Community Centre satisfaction survey

A summary of our findings

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Contents

Executive summary ........................................................................................................3
1.0 Introduction ...........................................................................................................4
2.0 Centre results .........................................................................................................4
  2.1 Barton ..................................................................................................................4
  2.2 Cutteslowe ..........................................................................................................5
  2.3 Littlemore ............................................................................................................6
  2.4 West Oxford ........................................................................................................6
3.0 Our next steps .........................................................................................................7
Executive summary

Project introduction

Four community centres\(^1\) across Oxford were surveyed in a pilot study to better understand who currently uses community centres and how satisfied those customers are with the services they receive. Our results give a useful indication of current customer opinion.

Oxford City’s community centres are managed by voluntary community associations. The work of these volunteers is critical to the success of the centres, and we will share our findings with these associations and continue to work in partnership to further develop the centres.

Findings and trends

- People from all age groups are represented across the four centres in our research, although a significant proportion of people were aged over 45 years.
- The majority of people who took part in this survey were white women.
- Most people using these centres live locally (within one mile) however people are willing to travel furthest to reach West Oxford Community Centre.
- Community centre security, cleanliness and the helpfulness of centre staff are most important to people using community centres.

This pilot study suggests people are not satisfied with centre toilet facilities (Barton, Cutteslowe), the heating (Littlemore) and vehicle parking (West Oxford).

Conclusions and recommendations

These findings suggest the four community centres are serving people living within their immediate proximity; however we cannot be sure our results give a true representation of everyone using each centre or that the centres are engaging with everyone from their catchment community.

People are generally satisfied with what is most important to them, although this research will help to guide our support with community associations to address the factors community centre users are least satisfied with.

When we extend this survey to other centres we will review how we collect responses to increase response rates and allow us to draw firmer conclusions. We will address how we engage with community associations, the timing of our survey work and how we adapt our survey technique to effectively capture results from different user groups.

\(^1\) Barton, Cutteslowe, Littlemore and West Oxford community centres
1.0 Introduction

The Communities and Neighbourhoods team conducted this pilot study to better understand current customer satisfaction at four community centres in Oxford.

This report summarises our findings for each centre and the recommendations we can make using this research. It states how we will use this information to develop our work with the four associations, and how we envisage this research progressing in the future.

To conduct this survey we set the following aims:

- Create a profile of current community centre users
- Understand current customer satisfaction with our four sample centres
- Use our findings to influence our continuing work with community associations, both at the four centres and with other centres in the city

We used survey documents (both paper and online) to capture people’s responses. Locality Officers facilitated visits to each centre between 17 December 2010 and 30 January 2011. Over this six week period we collected 228 surveys in total. We will report our findings to the four community associations involved in the pilot, and use our recommendations to shape our work for the future.

2.0 Centre results

The following chapters give an overview of our findings for each centre.

2.1 Barton
Total responses: 46

- Barton neighbourhood centre is used mostly by people living within a one mile radius who access the centre regularly (2 – 4 times per week). Most responses were made by women, and nearly all people who took part in the survey were aged over 30 years.

- Cleanliness, helpfulness of staff, security and toilet facilities are the important factors that influence satisfaction. At the moment visitors are very happy with the staff and but dissatisfied with cleanliness of the centre, especially the toilets. The majority of respondents refer to the centre in a positive manner describing it as warm, welcoming, accessible and safe.
• There is local support to diversify the range of services the neighbourhood centre delivers. This includes opportunities for learning and training, activities for children under 10 years and sports.

We will continue to work closely with the Barton Community Association and other partners to:

• Find solutions to improve the toilet/changing facilities, centre cleanliness, vehicle parking and signs

• Diversify the range of services on offer at centre

2.2 Cutteslowe
Total responses: 37

• Our research shows people using the centre frequently (2 – 4 times per week), are young people (aged under 18) and seniors (aged over 50) who live within one mile of the centre. No responses were collected from users aged between 30 – 44 years.

