

**Highland Council Community Safety, Public Engagement
and Equalities Committee**

12 September 2013

**Public Performance Survey 2013:
Responses to questions on Community Safety**

Report by the Assistant Chief Executive

Agenda Item	8
Report No	CPE 34/13

Summary

This report provides a summary of the responses from the Citizens' Panel on questions about attitudes to community safety in the 2013 Public Performance and Attitudes Survey.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Highland Council's 2013 Public Performance and Attitudes Survey (PPAS) was carried with the Citizen's Panel in the summer of 2013. The survey included a number of attitudinal questions to gather views on:
- Community safety concerns
 - Fear of crime
 - Precaution against crime; and
 - Perception of safety in the local area
- The report was analysed by the UHI Centre for Remote and Rural Studies and is available on the website. [Highland Council Performance and Attitudes Survey 2013](#). This report focuses on the Community Life section, pages 60 to 72.
- 1.2 This is the second year of reporting on a revised set of seven questions about community safety. We have aligned with questions from the former Northern Constabulary bi-annual Community Consultation Survey (last conducted in 2011). Our approach provides some continuity in understanding public perception across Highland. This year we have been able to make comparison with previous year's results. This information will continue to form part of the evidence required for the Council to agree priorities for future local plans for police and fire services as well as the Single Outcome Agreement.
- 1.3 For the whole survey there were 1,151 usable responses providing high levels of confidence that results can be generalised to the adult population in the Highlands as a whole. Confidence in the results is high and at the 95% level and within a +or- 2.9% confidence interval. In other words, if we had surveyed everyone we could be 95% confident that the results would be within a range of +/-2.9% of those reported.
- 1.4 The results of the survey support the Council's programme 'Working together for the Highlands' under the theme of 'Working together for strong and safe communities' and specifically the commitment to 'ensure that elected members will play a full part in agreeing the priorities and local plans for police and fire and

rescue services in the Highlands'. Elected members will also monitor performance against these plans'.

2. Key findings: Perceptions of safety in the local area

2.1 In response to the question 'how do you rate the safety of your area within 15 minutes' walk of your home?' 97.8% rated their locality as either "very" or "fairly safe"; an increase from the 2012 figure of 96.1% (92.9% in 2011). The difference between the years is shown below.

Safety of your area within 15 minutes' walk

	2011	2012	2013
A very safe area	51.3%	53.3%	58.5%
A fairly safe area	41.6%	42.8%	39.3%
Rather unsafe area	5.5%	2.9%	1.7%
A very unsafe area	1.1%	0.7%	0.1%

3. Key findings: Community Safety Concerns

3.1 The top three community safety concerns remain the same for 2013 and are:

- **Road safety**, with 30% saying it was a major concern (down from 35%) and as last year 46% have a minor concern with a total of 76% expressing a concern (down from 81%);
- The second highest concern was **alcohol abuse** with 24% saying this was a major concern (down from 27%) and 39% a minor concern (up from 38%) with a total of 63% expressing a concern (down from 65%);
- **Anti-social behaviour** ranked third with 19% saying this was a major concern (down from 24%) and as last year 38% a minor concern with a total of 57% expressing a concern (down from 62%). There is a notably a higher proportion of Council tenants holding this view, 66% of them although down from 76% the previous year.

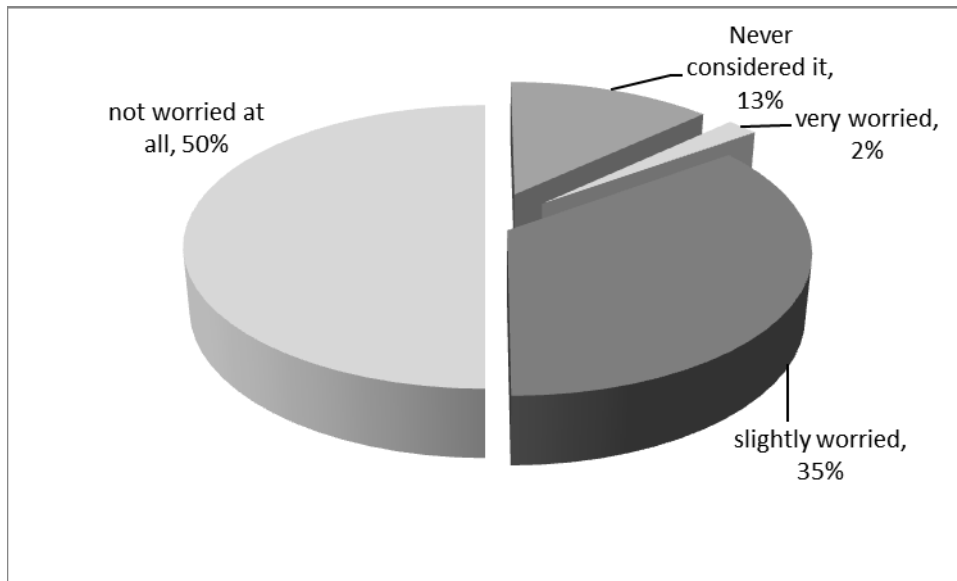
3.2 Different levels of concern were expressed by different groups in the community. For example:

- Council tenants continue to show more concern about antisocial behaviour, fire related antisocial behaviour, serious and organised crime, domestic abuse and abuse of vulnerable adults.
- People unable to work show more concern with domestic abuse, fire related antisocial behaviour and abuse of vulnerable adults.
- People with disabilities show more concern with violent crime and abuse of vulnerable adults.
- Those that have lived in the Highland for less than 5 years showed less concern in relation to antisocial behaviour, serious and organised crime, domestic abuse and violent crime in their area.

