

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 23 rd July 2024
Report Subject	National Residents Survey
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Data Cymru and the WLGA Improvement Programme have developed a modular, resident survey that is being offered free of charge to all local councils in Wales from July 2024.

The survey will collect high level local intelligence identifying people's perceptions of Flintshire and the Council (*the 'what'*). The data collected will, in turn, inform areas where the Council may need to undertake further, more in-depth, research to better understand those perceptions (*the 'why'*).

Councils across the whole of the UK continue to face unprecedented financial challenges and it is becoming ever more difficult to balance budgets with public expectation. With the growing need to make difficult, often unpalatable, financial decisions it is important to understand the views and opinions of residents and provide people with opportunities to have their say in helping to deliver improvements wherever possible.

In addition to core module questions, two additional question modules are being developed with the intention of making them available in year two (July 2025). These will be part of the free offer and a collaborative approach with local councils to develop questions will continue to be adopted.

From 2025, individual councils will be able to commission additional bespoke question modules relevant to their own business need at a small cost. Members are asked to approve the Council's recommendation to accept this offer to participate in the free core modules of the National Resident Survey.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members approve Flintshire's acceptance of the offer to participate in the free core modules of the National Resident Survey.
2	That Members support Flintshire's implementation of the National Resident Survey before the end of the summer 2024.
3	That Members champion supplementary consultation and engagement activity based on the findings of the National Resident Survey to better understand the 'why' behind the data collected.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE NATIONAL RESIDENT SURVEY
1.01	Data Cymru and the WLGA Improvement Programme have developed a modular resident survey that is being offered to all local councils in Wales. This centralised approach is free to all local councils and enhances comparability through standardisation. Data will be collected at a postcode level, allowing councils to understand trends at various geographies. In addition, this is an ongoing offer, meaning that trend data will be collected and analysed.
1.02	This comprises of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a 'core' set of questions that form a standard resident survey;• an analysis and dissemination dashboard;• question modules that can be added to the 'core' survey (where local councils want to examine particular topics in detail e.g. climate change, cost of living etc.)
1.03	Following an invitation for feedback from all local authorities, Data Cymru have now reviewed and finalised the set of core module questions, for implementation from July 2024.
1.04	The core survey The core survey will be a bi-lingual digital survey and will be accessible via direct links, email links, and QR codes. Residents in need of support to complete the survey online will be signposted to Flintshire Connects Centres. Local councils will be responsible for translation into languages other than English and Welsh. Whilst the survey will be available to implement locally from 15 July 2024, local councils can decide when, and how often, to run their surveys. The core survey will focus on the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• About your local area• About your local council• About you• About the survey

	<p>The survey will not include open text questions, however their inclusion will be reviewed after two survey cycles (2026).</p> <p>The survey will collect high level quantitative data identifying people's perceptions of Flintshire and the Council (<i>the 'what'</i>) which will inform areas where the Council may need to undertake further, more in-depth, qualitative research to better understand those perceptions (<i>the 'why'</i>).</p>
1.05	<p>The analysis and dissemination dashboard</p> <p>The analysis and dissemination dashboard is being built using Data Cymru's existing PowerBI skills, infrastructure, and licenses. There is no need for local councils to have local PowerBI skills or licenses. This dashboard will hold each participating local council's survey data and will be used to support benchmarking and improvement activity. All results will be held in one dashboard, which will comprise two sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A raw data section, which is accessible only to named officers within each participating local council. In this area, each participating local council's raw data will be presented back to them via tables and charts, including identifiable data provided by residents in their local council area only. • A benchmarking section, which is accessible to named officers in all participating local councils. In this area, each participating local council's disclosure-controlled data will be presented in tables and charts for comparison and benchmarking purposes. This data will therefore be visible to all participating local councils, but no identifiable information will be shared. <p>This dashboard will not be publicly available and will be mounted on a secure web page managed by Data Cymru. Alongside access to this dashboard, each local council will also receive a copy of their raw data in csv format.</p> <p>It is expected that local councils will publish the results of their surveys to 'close the loop' and therefore build trust and transparency in the process.</p>
1.06	<p>Additional question modules</p> <p>Acknowledging that a 'core' offer may not be expansive enough for some local councils, in addition to the 2024 core module questions, Data Cymru are working on the development of two additional modules to be available in year two of the project (2025). This will include a section on volunteering along with other relevant topics. These will be available as part of the free offer and a collaborative approach with local councils to question development will continue to be adopted. Additionally, as part of their preparatory work, WLGA and Data Cymru will engage elected members on the purpose of the additional modules and invite feedback on question design. As yet, no timescale for this engagement programme has been received, although we would expect it to be late 2024 or early 2025.</p>