• Users value the helpfulness of the centre staff, and describe the centre as warm, busy, safe, clean and welcoming.

• People are least satisfied with the toilets, centre décor, parking and availability of refreshments. There is demand for a more diverse range of activities such as group activities and games sessions, evening social events and health improvement services, such as sports and fitness and health advice.

We will continue to work closely with the Cutteslowe Community Association and other partners to:

• There is demand to improve the centre’s décor and especially the toilet facilities

• Raise the profile of the centre within the local area and increase attendance

• Further investigate the potential for diversifying service delivery in line with community demand
2.3 Littlemore
Total responses: 40

- The views of people from all age categories were collected. Nearly all respondents were female (89%).

- Positive comments were made about the character of the centre, describing it as warm, clean, welcoming, spacious and accessible.

- Littlemore Community Centre users are satisfied with what is most important to them: centre cleanliness, security and the toilet and changing facilities.

- People are least satisfied with the range of services on offer at the centre, the heating and have some difficulty making bookings.

We will continue to work closely with the Littlemore Community Association and other partners to:

- Improve the diversity and volume of services delivered from Littlemore Community Centre

- Review the current booking system

- Promote activities to encourage more people, especially men, to use the centre

2.4 West Oxford
Total responses 105

- West Oxford Community Centre received the highest number of responses. Respondents were most receptive to the online version of the survey.
• Results were collected from almost all age categories, except from people aged 0 – 15 years. Most people live within one mile of the centre (54%) although people are willing to travel further to reach West Oxford community centre, with 46% of respondents travelling an average 6.5 miles to reach the centre.

• People describe the centre as **warm, welcoming, clean, accessible and light**.

• Overall satisfaction is high, however people feel improvements could be made to **vehicle parking, the range and availability of food and drink, kitchen facilities and the cost of using the centre**.

We will continue to work with the West Oxford Community Association and other partners to:

• Address areas of customer dissatisfaction and prioritise features of greatest customer importance into the long term plans for the centre.

• Further investigate the potential to diversify the services delivered from the centre further, by prioritising music and theatre performances, and sports and fitness and activities for young people.

### 3.0 Our next steps

We now have baseline data for these four centres. We acknowledge our conclusions are limited due to the small number of responses, but see how this has been a valuable exercise to further understand how community centres are meeting community demand and what improvements should be prioritised to increase customer satisfaction for the future.

The customer profile for people completing surveys can be generalised as:

• White women
• Aged over 30 years
• Live within one mile of the centre
• Access services frequently, 2 – 4 times a week

Customer satisfaction can be summarised across the four centres as:

• People are most satisfied with helpfulness of centre staff but feel improvements could be made to centre toilet facilities and the range of services on offer.
• People describe all four centres as warm and welcoming.

Although our research included online and paper versions of the survey, carefully timed visits by Locality Officers and targeted communications to promote the survey, we recognise our research technique must be refined in
the future to increase response rates. We can make the following recommendations to further improve our research:

- Avoid surveying during holiday periods
- Allow a longer lead in time to engage community associations more in the delivery of the research
- Adapt the research technique in response to different community audiences, such as for youth clubs

In future we will also consider how our research can understand the needs of the wider community who are not currently accessing community centres.

We will continue to work closely with community associations and form action plans to address these issues. There are already some positive outcomes to show how we are using this research to improve customer satisfaction:

- Barton Neighbourhood Centre negotiating a new cleaning arrangement to improve the service currently in place
- Cutteslowe Community Centre have organised the Community Payback to redecorate the centre, focussing especially on the toilet facilities
- Littlemore Community Centre are redecorating the centre and trustees are using their recently developed action plan to attract more people to the centre
- West Oxford are refining the service their community café offers and have introduced a flexible hire charge system

If you would like to know more about this research, please contact Helen Thompson (Oxford City Council Locality Officer) on 01865 252742 or hthompson@oxford.gov.uk.