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## AGENDA ITEM B3

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### CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2020

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#### **Purpose of Report**

To receive the Committee's direction about whether or not to proceed with the NRB customer satisfaction survey in 2020.

#### **Recommendations**

Officers recommend that the Committee:

1. *Receive the Customer Satisfaction Survey 2020 Report.*
2. *Recommend to Council whether or not to proceed with the NRB survey in 2020.*

#### **1. Background**

The Council undertakes a customer satisfaction survey to measure its performance against non-mandatory non-financial performance indicators across its significant activities. This has previously been on a three-yearly basis with the last survey undertaken by the National Research Bureau (NRB) in October 2018. Last year Council requested the survey be undertaken annually in order to more effectively track performance. At its meeting in June 2019, Council agreed to carry out a survey in 2020 after the new Council had been given the opportunity to consider new questions, trend information and benchmarking against other councils. The Annual Plan for the 2019/20 year includes the NRB Survey as a method of measuring performance against non-mandatory non-financial performance indicators for this financial year. The results are due to be reported in the Annual Report in October 2020.

#### **2. Should Council carry out a customer satisfaction survey in 2020?**

##### **2.1 National Research Bureau Proposal**

NRB provided a proposal to carry out a resident survey in 2020 (see Appendix 1). At the February 2020 Annual Plan Workshop, councillors expressed some concern regarding the methodology proposed, including the sample size and preference for landline telephones as the main approach. In addition, it was unclear whether council was able to access comparative data without further cost as these had not previously been supplied. Councillors were also of the view that the survey questions might not necessarily align with the strategic direction of the new Council and what it wanted to measure in terms of quality and performance for the Long Term Plan 2021—2031.

## **2.2 The impact of Covid-19**

The Covid-19 pandemic has subsequently impacted the Council's service provision and performance. It is likely that responses to a customer satisfaction survey carried out this year will be significantly skewed such that responses may be an unreliable indicator of performance this year.

## **2.3 Auditors' response**

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in New Zealand, Audit NZ advised that if Council chose not to carry out a survey this year, contrary to that stated in the Annual Plan, it should report in the Annual Report the reasons for this. Audit NZ would then consider whether the performance story was complete and any impact this would have. This would be recorded in our Annual Report. Audit NZ indicated that it may be preferable to make any changes to our process in the LTP next year as this would reduce any expectation gap from the community.

Officers contacted Audit NZ to determine if their position had changed in light of the potential impact of Covid-19 and they were unable to confirm their position at the time of contact.

Officers have also received advice from the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) through the Society of Local Government Managers. The OAG advise that councils should proceed as normal and report back through the commentary in the Annual Report any potential impact Covid-19 may have had on the customer response.

## **2.4 Options**

Officers consider there are two options; either to proceed with a repeat of the 2018 NRB survey using the methodology set out in the proposal or to not carry out a survey this year. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in New Zealand NRB advised that they would be able to carry out a survey in mid-June in time for the results to be included in the Annual Report. Council would need to confirm the questions to be included in the survey in early June. Officers consider there is insufficient time to investigate other options or additional questions to be included in the survey.

The cost proposed for a repeat of the 16 minute 2018 survey was \$18,750. If this option is recommended, officers would need to confirm costs and timeframe with NRB.

The benefits of carrying out the NRB survey include:

- ability to compare performance results with the 2018 survey;
- consistency with the performance statements in the Annual Plan;
- meeting customer expectations;
- low risk of an unfavourable audit; and
- minimal additional human and financial resourcing to carry out the work (the cost of the survey has been included in the 2019/20 budget).

The disadvantages and risks of carrying out the NRB survey include:

- lack of confidence in the results as a true picture of performance due to the survey methodology and impact of Covid-19; and
- potential inefficient use of financial resources arising from the above.

## **2.5 Consultation**

Officers have consulted with auditors as indicated in paragraph 2, above. This decision does not directly impact individuals and is not significant for the purposes of the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. Consultation with the community is not therefore required.

## **2.6 Legal implications**

Performance reporting requirements are set out in Part 6 and Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 2002.

