

# **NETs & Land Services**

## Customer Survey Report 2008 / 2009

**In October 2008 NETs & Land Services conducted their 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Customer Survey, a key tool for the service in measuring the satisfaction levels of their customers and identifying areas for concern in West Lothian and help set our main priorities for the coming year.**

### **Background**

The survey was distributed to 2732 members of the new West Lothian Citizens Panel with 1517 returned, a return rate of 55.5% - compared to 69% in 2007, however the sample size was considerably bigger this year than the previous year (only 588 in 2007).

The survey was reviewed and re-vamped, from the previous years, so we could measure satisfaction levels relating to the key priorities which we set following the previous years survey, including the Street Cleansing Service and the work being done by the new Environmental Wardens. We also increased the questions regarding the quality of customer service and our complaints procedure.

### **Findings**

In total we asked 37 questions relating to **Street Cleansing, Environmental Wardens, Grounds Maintenance, Neighbourhood Environmental Teams, Children's Play Areas, Cemeteries and Customer Care**. Customers were given 4 possible grading responses for each question – Excellent, Good, Satisfactory and Poor.

**The overall level of satisfaction in NETs and Land Services for 2008 was 88.28 %**

### **Areas of High Satisfaction**

The results of the survey were very positive, with many questions scoring well above 80% satisfaction results. The main areas of satisfaction, those which customers rated either excellent or good more than anything else were:

- Street Cleansing Service: Parks **(89.79%)**
- Street Cleansing Service: Main Streets / Town Centres **(89.91%)**
- Fly Tipping response Service **(92.79%)**
- Overall Grounds Maintenance Service **(89.9%)**
- Provision of Play Areas in Local Communities **(87.47%)**
- Maintenance of Play Areas **(89.32%)**
- Maintenance of Cemeteries and Churchyards **(97.26%)**

### **Main Areas of Concern**

The main areas of concern, those which customers rated as the most unsatisfactory, more than anything else, were:

- Cleanliness of Grass Verges **(19.12% unsatisfied -**
- Cleanliness of Rural Roadside Verges **(20.46%)**
- Grounds Maintenance Service: Rural Roadside Verges **(15.43%)**

## Quality of Customer Service

As part of this years survey we increased the number of questions we asked customers about the level of customer service the received when the contact the service. The results were very encouraging will many questions returning a large % of satisfactory responses, as follows:

- Provision of Information on the Service **(93.25%)**
- Accessibility of the Service **(95.81%)**
- Conduct of Employees **(96.99%)**
- Customers who felt they were treated fairly **(82.29%)**
- The outcome of Complaints **(83.39%)**

As a result of the success of this section we intend to now survey those customers, who contact us through the Call Centre or CIS offices, on the quality of the customer service they received.

## Comparison with Survey Result 2007

On the whole are results were more positive and satisfaction levels have risen from the previous years. The concerns raised by our customers in 2007 have been addressed. In 2007 our Customers identified the main areas for concern as:

