also tackle the areas where the survey shows we need to do more. That's essential for the people who live and work here, but also for maintaining our reputation as a world-class capital city.”

Other findings in the Edinburgh Peoples Survey 2012 include:

- Improved performance of the whole Council compared to previous years. As well as overall management of the city, there were increases in delivering value for money and displaying sound financial management.
- Edinburgh continues to be highly regarded as a place to live with 97% expressing satisfaction, continuing a year-on-year increase since 2010. Satisfaction with neighbourhoods as place to live has also stayed very

high at 94%, up by 8% since 2008.

- High levels of satisfaction with nursery, primary and secondary schools (excluding those who stated 'don't know').
- Improved satisfaction with the way the Council communicates with customers and "puts customers first".
- Satisfaction has reduced in refuse collection (to 78%) and dog fouling (to 48%).
- Road maintenance continues to have a lower satisfaction score than other services (56%), staying about the same over the five year period.
- Reduced feeling of ability to have a say on local issues and services.

More detailed analysis will be carried out to understand the reasons underlying the changes in satisfaction. The research will also be used by managers and staff to develop action plans for maintaining high performance and addressing areas for improvement.