



Purpose of the Report

This report presents the results of the Involving People Survey conducted in July 2012. A Community Engagement Working Party was formed to review engagement at the Borough of Poole. The Involving People Survey was commissioned to understand stakeholders views about the current community engagement arrangement at the Borough of Poole (positive and negative), and ideas to improve engagement.

Aims of the Survey

- What are the good aspects of the Council's current engagement arrangements.
- What is less good about current engagement arrangements.
- Ideas to improve engagement.

Key Findings

- 288 responses were received to the survey. The majority were responding as Poole residents (95%).
- The most successful method of promoting the survey was through libraries. 104 respondents had found out about the survey from a library.
- By far the most common method of engaging with the Council amongst respondents was through voting in local elections (82% had done this). 37% had taken part in paper surveys or consultations, and 34% had attended community fun days or other community events.
- Most common likes about the way the Council engages with its residents included Poole News, the Council's website and online facilities, use of social media and libraries.
- Dislikes about the way the Council engages with its residents included the way the Council communicates and promotes engagement, lack of use of the internet, reliance on the internet and meetings.
- Some respondents also felt that the Council does not always listen to residents, or decisions have already been made before engagement/consultation takes place. Respondents also mentioned a lack of feedback about what decisions have been made, or how their comments have been used.
- Most ideas to improve the way the Council engages focused around increasing and improving the promotion and publicity of engagement. Respondents also suggested that the Council should listen to their views, and provide feedback. Some respondents felt that the use of social media, such as Twitter and Facebook could be improved.

Methodology

The Involving People Survey was available to fill in online through the Council's website, and paper copies were available in Council buildings and libraries. Copies were also provided to be handed out at meetings. An engagement event was held at the Dolphin Centre, where copies of the survey were available.

The survey was promoted through several methods such as in Poole news, on the Council's website home page and internally to staff, both on the Loop and by email.

Survey Respondents

288 responses were received to the Involving People Survey. The majority of these responded as Poole residents (95%). 53 (19%) responded as Council employees (Table 1).

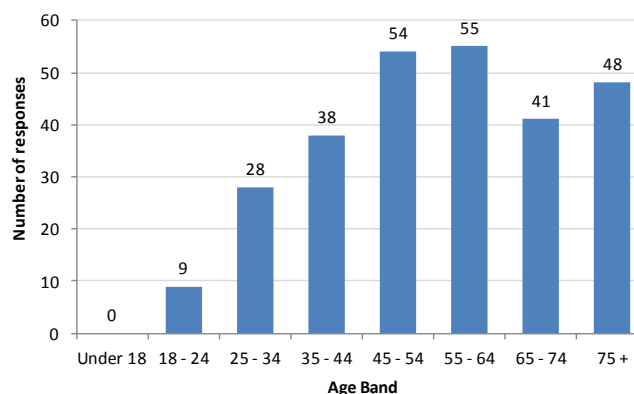
More responses were received from older age groups, than younger age groups. There were no responses from under 18s (Figure 1). 63% of respondents were female, and 37% male.

Table 1: respondents to the survey

Are you responding:	Number	%
as a Poole resident	260	95%
as a Council employee	53	19%
Other	9	3%
on behalf of a charity / organisation	7	3%
on behalf of a business organisation	4	1%
as a Councillor	3	1%

Base: 274 responses

Figure 1: Age of respondents



Base: 273 responses

188 respondents (73%) had no health problem or disability. 68 (27%) had a health problem or disability with 37 (14%) having their day to day activities affected a little, and 31 (12%) having their day to day activities affected a lot.

240 respondents provided their postcode. Responses were received from all wards in the Borough, but most came from the wards around the town centre (Table 2). The highest number of responses were received from Oakdale (14%) and Poole Town (14%). Fewest came from Branksome East (2%) and Branksome West (3%).

The survey was promoted using a variety of methods, such as on the Council's website, in Poole News. Copies of the survey were also available in Council buildings such as libraries, and an engagement event was held at the Dolphin Centre. Of the responses that were received, 104 had found out about the survey through a library. 40 had found out about the survey at the engagement event at the Dolphin Centre, and 39 through working at the Council (either on the Loop or through email) (Table 3).