4. Key findings: Fear of Crime

4.1 Respondents were asked: "How worried are you about becoming a victim of crime?" The majority of the panel, 62.5% indicated they had never considered it or were not worried at all (up from 58%) compared to 37.6% that say they have some degree of worry (down from 42%); including only 2.5% saying they are very worried (see Figure 1 below).

Fig 1: Extent to which respondents are worried about being a victim of crime (in general)



- 4.2 There are notable differences in response according to individual characteristics:
- There is a greater level of worry found amongst disabled people with 48% saying they are worried (down from 57%) including 5% saying they are very worried (down from 12%).
 - Council house tenants show more worry, with 53% worried (down from 54%) including 12% very worried.
- 4.3 Respondents were then asked about how worried they were about specific crimes. From a list of ten, there were only two identified where a majority showed some worry. The first was vandalism/deliberate damage to home property or car, a worry to 51% (down from 54%). The second was having their home broken into, a worry for 51% (down from 53%).
- 4.4 A sizeable minority felt worried about having their car stolen or broken into (45%) with retired people saying they are more worried (48%). A minority also felt worried about being attacked by someone under the influence of alcohol (39%, down from 43%). Higher levels of concern were expressed by council tenants (49%) and the lowest level by those who have been resident in the area for less than 5 years (26%).
- 4.5 Respondents were asked how worried they were about being the victim of being attacked, assaulted or robbed in the street, 31% said this was a worry (down from 33%). There are some variation between groups with disabled people more worried about becoming a victim (42%, down from 48%) than among those who are not disabled (29%, down from 31%). Council tenants were also more worried (42%, same as previous year) than people living in other types of accommodation (28%, down from 38%) and homeowners (30%, down from 32%).
- 4.6 Levels of worry over being the victim of an attempted rape, or other serious sexual offence has remained the same with 11% of respondents slightly worried and a further 3% very worried (14% expressing some level of worry). Nearly all those expressing a worry are women.

4.7 In responding to a specific question on being a victim of domestic abuse, 4% (up from 3%) reported being worried and 1% very worried.

4.8 A separate question was asked about suffering discrimination or being subject to a hate incident (based on religion or belief, race or ethnic origin, mental health, physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or learning disability). For the majority of respondents (62-71%) this is not a concern. An increased minority say they have concerns about being subjected to a hate incident or hate crime. In the table below this ranges from between 8% and 18%. Last year the range was between 3% and 9%. There are other notable differences from last year in the types of hate incident or hate crime people were concerned about. Last year's top three reasons for concern related to religion/belief, race/ethnicity and mental health. This year it is race/ethnicity, mental health and learning disability.

Extent of concerns about anyone (including yourself) being subjected to a hate incident or a hate crime

Grounds	Major Concern (A) %	Minor Concern (B) %	Total Concerned (A+B) %	Not a Concern %	No opinion/ don't know %
Race or ethnic origin	3	15	18	62	20
Mental health	3	15	18	62	20
Learning disability	3	14	17	63	20
Physical disability	3	13	16	64	20
Religion or belief (including non-belief)	3	11	14	68	18
Sexual orientation	3	9	12	67	20
Gender identity	1	7	8	71	21

5. Key findings: Precautions against crime

5.1 Respondents were asked to select which precautions they took because of possible worries about crime. The most common precaution taken (always or sometimes) was to make sure that the home is adequately secured (88%) and to make sure their vehicle is adequately secured (87%). The percentage of respondents answering always or sometimes is shown below.

Precaution Taken	% who say they always or sometimes do this (2012)	% who say they always or sometimes do this (2013)
Make sure your home is adequately secured	88%	88%
Make sure your vehicle is adequately secured	84%	87%
Carry a mobile phone	61%	69%
Avoid certain places	51%	53%
Mark your property in case it is stolen	40%	45%
Avoid going out when it is dark	30%	27%
Avoid going out at certain times	28%	26%
Avoid going out alone	27%	29%
Take self-defence classes	4%	5%

The above and other information in this report will be shared with partners to target appropriate responses and inform the development of local plans.

6. Implications

- 6.1 Resources implications: There are no financial implications as a result of this survey report.
- 6.2 Equalities, Legal and Risk implications: This report identifies equalities issues that highlight the requirement to consider the needs of different groups when targeting crime prevention activities and offering assurance to groups expressing higher levels of vulnerability and fear. Without considering these needs there is a risk of failing to meet the equalities duties placed on public bodies and a failure to consider a range of evidence in agreeing the priorities and objectives for local policing and fire and rescue services. The Single Outcome Agreement has set equalities outcomes and with the partnership target to reduce the gap in fear of crime amongst people with disabilities compared to others.
- 6.3 Climate Change: There are no climate change implications as a result of this report, however it worth noting that around 750 members of the Citizens' Panel choose to respond to surveys electronically. This is encouraged to reduce paper and postage costs which have implications for carbon emissions as well.

7. Recommendations:

7.1 Members are asked to note that:

1. The survey shows 97.8% of respondents rated their area within 15 minutes' walk of their home as either "very" or "fairly safe"; the top three concerns continue to be road safety, alcohol abuse and anti-social behaviour; and the majority of respondents (62.5%) were either not concerned about or had not considered being a victim of crime. All of these scores show improvement from previous years.
2. The crimes of most worry were vandalism/deliberate damage to home property or car and having their home broken into; and making sure homes and cars are adequately secured remain the top two precautions people reported taking.
3. Notable differences in responses were reported for people with disabilities, those unable to work, council house tenants and women. This information will be shared with partners to target appropriate responses.
4. This feedback from the public is one source of evidence in agreeing and reviewing our community safety priorities.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive

Author: Evelyn Johnston, Strategic Performance Manager

Date: 29 August 2013