

**RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO
ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 25th June 2008
title: Citizens' Panel Survey Report – Financial Reporting
submitted by: Chief Executive
principal author: Michelle Haworth – Corporate Policy Officer

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform committee of the results of the Ribble Valley Citizens' Panel Survey conducted in December 2007.

2 RELEVANCE TO THE COUNCIL'S AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES:

- Council Ambitions: It is important that the Council is aware of the levels of
- Community Objectives satisfaction from our customers; this will enable us to improve
- Corporate Priorities: the Council of the areas which our customers see as priorities our service delivery. In addition, this survey will help to inform
- Other Considerations: for improvement.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Ribble Valley Citizens' Panel was established in 2004 to enable the Council and its partners to access the views of Ribble Valley residents on issues of concern. The results are used to develop policies and strategies, and to identify where service improvements are required.
- 3.2 The Ribble Valley Citizens' Panel currently has over 700 members. The Council works in partnership with neighbouring East Lancashire authorities – Hyndburn, Pendle, Burnley and Rossendale – to form an East Lancashire Citizens' Panel. The Ribble Valley panel is surveyed twice a year about matters relating specifically to Ribble Valley, and twice a year as part of an East Lancashire-wide survey.
- 3.3 In December 2007, panel members were invited to take part in a Ribble Valley-specific survey covering the topics: Equality and Diversity; Citizenship; Financial Reporting; and Clitheroe Market. The full survey report has been circulated to all members for information. This report focuses specifically on the section of the survey covering matters relating to Financial Reporting.

4 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- Almost a fifth of respondents had viewed the Council's Statement of Accounts, or its summary, with over three-quarters of these stating that it was published in the best format for their needs.
- Over two-thirds of respondents found the Statement of Accounts interesting to read, and three-quarters found it easy to understand.
- A tenth of respondents felt that financial documents were difficult to access.
- Almost two-thirds of panel members felt that the Council should produce an Annual Report.

- When asked in what format the Annual Report should be produced the majority of people answered 'electronically' – either made available by email (on request) or through the intranet.

5 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 It is recommended that Committee note the results of this Citizens' Panel survey.

6 RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1

- Resources: None
- Technical, Environmental and Legal: None.
- Political: None
- Reputation: It is important that the Council uses customer satisfaction information to improve service delivery where possible.

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For more information please ask for Michelle Haworth, extension 4421.