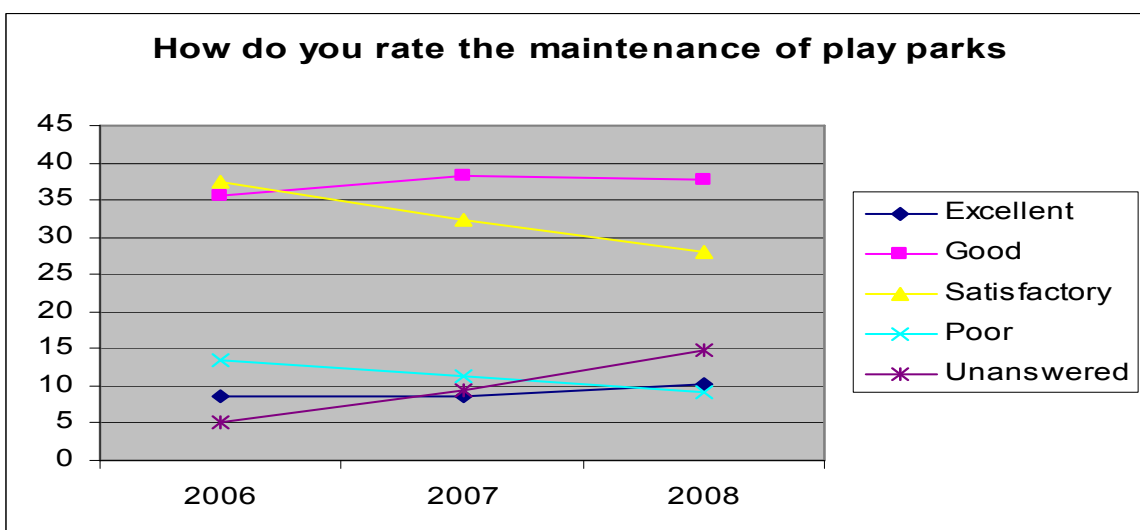
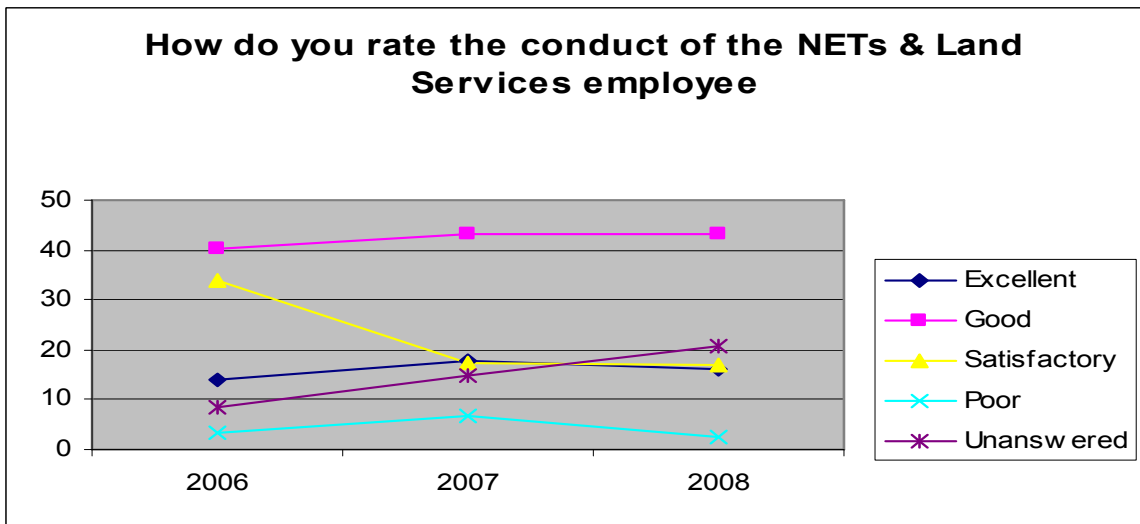
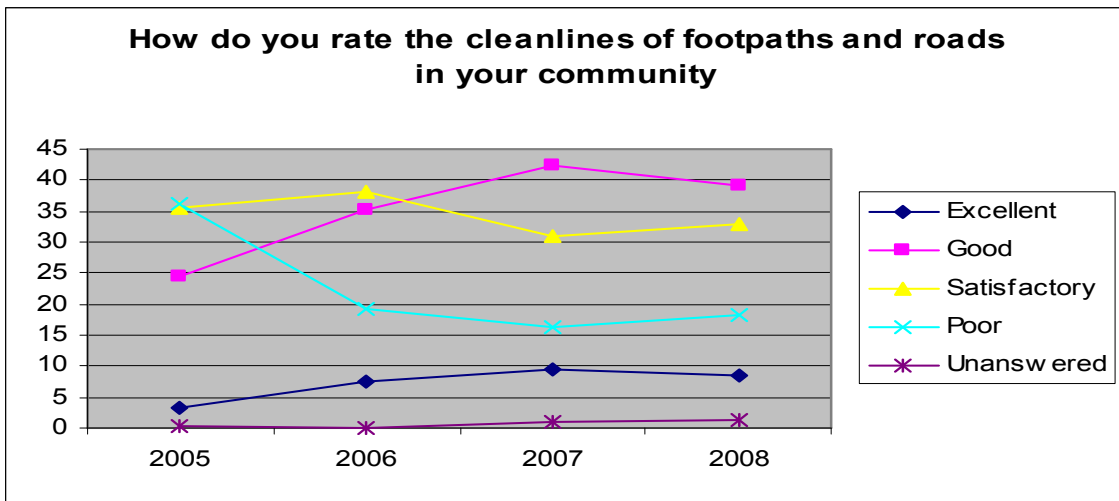
- Cleanliness of Grass Verges (16.5% Unsatisfied) – 19.12 % in 2008
- Awareness of Environmental Wardens (82% Had not seen the Wardens On Patrol) – 84 % in 2008
- Provision of Play Areas (14% Unsatisfied) – 12 % in 2008
- Adequate equipment within Play Areas (25.5% Unsatisfied) – 27% in 2008