Only 11 respondents said that they had filled in the survey after attending a meeting. Most of these were responding after a carer's meeting.

Table 2: Location of respondents

Ward	Count	%
Oakdale	34	14%
Poole Town	33	14%
Parkstone	25	10%
Penn Hill	23	10%
Creekmoor	18	8%
Broadstone	17	7%
Canford Heath East	13	5%
Canford Cliffs	11	5%
Canford Heath West	11	5%
Newtown	11	5%
Hamworthy East	10	4%
Merley and Bearwood	10	4%
Hamworthy West	7	3%
Alderney	6	3%
Branksome West	6	3%
Branksome East	5	2%

Base: 240 responses

Table 3: Method of finding out about the survey

Method	Number
Library	104
Dolphin Centre	40
Through work (BOP)	39
Website	13
Email	10
Community Group	7
Online	6
Employer	5
Member of staff	5
Poole News	5
Letter	2
Meeting	2
PHP	2
Word of mouth	2
Other	14

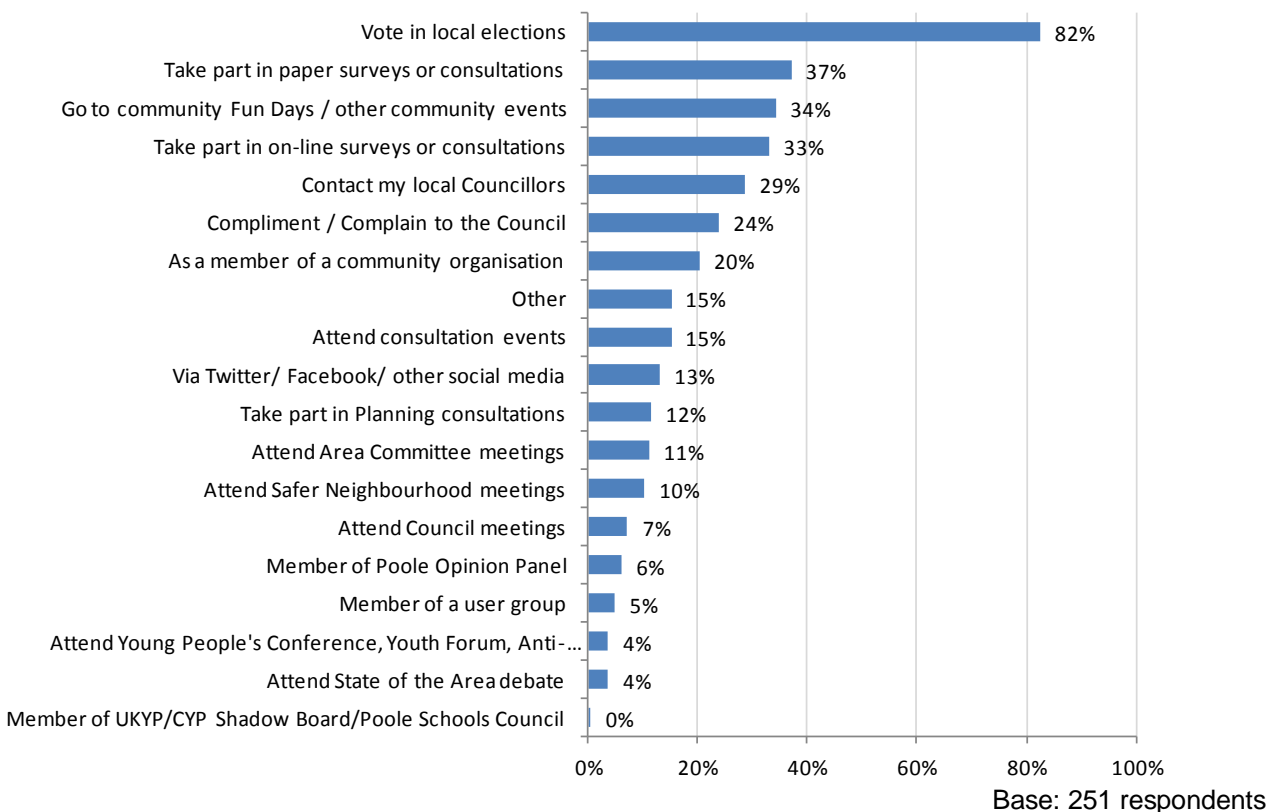
Base: 256 responses

Q1: In what ways do you currently engage with the Council?

