



**Plymouth 2020 Local Strategic Partnership:
Customer Satisfaction Survey 2008**

**REPORT
June 2008**

Produced by SERIO

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1. Introduction

Plymouth 2020 – the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) management team is in the process of developing a Business Plan for 2008/11 and is currently reviewing its internal staffing arrangements within the LSP support team.¹ In this context, a customer satisfaction survey was carried out in order to gain perspectives on the quality of the services provided by the Partnership and to identify new services which may be required in the future. The survey design and implementation took place within a short timescale, between April and May 2008, and predominantly involved Plymouth 2020 LSP members, who represent a range of partner organisations.

It is of particular note that the customer satisfaction survey was the first survey of its kind implemented by the LSP support team and this report aims to outline the key findings of the survey.

¹ The support team are also known as the back office staff of P2020 LSP.

2. Research Methods

The questionnaire used in the customer satisfaction survey was developed through a series of workshops held with existing staff from within the LSP support team. The questionnaire included a range of both *closed* questions, aimed at gathering more finite data, and *open* questions aimed at gathering more attitudinal data.

The overall purpose of the questionnaire was to elicit views from respondents on the services and functions of the LSP (and back office) in order to constructively inform the Partnership on a strategic and operational level.

The survey was implemented using an online software package called *e-Consult* supplied by Plymouth City Council. P2020 LSP partners and customers were emailed and invited to complete the questionnaire by following an electronic link to this service; respondents then navigated to the online survey and given one week to complete the questionnaire.

3. Survey Results

3.1 Introduction

This section of the report details the key results from the customer satisfaction survey. The results are categorised according to the sequence of questions included in the online questionnaire. The section firstly provides a respondent profile, and then presents the findings on:

- the role and services of P2020 LSP;
- financial contributions to the LSP;
- respondent perspectives on P2020 meetings;
- P2020's function and ability to deliver; and,
- respondents' general comments regarding the Partnership and its support team.

3.2 Respondent profile and Response Rates

Two hundred people, mainly LSP partner organisations and customers, were invited to complete the questionnaire. 35 people completed and returned the survey.² The total response rate is calculated at 18% which in comparison to average survey response rates seems satisfactory. Survey response rates vary considerably, for example ranging between 13% to 33% (SuperSurvey, 2003), and depend upon numerous factors such as the total number of people invited to complete the questionnaire and the response timeframe. Considering these factors it is probable that the LSP Customer Satisfaction Survey could have yielded higher response rates by lengthening the survey completion timeframe.