It is disappointing that despite implementing a number of improvement measures to help address these issues last year, our customers still feel that some of them are problem areas in our performance. We believe that by continuing the hard work we have put in to improve these areas of the service, future customer surveys will show an increase in satisfaction for these areas. Given the large increase in the sample size in 2008, it is very positive that every question asked returned a satisfaction rate of over 70%.

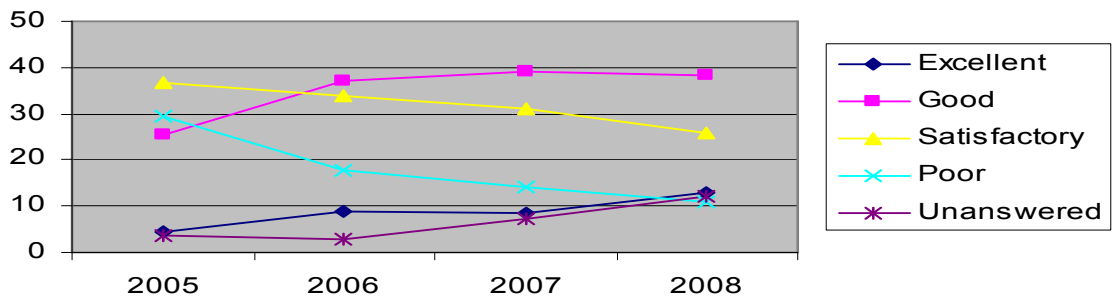
**The overall level of customer satisfaction in NETs and Land Services increased in 2008 from 87.67 % to 88.28%**

**Trend Results (3 or 4 Years)**

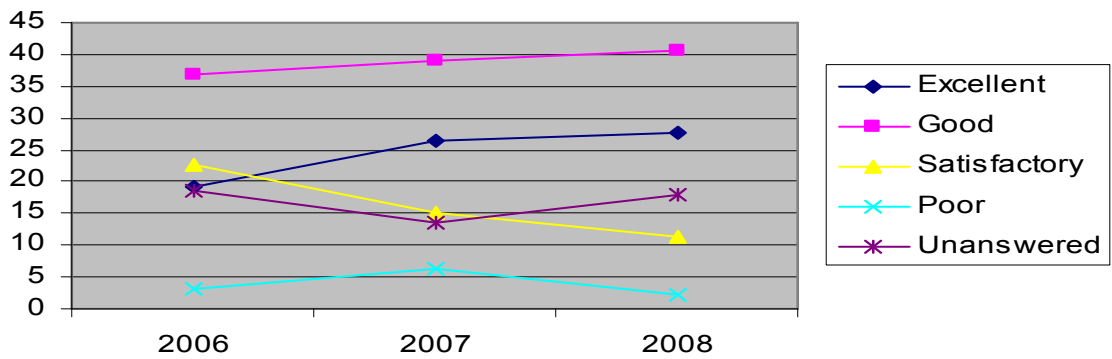
As this was the 4<sup>th</sup> customer survey we have carried out we are able now to see if satisfaction levels are improving consistently and showing an upward trend. As the questions within the survey are changed year on year to reflect the work we are doing we cannot do this for every survey but those we can are showing a steady trend in improving satisfaction, for example:



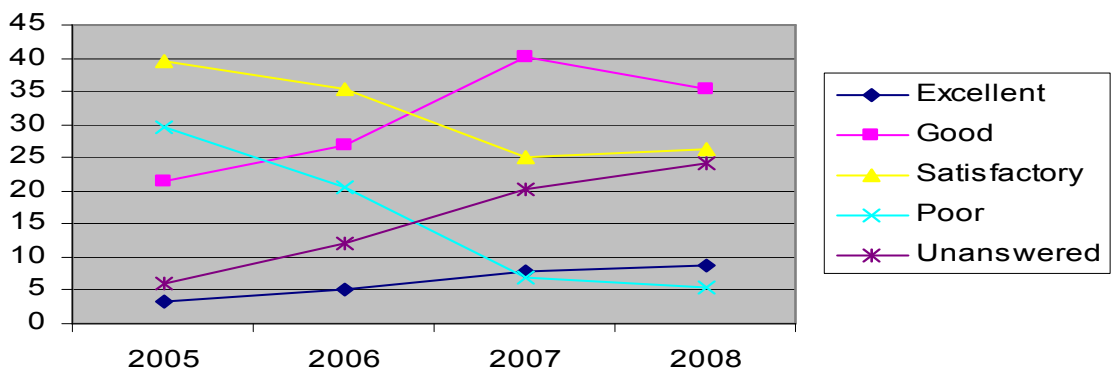
### How do you rate the provision of play parks within your community