Of the 284 responses to this question, 33 people (12%) said that they did not currently engage with the Council.

251 people had engaged with the Council in some way. Figure 2 below shows that most of these (82%) had engaged by voting in local elections. Other common engagement methods were taking part in surveys and consultations on paper (37%) or on-line (33%). Just over a third of respondents (34%) said that they go to community Fun Days or other community events. 29% contacted their local Councillors.

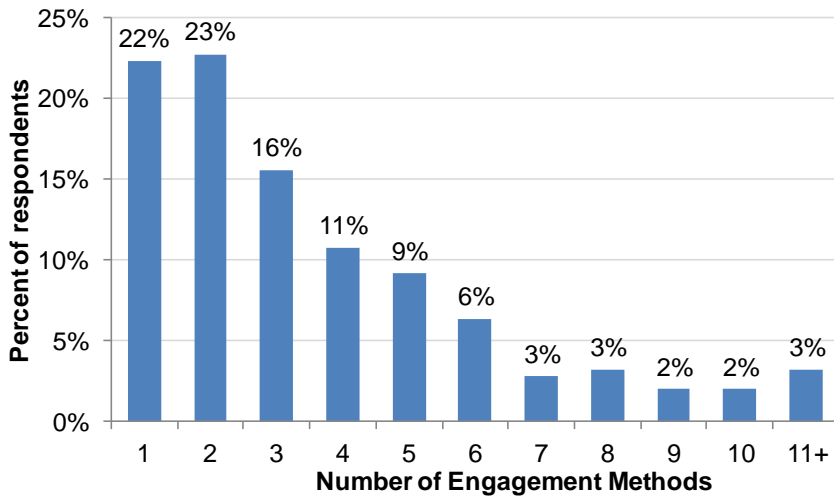
Figure 2: How respondents currently engage with the Council



Base: 251 respondents

When looking at the number of ways that respondents engaged with the Council, 45% have only engaged using 1 or 2 methods (Figure 3). Fewer respondents had engaged with the Council in multiple ways.

Figure 3: Number of ways respondents engaged with the Council



Base: 251 respondents

Q2: What do you like about the way the Council engages with its residents?

There were 193 responses to this question. 16 people mentioned that there was not a lot they liked, or nothing that they liked about the way the Council engages. 8 people felt that they had no experience of or were not aware of any engagement.

Figure 4 below shows what respondents like about the way the Council engages with its residents.

Figure 4: Most common likes with how the Council engages with its residents



37 respondents said that they liked Poole News. These respondents felt that it was a good way of keeping up-to-date with Council News and events, and it is informative.

"Poole News magazine is useful - especially events list."

"Regular copies of Poole News ensures people without IT access can keep up-to-date."

Respondents also liked the website (25), online facilities such as "report it" and surveys (7), and the use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook (11). Comments about the website included that it was easy to use, is informative and up-to-date.

"BOP Website does contain useful information"

"Up-to-date website."

"Website is easy to use - when information is available... Like being able to submit requests online."

14 respondents mentioned libraries as something they liked – they felt that libraries were a good source of information, had good facilities and liked that you can view documents such as papers and planning documents. 11 respondents said that they liked engagement with Councillors, saying that they were helpful, and there were many opportunities to engage with them such as through surgeries or by email. 8 respondents mentioned the good customer service they received.

"Good leaflets, library facilities, used as means of communication."

"There are many opportunities for residents to engage with councillors."

"Good response on telephone - no automated answering of telephone. Having a person answer is great."

Q3: What don't you like about the way the Council engages with its residents?