	<p>From 2025, it will also be possible for individual councils to commission bespoke additional question modules relevant to their own business need at a small cost.</p>									
1.07	<p>Benefits</p> <p>By taking up this offer, local councils will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Easily and efficiently gather robust local intelligence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Council areas are not homogenous so understanding local trends is key to developing local solutions; ○ Taking a standardised approach to data collection allows long-term trends and impacts to be observed and understood. 2. Undertake sector-led improvement through benchmarking. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collecting the same data over time and across Wales will facilitate continuous improvement based on evidence of outcomes and performance; ○ Where data is available, benchmarking can take place at sub-LA geographies, such as ward and lower super output area (LSOA), meaning only the ‘most similar’ comparators need be included in the process. 3. Contribute to meeting various legislative requirements around engagement and consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ○ Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 									
1.08	<p>Funding</p> <p>The core offer is free to all local councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development funding was secured via the WLGA Improvement Programme • Ongoing running of the survey is secured through Data Cymru <p>The option to develop bespoke additional question modules will have a small charge due to the extra data cleaning and analysis required.</p>									
1.09	<p>Timeline:</p> <p>Data Cymru’s project timeline can be found below, however, as per the recommendation above, Flintshire can ‘sign up’ at any point.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 1800 1262 2054"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="320 1800 676 1839">Item</th> <th data-bbox="676 1800 995 1839">Date</th> <th data-bbox="995 1800 1262 1839">Status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1839 676 1951">Complete alpha version of the core survey</td> <td data-bbox="676 1839 995 1951">31 March 2024</td> <td data-bbox="995 1839 1262 1951">Complete</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1951 676 2054">Complete alpha version of the dashboard</td> <td data-bbox="676 1951 995 2054">31 March 2024</td> <td data-bbox="995 1951 1262 2054">Complete</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Item	Date	Status	Complete alpha version of the core survey	31 March 2024	Complete	Complete alpha version of the dashboard	31 March 2024	Complete
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	Complete final version of the core survey	12 July 2024	Complete
	Complete final version of the dashboard	12 July 2024	On track Final output to be presented end of June 2024
	Go live: Roll out the core survey and dashboard to interested local councils	From 15 July 2024	On track
	Complete final versions of two additional question modules	31 July 2025	On track
1.10	In anticipation of Cabinet approval, it is recommended that Flintshire implement the survey before the end of the summer 2024.		

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Revenue: there are no implications for the approved revenue budget for the implementation of the core survey for the current or future financial years. Flintshire will utilise existing channels to communicate and inform residents when the survey is launched e.g., website, social media.</p> <p>From 2025, it will be possible for individual councils to commission bespoke additional question modules relevant to their own business need, at a small cost. Should this be considered beneficial at that time a further report will be presented to Cabinet for approval.</p> <p>Capital: there are no implications for the approved capital programme for either the current financial year or for future financial years.</p> <p>Human Resources: High level analysis will be provided by Data Cymru free of charge as part of the core module package, however, the Council may need to undertake further, more in-depth research to better understand people's perceptions (<i>the 'why'</i>) which will require services to take ownership of this additional work as part of their consultation and engagement activities.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed with a positive result (Appendix 1).

3.02	<p>Potential risk – public benchmarking of results</p> <p>All results will be held in one dashboard mounted on a secure web page managed by Data Cymru. The dashboard will not be publicly available. It will hold each participating local council’s survey data and will be used to support benchmarking and improvement activity. Alongside access to this dashboard, each local council will also receive a copy of their raw data in csv format.</p>
3.02	Data Cymru has completed Data Protection Impact Assessment and draft data governance documentation is currently being compiled, ahead of a presentation to local council Data Protection leads on 18 June 2024.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	At its meeting on 13 th June 2024 Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that council should consult annually with residents via a survey sent out with council tax bills. This survey, whilst not being posted with council tax bills, would meet that recommendation.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Integrated Impact Assessment

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Hayley Mallon, Customer Service & Communications Manager Telephone: 01352 702122 E-mail: Hayley.mallon@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	None.