## **2.7 Financial considerations**

There are no additional financial considerations.

## **3. Conclusion**

The Committee should consider and recommend to Council whether to proceed with the NRB survey this year. If the Committee does recommend the survey proceed, officers will confirm the proposal with NRB and report to the Council meeting on 3 June.

## **4. Appendices**

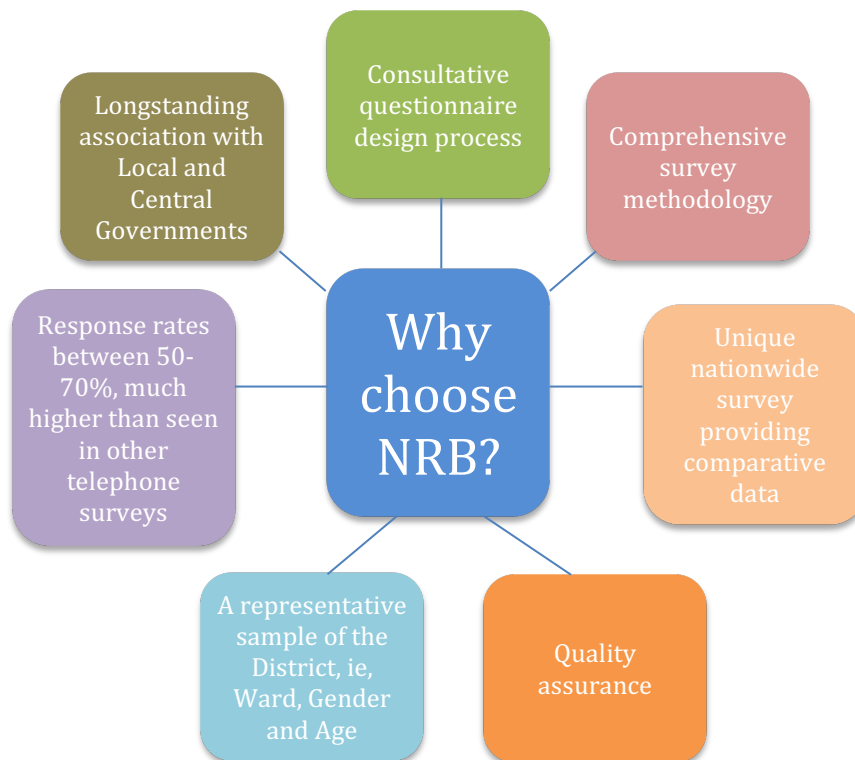
Appendix 1 – NRB Proposal for SWDC 2020 Resident Survey

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Reviewed by: Harry Wilson, Chief Executive Officer

**Appendix 1 –  
NRB Proposal for SWDC 2020 Resident  
Survey**

# Proposal for South Wairarapa District Council 2020 Resident Survey



## Questionnaire Development

### Overall

Consultative questionnaire design process

We successfully conducted the Council's residents' surveys in previous years, including more recently, 2013, 2016 and 2018 and will use the 2018 questionnaire as a basis for the 2020 survey.

This will allow:

- Comparison with data collected in previous years.
- Provide users/service provided satisfaction readings as well as overall ratings.
- Inclusion of any other local issues that Council requires feedback on.
- Analysis by Ward and where applicable, by socio-economic groups, for all key findings.
- Residents to provide feedback on why they feel dissatisfied with selected services and facilities provided. Open-ended responses are fully coded, weighted and ranked.

### Satisfaction Scale - Flexibility

In the previous surveys a three-point scale was used when asked satisfaction with local facilities/services (eg, footpaths, roads). They are generally something residents are familiar with; although they may not have had direct experience, they know of someone who has.

For more conceptual questions, varying scales are used, ie, four-point and five-point scales.

We are, of course, more than willing to adapt/change any of the scales, if this is the Council's decision.

## Methodology - Satisfaction Surveys

Comprehensive  
survey  
methodology

### Introduction - Sample Size and Method

For your 2020 Resident Survey we propose to survey 300 residents (aged 18 or over) **mainly** by landline telephone in March/April 2020. We will liaise with the Council to determine a suitable interviewing period. If cellphone numbers are listed in the phonebook these will be phoned.

