

SURREY RESIDENTS SURVEY 2003

TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS AND

WAY FORWARD

KEY ISSUE:

An in depth County wide residents survey was carried out in December 2003. It is important to fully understand the transportation results and what Countywide actions and local actions need to be undertaken to respond to residents concerns, perceptions and desires for improvement.

SUMMARY:

The report provides the main transportation findings of the survey and provides an action plan to move forward. The key issues from the report are:

- The need to seek a positive image for transportation
- Only use the Surrey County Badge
- Target Prudential funding appropriately
- More information on roadworks
- Better co-ordination of roadworks through the new Traffic Management Bill

- Target more funds towards safer routes to school and alternatives to the car
- Make more use of mobility Awareness Officers
- Share best practice from the eleven Local Transportation Offices
- Target more LTP2 money towards the above

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to note the contents

1. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. MORI Local Government Research Unit on behalf of Surrey County Council undertook a residents survey during September and early October 2003. The specific issues covered by the survey were: Satisfaction with Surrey as a place to live; Satisfaction with, and perceptions of, the County Council; Residents' priorities; Attitudes towards Council services; Library usage; Use of waste and recycling facilities; Satisfaction with, and importance of, transport within Surrey; and County communications. This report concentrates on "satisfaction with, and importance of, transport with Surrey".
2. Of the sixteen services listed by MORI in the survey as provided by the County Council, those provided or facilitated by the Transportation Service were listed as 4th and 5th in importance. Local train services for which the service helps to promote came 7th.
3. This report will respond to the issues raised regarding Highways and Public Transport, Local Transportation Offices, briefly review the statistical acceptance of the report, and propose an action plan for the service.

Issues regarding Highway Services

4. The survey brought out the following key issues for the public:
 - Satisfaction with road maintenance is a more important driver of satisfaction with Surrey County Council than any other service assessed in the survey;
 - Improving satisfaction with road maintenance will have a positive impact on satisfaction with Surrey County Council;
 - 46% of residents are fairly dissatisfied or more with the level of road maintenance;
 - 42% of residents are fairly dissatisfied or more with the level of pavement maintenance;
 - 96% of residents view road and pavement maintenance as being either fairly or very important to them;

Issues regarding Public Transport

5. Of all the services provided by the County Council for local people, local bus services and rail were rated respectively as 4th and 7th most important, out of a total of 16.
6. Local rail services were identified as the most commonly used form of public transport in Surrey, supporting the patronage data held by the County Council. Annual rail usage is twice that of bus. This is not surprising since Surrey has more rail stations than nearly any other Shire County in the UK and the MORI research confirms the County's position as having the highest number of rail users in the South East of England.

7. Bus usage based on numbers of passengers per head of population compares favourably with the rest of the South East but the survey tends to suggest that it is slightly lower than in the South East as a whole. It is significant, that the largest group of users of bus and rail services are, the 16-24 age group. The figures for commuting to work show that rail is three times more likely to be used than bus.
8. Bus users are shown to be most dissatisfied with the condition and availability of bus shelters (District/Borough Council function), frequency of bus services and level of bus fares. They are most satisfied with the ease of boarding and alighting, personal security and attitude of bus drivers. Frequent and reliable services are considered important, together with cleanliness are the key drivers of user satisfaction.
9. Personal safety is known to be an issue for woman travelling on trains. This was confirmed in another recent survey for the Passenger Transport Group entitled "Safety of Women at Railway Stations" where 42% of women said they felt either 'very unsafe or unsafe' while using Stoneleigh Station. However, crime statistics reveal that the fear is greater than the actual number of instances of incidents involving women.
10. Younger residents surveyed indicated that they would use bus services if the services were more reliable. These younger residents are the predominant peak time users when traffic volumes are at their highest and congestion often at its worst, often resulting in buses being held up in traffic.
11. Residents indicate that they would use public transport more if they were 'better' or 'better connected'. There is no doubt that reliability is a major problem for bus, for example services caught up in traffic and because of such delays they miss connections at rail stations.

Local Transportation Service Offices

12. Part of the survey concentrated on "transport contact questions", the results are quite mixed. When the respondents were asked, who they would contact if they had concerns regarding transport or highways. Most people indicated they would go to the Borough or District Council. The respondent's instinct for contacting County Hall or the Local Transport Office was never first.
13. The majority (89%) of residents from the survey are not aware that Surrey has eleven Local Transport Offices in their area to deal with local residents' transport concerns etc. Awareness appears to be highest among the 55-64 age group with 14% compared to an overall awareness of 9%. The following table gives a "pecking order" for awareness:

Local Office	Residents Awareness Value
Surrey Overall	9%
Spelthorne	18%
Runnymede	16%
Mole Valley	13%
Elmbridge	11%
Guildford	7%
Reigate & Banstead	6%
Surrey Heath	6%
Tandridge	6%
Waverly	6%
Woking	6%
Epsom & Ewell	5%

Statistical Acceptance of the Survey

14. The survey employed a very robust methodology – face to face interviewing, among a sample size, which would often be considered adequate for a national survey (over 1,000). The demographic composition of the sample varied within acceptance limits, and was mathematically weighted to reflect the actual demographic distribution at District/Borough level. This is normal practice and does not detract from the validity of the survey.
15. This means that we can be 95% confident that at County level, a response (egxx% would use buses more if...) is an accurate reflection of residents' views to within plus/minus 3% of the percentage shown in this survey. At District/Borough level, however, accuracy falls to plus/minus 10%, so that only differences of 10% or more between districts should be considered real.
- 16 In comparison with the BVPI survey (currently under scrutiny), our more robust methodology will yield a more accurate picture where similar questions are asked.

Action Plan

- The need to seek a positive image of transportation
- Only use the Surrey County Badge in all external promoting
- Target Prudential funding appropriately
- More information on road works
- Better co-ordination through the new Traffic Management Bill of road works

- Target more funds towards Safer Routes to School and alternatives to the car
- Make more use of Mobility Awareness officers
- Share best practice from the eleven Local Transport Offices
- Target more LTP2 money towards the above.

Conclusion

The action plan drivers are the need to improve the image of the service and thereby the County Council. If resources can be found to promote alternatives to the car then congestion in Surrey will not continue to grow as forecast, along with the associated costs in damage to the highway, environment, businesses and commuters. The funding of travel awareness officers and more investment in safer routes to schools is part of this process. Keeping the travelling public aware of road works can be a positive story as they are forewarned. The prudential funding is a key ingredient in targeting those scarce resources towards a better highway infrastructure.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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