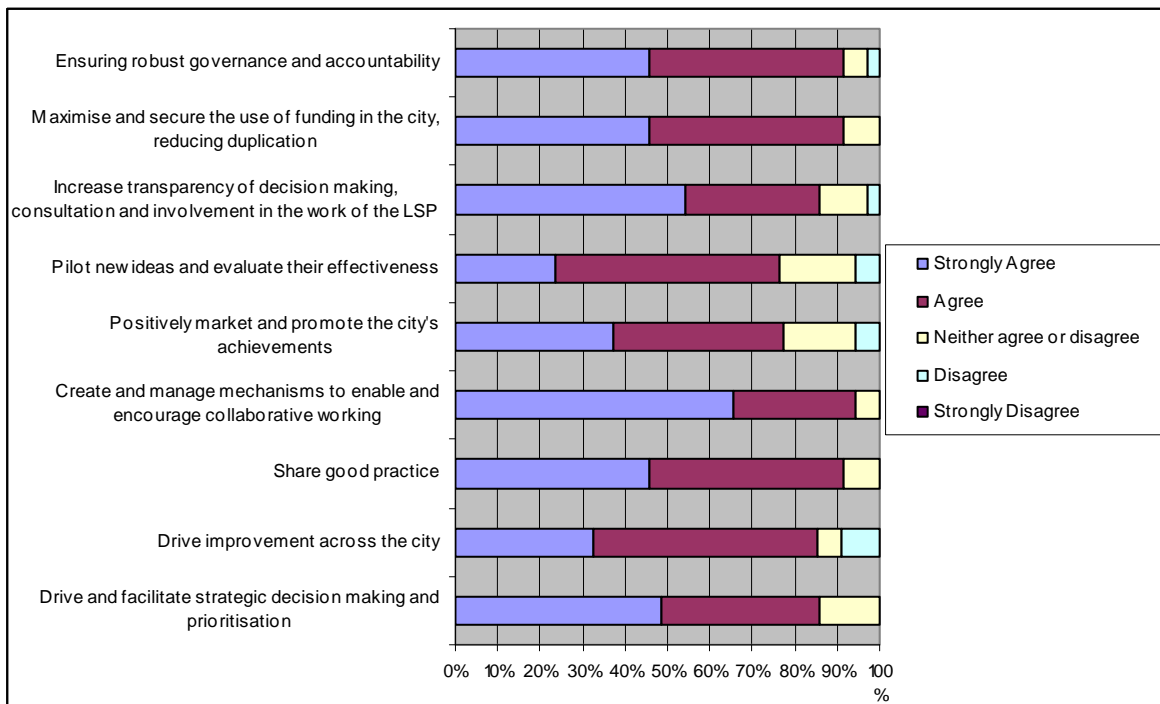
Of those who completed the survey, 25 respondents (71%) represented public sector organisations, seven (20%) represented third sector organisations and three (9%) represented private sector organisations.

3.3 Perspectives on the role and services of the P2020 Local Strategic Partnership

Survey respondents were firstly invited to individually rate the extent to which they perceive the LSP's role to include a range of pre-defined services. The percentages of responses relating to each predefined service are shown in Chart One below:

² LSP partners include: Plymouth City Council; Devon and Cornwall Constabulary; Plymouth Teaching and Primary Care Trust; Job Centre Plus; Plymouth Chamber of Commerce; the Learning and Skills Council; Plymouth Community Partnership; Plymouth Guild; and, the University of Plymouth. LSP customers involve residents and businesses with the City.

Chart One: Perspectives on the LSP's Role



Source: LSP Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire
Base: 35 Respondents (multiple responses)

Chart One shows that a large number of participants (94%) either strongly agreed or agreed that the LSP's role involves creating and managing mechanisms to encourage and enable collaborative working. Thirty-two of the 35 respondents (91%) also strongly agreed or agreed that the LSP's role involves the sharing of good practice. Similar responses were given with regard to the LSP's role involving robust governance and accountability, and maximising and securing the use of funding in the city by reducing duplication. There were, however, a number of services which lesser numbers of respondents feel are not part of the LSP's role: for example, two participants (6%) disagreed with the statement suggesting that the LSP's role involves positively marketing and promoting the city's achievements; two participants (6%) also disagreed with the statement suggesting that the LSP's role involves piloting new ideas and evaluating their effectiveness. Three participants (9%) disagreed that the LSP should drive improvement across the city.

Respondents were also asked to share comments regarding the future role of the LSP's back office team. Although, one particular respondent felt that the roles and responsibilities of the back office team are unclear, a number of positive comments were made, largely around their supportive nature, for example, one respondent felt that the back office team are especially supportive with funding streams such as Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, while another respondent felt that the back office holds the LSP together. However, respondents did feel that there are gaps in the current functions of the LSP; respondents' suggestions to fill these gaps in the future included:

- Increased performance management of theme groups and the Executive Group;