We also propose conducting 30 of the 300 interviews as face-to-face interviews, in each of the three Wards, and with residents aged 18 to 44 years.

This sample size and landline phone/face-to-face method provide a good trade-off between the reliability of the results (the margin of error), and the cost involved in conducting the survey. The margin of error for the survey of 300 is  $\pm 5.7\%$ , given a 95% confidence level, where the sample is 'split' 50/50 on an issue.

### Landline, Mobile Phone Numbers, Web Surveys, Mail-Outs

We would recommend mainly using a landline phone approach for the survey. According to the latest 2018 Census figures, **63%** of households nationwide have a landline, so a majority of the population still have a landline phone.

We note that no sample frame or survey methodology can fully cover all variance in a defined population. A scientifically selected **face-to-face** survey would cover this variance the best, but this would be prohibitively expensive, hence our suggestion of doing a sample size of 30 face-to-face.

Other survey methodologies, such as **web or mail-out surveys**, typically comprise samples that are **'self-selected'**. When a survey frame is self-selected, less reliance can be placed on the results, when compared with a survey in which the sample is not self-selected. Further, self-selected surveys often have low response rates (often in the **5% to 30%** range).

The Council may like to put the survey on their Facebook/website pages. This should be after the survey to ensure that the questions don't get into the media, with the resulting coverage perhaps influencing the results.

### Comparative Nationwide and Peer Group Benchmarking Data

Unique  
nationwide  
survey  
providing  
comparative  
data

Councils are able to compare its survey results, where applicable, with National and Peer Group average comparative results that NRB establishes on a **separate** survey.

Currently, these figures are derived from the National Research Bureau's October/November 2018 National Communitrak™ Survey of 750 residents nationwide. This overall sample is split into relatively even groups for Urban, Provincial and Rural Peer Groups of Councils, and these three groups are combined to create the National Average figures.

Attached is also a description of the community outcomes questions asked in the Communitrak™ survey.

## Interview Quotas

A representative sample of the District, ie, Ward, Gender and Age

- a. **Proportional Ward quotas** will be used. These Ward quotas are in proportion to the population aged 18 and over in each Ward and are derived from Statistics New Zealand's 2018 Census figures. We recommend the following quotas be used:

Ward	Quota	*Expected (Based on 2018 Census figures)
Featherston	100	93
Greytown	100	101
Martinborough	100	106
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>

- b. **A 50/50 gender quota** will be used; that is, we will use quotas to target interviews with 150 men and 150 women. This is to ensure an even gender balance, as **men** are often **under-represented** in phone survey results with the emphasis on getting young people, rather than gender. 2018 Census figures show that 49% of the South Wairarapa District population aged 18 or over is male and 51% is female.
- c. We also recommend using an **age group** quota to ensure a reasonable minimum of younger residents are interviewed. For South Wairarapa District we propose a target of interviewing 60 residents aged 18 to 44 years, with 30 of these being conducted face-to-face (as mentioned above), as this group is increasingly difficult to obtain by landline phone. 2018 Census figures show 33% of the population aged 18 years or over are aged 18 to 44 (in 2013, this Census figure was 35%).

## Response Rate

Response rates between 50-70%, much higher than seen in other telephone surveys

Callbacks also help to ensure that an acceptable response rate is achieved. NRB typically achieves phone surveys response rates for Council clients in the **50% to 70%** range. For the 2018 South Wairarapa District Residents Survey we achieved a **64% response rate**. Response rates quoted for many telephone surveys range between 20% and 45%. The 50% to 70% range NRB achieves depends largely on interview duration, and to a lesser extent on the urban/rural make-up of the sample area.

In general, a decrease in the number of callbacks results in a decrease in the response rate. Surveys with either no or only one callback often have low response rates. As the response rate decreases, the survey results are increasingly called into question. NRB uses four calls (three call-backs) on different days, and at different times of the day, to attempt to interview the eligible respondent.