There were 165 responses to this question. 18 respondents said that there was nothing that they dislike about the way the Council engages. 3 respondents said that they could not comment because they had no experience of engagement or no opinion. 14 respondents stated general dislikes about the Council that were not related to the way it engages with residents. These are included in Appendix A.

Figure 5 below shows what respondents dislike about the way the Council engages with its residents.

8 respondents felt that there was limited or no engagement carried out by the Council.

55 comments related to dislikes about the way in which the Council communicates with its residents, or promotes any engagement. 18 made comments about promotion, saying that it can be difficult to find out what is going on, and there needs to be more promotion and publicity around engagement opportunities.

"Sometimes I feel that communications are aimed at the lowest common denominator and at younger people."

"Lack of publicity apart from on the internet and BoP public offices."

"Hard to find out what's going on."

"When letters are sent out and don't reach the right people."

Figure 5: Most common dislikes with how the Council engages with its residents



Looking at particular methods of communication and promotion, 10 made comments about Poole News, with respondents disliking its reduced frequency or being unhappy with the content. Comments were made about the content and information available on the website (6) and that Social Media use was insufficient (2). However, 9 respondents made comments about the use of the internet in promotion particularly that the Council assumes everyone has access to a computer or is ‘internet savvy’.

“The Council only seems to have time for people who operate online.”

“Seem to have forgotten those who do not use or have use of computers.”

“Information you need is not always available online or is not up-to-date.”

“I feel the social media use by the council could be improved and isn't particularly engaging ..”

Some respondents mentioned meetings (7) with some finding their timing inconvenient, or finding the meeting itself unappealing or negative.

“At meetings it is often those who shout loudest that get heard, there isn't a fair managing of the people who get to speak”

33 comments focused around the process of engagement. 15 respondents felt that the Council does not listen to what people say, or goes against residents views. Some respondents also felt that decisions had already been made before engagement took place (5) or that engagement happened too late in the process to be able to influence decisions (3). Feedback was also mentioned by some (7) with respondents feeling that there is no information on what decisions have been made, or what has happened with their comments.

"It doesn't always listen!"

"Always seems decision is made prior to consultation and only consulting as paper exercise."

"After surveys or consultation nothing appears to happen - gypsy sites - whats happening now? Need to update people to show that responses are being considered, etc."

"Despite comments/objections the public's views inevitably seem to be ignored by council."

Q4: What ideas do you have to improve how the Council engages with its residents and to encourage people to get more involved?

There were 156 responses to this question. 11 respondents said that they did not have any ideas. 9 made comments not relevant to how the Council engages, and 4 made general compliments about the Council. These are included in Appendix A.

Figure 6 below shows the most common suggestions made to improve how the Council engages with its residents.

Figure 6: Most common ideas to improve how the Council engages with its residents



The most common suggestion was to improve promotion and publicity (15). Suggestions included more information in newspapers, libraries and fliers, leaflets on how to engage and going out to where people are.

"Promote / advertise better events and public consultation. Not everyone will be aware of the opportunity."

"More advertising of services. Maybe a brochure/Poole magazine posters. Section in Echo."

"Better publicity, more accessible sessions with a variety of techniques to hear peoples voices, e.g. participatory appraisal, being proactive, going out to where people are rather than expecting people to come to you."

Some suggested that social media could be used more effectively by the Council (9). There were also suggestions of an email subscription system, where people could receive email alerts on engagement (5), or an email newsletter (4).

"Engaging via social media? (Maybe you do already.) However, you would need, for example, to encourage/entice me to follow you on Twitter."

"Is there an online email/newsletter to subscribe to which would arrive regularly unprompted? Like alert on the Loop. If not, I think this would be a good idea to help people receive information without having to think about looking for it."

Other suggestions made by respondents included to listen to resident's views, and to provide feedback on how these have been acted on and the decisions made.

"Demonstrate that you do something with their input. Of course you will not please everyone but at least show that you are doing something."

"Listen to people - residents know what they're talking about."

The Involving People Survey was conducted by the Corporate Research Team, Borough of Poole, on behalf of the Community Engagement Working Party. For further information please contact Corporate Research on (01202) 633086 or visit our website at www.boroughofpoole.com/research