### How do you rate the standard of maintenance of council cemeteries



### How do you rate the response to Fly Tipping



## **Local Area Results Segmented**

As part of our analyses of the results we segmented our customer groups into the 9 Local Areas of the Council Wards. Full results for each Local Area will be reported at Local Area Committee meetings for consideration by Elected Members and Community Leaders in those areas. Some of the key results for each area are listed below:

### **1. Linlithgow**

Response Rate: 66.67% (142 responses)

Overall Level of Customer Satisfaction: 90.84%

#### **Main Areas of Satisfaction**

- Fly Tipping Response Service: (94.68%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Parks: (94.12%)
- Provision of Play Parks (96.30%)
- Maintenance of Play Areas (94.74%)
- Maintenance of Cemeteries and Churchyards (97.25%)

#### **Main Area of Concern**

- Street Cleansing Service – Rural Roadside verges (20.44%)

### **2. Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh**

Response Rate: 57.09% (161 responses)

Overall Level of Customer Satisfaction: 87.19%

#### **Main Areas of Satisfaction**

- Grounds Maintenance Service – Parks: (90.97%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Main Streets / Town Centres: (90.57%)
- Fly Tipping Response Service: (92.98%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Main Streets / Town Centres: (94.90%)
- Maintenance of Cemeteries and Churchyards (97.92%)

#### **Main Areas of Concern**

- Street Cleansing Service – Rural Roadside verges (23.42%)
- Street Cleansing Service – Grass verges (20.13%)

### **3. Livingston North**

Response Rate: 55.56% (225 responses)

Overall Level of Customer Satisfaction: 86.72%

#### **Main Areas of Satisfaction**

- Street Cleansing Service – Main Streets / Town Centres: (91.89%)
- Fly Tipping Response Service: (92.90%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Parks: (93.33%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Main Streets / Town Centres: (95.87%)
- Maintenance of Cemeteries and Churchyards (95.68%)

#### Main Areas of Concern

- Street Cleansing Service – Footpaths (19.20%)
- Street Cleansing Service – Grass verges (20.98%)

#### **4. Livingston South**

Response Rate: 56.11% (202 responses)

Overall Level of Customer Satisfaction: 88.96%

#### Main Areas of Satisfaction

- Grounds Maintenance Service – Main Streets / Town Centres: (92.96%)
- Fly Tipping Response Service: (90.12%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Parks: (93.37%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Main Streets / Town Centres: (93.94%)
- Maintenance of Cemeteries and Churchyards (98.68%)

#### Main Areas of Concern

- Street Cleansing Service – Footpaths (18.81%)
- Street Cleansing Service – Grass verges (20.00%)

#### **5. East Livingston and East Calder**

Response Rate: 60.64% (228 responses)

Overall Level of Customer Satisfaction: 88.37%

#### Main Areas of Satisfaction

- Street Cleansing Service – Parks: (90.45%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Parks: (92.20%)
- Maintenance of Play Areas (90.05%)
- Maintenance of Cemeteries and Churchyards (97.83%)

#### Main Areas of Concern

- Adequate equipment within Play Areas (27.75%)
- Street Cleansing Service – Rural Roadside verges (24.09%)

#### **6. Fauldhouse & the Breich Valley**

Response Rate: 47.56% (107 responses)

Overall Level of Customer Satisfaction: 86.28%

#### Main Areas of Satisfaction

- Fly Tipping Response Service: (90.24%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Parks: (91.29%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Housing, Open Space Areas: (90.57%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Main Street / Town Centres: (91.35%)
- Maintenance of Cemeteries and Churchyards (96.74%)