## NRB's Local Government Experience

Longstanding association with Local and Central Governments

The National Research Bureau (NRB) Ltd is a survey research firm specialising in monitoring work for Local, Regional and Central Government. The NRB is a full service research company providing surveys, evaluations, and consultation to local and central government agencies.

The company has been established for 51 years and has been in continuous operation during that time, with a 28 year association with local government in NZ. Extensive information on the company and its service profile is available on our website: [www.nrb.co.nz](http://www.nrb.co.nz).

Whilst NRB is Auckland based, our interviewers are located nationwide. For the South Wairarapa District Council 2020 survey, we will again use our interviewers mainly based in the lower half of New Zealand, with assistance from other interviewing teams, if necessary.

## Quality Assurance

Quality  
assurance

### Commitment to Quality Assurance

This is to confirm that NRB is committed to quality assurance at all stages of the survey process. Upon completion of the interview NRB Supervisors and in-house staff audit 100% of all new interviewers' work and 20% of experienced interviewers.

NRB is a member of ESOMAR.

Please see: <https://www.esomar.org> and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ESOMAR>

### Audit NZ

Each year, at the request of Audit NZ, we send a single letter to Audit NZ that covers all our Communitrak™ and Council Satisfaction surveys. Briefly this letter sets out our experience, assures them that we act independently and outlines the methodology used in these surveys.

### Schedule

Questionnaire finalised: Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020.  
Interviewing: Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March - 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020.  
Summary report: Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020.  
Full report: Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020.



## Budget, and Budget Options

Based on the 2018 questionnaire length remaining, on average, **16 minutes** long, the budget for the 2020 survey of 300 residents is \$18,750 plus GST.

As in 2018, the deliverables for the survey, where a report is required, includes the following:

1. A summary of the survey results, which is a PDF file emailed on completion of data processing.
2. The preparation and finalisation of two reports.
3. The main survey report will contain an Executive Summary, detailed results for all questions, and a description of the survey methodology. The main report contains:
  - Survey specifications/methodology.
  - A one page Infographic, showing a snapshot of the District's results.
  - Executive summary.
  - Main findings.
  - Breakdown of sub-samples used for weighting purposes.
4. The verbatim report will contain the verbatim responses recorded by interviewers in the open-ended questions. These responses will be either coded (grouped) by our experienced in-house coding staff, or not, as required.
5. Provision of electronic (PDF) reports. If no bound copies of the reports are required, the budget would be reduced by **\$350 plus GST**.
6. Provision of results from previous years, so that the Council can compare the survey results against previous years.
7. An Excel file of the tables of data shown in the main survey report, at no extra cost.
8. Provision of electronic files of all charts/graphs in the report, if required, at no extra cost.
9. And NRB's National and Peer Group comparison figures, where applicable.

If the average interview duration is increased to 20 minutes, the budget would be \$22,750 plus GST.

**Table: Community Outcomes Questions**

<b>Leadership</b>		
Satisfaction with the way Council involves the public in the decisions it makes, using the scale:		
Very satisfied, Satisfied,	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied,	Dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied.
Agree/disagree that Council makes decisions that meet the needs and aspirations of their residents using the scale:		
Strongly agree, Agree,	Neither agree nor disagree,	Disagree, Strongly disagree.
Overall, do residents think Council has a good reputation:		
Yes	No.	
<b>Social well-being</b>		
Perception of safety in the District/City, using the scale:		
Yes, definitely, Yes, mostly,	Not really, No, definitely not	
Rating community spirit in the District/City, using the scale:		
Very good, Good,	Neither good nor bad,	Not very good, Poor.
<b>Economic well-being</b>		
Do you have access to the Internet?		
<b>Environmental well-being</b>		
Satisfaction that the natural environment in your District/City is being preserved and sustained for future generations, using the scale:		
Very satisfied, Satisfied,	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied,	Dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied.
<b>Quality of life</b>		
Rating the overall quality of life in the District/City, using the scale:		
Very good, Good,	Fair, Poor.	
Whether the District/City is ...		
Better,	Same,	Or worse, as a place to live, than three years ago.