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Meeting	Performance & Resources Board	Agenda no.	8
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Presented By	AD Corporate Comms - Emily Cheyne-Guess		
Subject	SMSR Public Perception Survey		
Type of Report	information		
PFCC Action Point No.	N/A	For Publication	Yes

RECOMMENDATION(S)

For noting as a progress report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) approved the progression of a Public Perception survey, working with a third-party provider to conduct this work.

SMSR research and analysis agency was awarded and commissioned this work. SMSR has been commissioned for two years to measure public views, as well as engage with our harder to reach and more diverse communities – understanding their risks and needs.

SMSR is engaging with communities for 12 consecutive months, then the findings are reviewed, and will then engage for an additional 12 months. This ensures the data is valid and reliable.

SMSR will:

- Ensure they reach and engage with at least 8,000 people over 12 months – to ensure that the data is statistically valid
- Use several methods (telephone survey, digital, workshops, interviews) to engage with and reach the communities we specifically ask them to reach
- Provide headlines throughout the 12-month data collection period
- Reach a representation of our communities across Greater Essex, including those groups and communities who we have little or no interaction with

BACKGROUND

The fieldwork is now complete for the first quarter of reporting, and SMSR has attained the full 1925 surveys providing a solid, representative sample of residents.

The attached report (Appendix A) includes an introduction, methodology, summary and breakdowns for each question together with sampling information at the end.

- In this first quarter 1,927 Essex residents were interviewed between January and March 2024 (Q4 23/24) – approx. 137 in each of the 14 Districts
- Fieldwork is split between interviews taking place over the phone and face to face. In Q4 23/24 63% of interviews were conducted over the phone, with the remaining 37% face-to-face.
- Results have been weighted to accurately represent the population size and demographics of each District, based on the 2021 Census.
- Going forward, the report will present the results at an annual and quarterly level to track the performance of ECFRS and highlight significant changes in public perceptions over time
- As the sample size increases, this will also include District and demographic analysis – although the sample size did allow for some demographic analysis in this first wave
- Future reports will continue to track changes in public perception levels and identify high performing areas and those with need for improvement

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

To include proposals, benefits, alternatives

Following the first quarter of results, it has been noted that it was difficult to ascertain the abode type and ownership from the postcode. This is an important question for us, so we can understand not just the urban and rural split, but also further demographic differences. Two additional questions have been added into the next quarter survey so we can understand this better:

What type of home do you currently live in?

Detached house

Semi-detached house

Terraced house

Flat or apartment in a building with 1-4 units

Flat or apartment in a building with 5 or more units

Bungalow

Mobile home or caravan

Other (please specify)

Prefer not to say

Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

I own my home outright

I own my home with a mortgage

I rent from a private landlord

I rent from a housing association

I rent from the local council

I live with my parents or relatives

I have a shared ownership (part rent, part buy)

Other (please specify)

Prefer not to say

Alongside this, we have also worked with SMSR to update the alcohol question in light of the low percentage of people who said they drink alcohol to:

How frequently do you typically drink alcohol?

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Once a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely
- Never

How often do you consume enough alcohol to feel intoxicated or drunk?

- Very often (several times a week)
- Often (weekly)
- Sometimes (monthly)
- Occasionally (a few times a year)
- Rarely

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

Identified risks should be accompanied by a risk treatment action plan.

LINKS TO FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

The proposal supports all the Fire and Rescue Plan priorities, plus will seek to support and inform the consultation for the next Fire and Rescue Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The contract has been awarded, and the costs have been split between OPFCC and ECFRS.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The ECFRS Procurement team has managed the contractual arrangements to ensure legal compliance.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

This decision has no direct staffing implications as the work is being undertaken by a third party. Management of the contract, and oversight of the work and outputs is managed by the current staffing team.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The actions being taken will not have a disproportionate impact on individuals with protected characteristics (as defined within the Equality Act 2010), when compared to all other individuals and will not disadvantage people with protected characteristics.

Race	n	Religion or belief	n
Sex	n	Gender reassignment	n
Age	n	Pregnancy & maternity	n
Disability	n	Marriage and Civil Partnership	n
Sexual orientation	n		

The proposal seeks to gain the views of Essex public and partners. Protected characteristics will not be disadvantaged.

The external survey provider will engage a representative sample of the public of Essex. A representative sample includes but is not limited to:

- Clear demographic and geographic representation of the landscape of Essex.
- Traditionally less heard groups such as ethnic minorities, and those with disabilities (physical, learning, and sensory)

The Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard has been fully considered and incorporated into the proposals outlined in this paper.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

To include rep bodies, boards, external agencies

FUTURE PLANS

Long term strategic direction

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES

Appendix 1 SMSR Public Perception Survey