#### Main Areas of Concern

- Street Cleansing Service – Rural Roadside verges (28.57%)

- Street Cleansing Service – Footpaths (24.09%)

## **7. Whitburn and Blackburn**

Response Rate: 50.43% (176 responses)

Overall Level of Customer Satisfaction: 86.93%

### Main Areas of Satisfaction

- Fly Tipping Response Service: (94.89%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Parks: (94.19%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Main Street / Town Centres: (90.80%)
- Maintenance of Cemeteries and Churchyards (96.27%)

### Main Areas of Concern

- Street Cleansing Service – Footpaths (25.29%)
- Street Cleansing Service – Rural Roadside verges (24.71%)

## **8. Bathgate**

Response Rate: 54.55% (144 responses)

Overall Level of Customer Satisfaction: 90.84%

### Main Areas of Satisfaction

- Street Cleansing Service – Parks (92.59%)
- Street Cleansing Service – Main Street / Town Centres (92.25%)
- Fly Tipping Response Service: (93.75%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Main Street / Town Centres: (95.71%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Parks: (96.32%)

### Main Area of Concern

- Street Cleansing Service – Rural Roadside verges (16.43%)

## **9. Armadale and Blackridge**

Response Rate: 51.36% (132 responses)

Overall Level of Customer Satisfaction: 88.21%

### Main Areas of Satisfaction

- Street Cleansing Service – Parks (90.48%)
- Fly Tipping Response Service: (91.09%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Main Street / Town Centres: (91.06%)
- Grounds Maintenance Service – Parks: (93.39%)
- Maintenance of Cemeteries and Churchyards (97.37%)

### Main Areas of Concern

- Street Cleansing Service – Rural Roadside verges (23.08%)
- Street Cleansing Service – Footpaths (17.69%)

## **Explaining and Addressing Dips in Performance and Areas for Concern**

As noted above the Customer Survey identified key areas of concern in our service delivery, areas where customers have felt there has been a dip in our performance. In order to address these dips in Service performance we created put in place a number of initiatives. We will evaluate the success of these initiatives through our next Customer Survey, due out in the autumn of 2009.

### **Street Cleansing**

The main area for concern highlighted by our customers were relating to the Street Cleansing Service – Rural Roadside Verges, Grass Verges and Footpaths. In order to tackle these issues and increase the effectiveness of our Street Cleansing Service we have reviewed the way the service is delivered, the staffing levels and the shift patterns.

In December 2008 we assigned 10 members of our Grounds Maintenance teams to assist the Street Cleansing Service. This allowed us to double the amount of squads we placed on grass verges and also allowed us to train additional staff to use the mechanical sweepers. Mechanical Sweepers are now being used at their full capacity to increase the effectiveness of these cleansing machines.

We currently employ over 60 full time staff in our street cleansing team, however, from April 2009 we will be employing a number of new staff to supplement the Street Cleansing squads for the busy spring and summer schedules, which include gala-days, community fairs and a number of other large scale public events.

In addition to these new members of staff, we have also reviewed the current shift patterns of the squads. Our new staff will work a Thursday to Monday shift to provide a permanent shift cover at the weekends. In order to clean roadside verges we sometimes require to close sections of the road, which logistically can be very difficult during busy weekdays, making it more practical to do this at weekends. Therefore by employing staff working a permanent weekend shift we hope to be able to tackle a number of the issues which have risen in relation to the cleanliness of road side verges.

### **Play Areas**

When we segmented our results we found that some local areas had highlighted the provision of play areas and the equipment within play areas as a cause for concern. Last year we invested over £600,000 in children's play areas in West Lothian and we plan to repeat that investment in the coming year on a number of different locations. The area of East Livingston and East Calder had highlighted this particular area so over the coming year we plan to invest in new or improved play areas at Harrysmuir, Pumpherston and Langton View, East Calder.

As part of this huge project we will undertake a wide range of consultation with local school children to ask them what they would like to see in their play parks. This consultation has been very well received by the children in the previous year and it is hoped that by doing this the equipment will be suitable and more enjoyable to everyone that uses them.

A full list of our planned Service Improvements can be found in the Operational Service Management Plan 09/10 which is available on the Council website or by contacting us.

**If you would like any further information on any of our services or have any enquires then please do not hesitate to contact us through our Call Centre on 01506 775000 or e-mail us at [customer.service@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:customer.service@westlothian.gov.uk).**