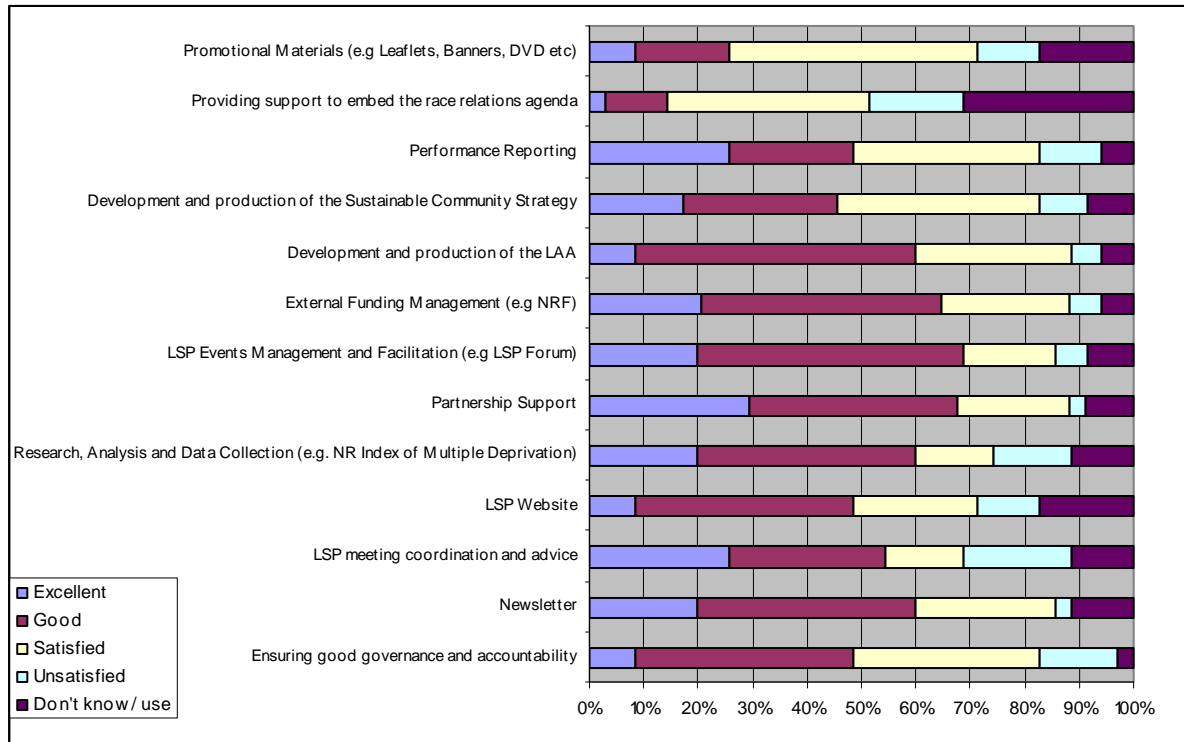
- The piloting of new ideas and evaluating these ideas;
- Sharing training opportunities among partner organisations;
- The facilitation of decision making;
- The production of data and information in a user friendly way;
- More support to the BME community in the City;
- To communicate the LSP Communication Plan more efficiently, maintain the Partnership website and market/promote the LSP, and its successes, to partners and wider public (recommended by two respondents);
- More facilitation and advice on commissioning research;
- Increased information on the resources available to individual theme groups;
- Increased clarity on the roles of the LSP Board, Executive Group and theme groups; and,
- The implementation of an LSP governed service aimed at providing advice and support for businesses.

A range of recommendations were also made with regards to the skills types that respondents felt would be of value to partners in the future. In this respect, both organisational and research/analytical services and skills were perceived as important attributes needed for the future of the Partnership. Performance management and reporting skills were also perceived as key attributes which need to be maintained in the future.

Participants were then invited to state what services and functions offered by the LSP they perceive to be of most importance to their organisation in the future. Eleven respondents (31%) felt that project facilitation and support would be important to them. Research, analysis, and its collation/management was also considered an important service by 5 respondents (14%). Other services mentioned, although to a lesser frequency, included event and meeting coordination and performance management/reporting.

Respondents were then invited to individually rate the actual services currently provided by the LSP. The percentages of responses and ratings of each service are shown in Chart Two below:

Chart Two: Rating of Local Strategic Partnership Services

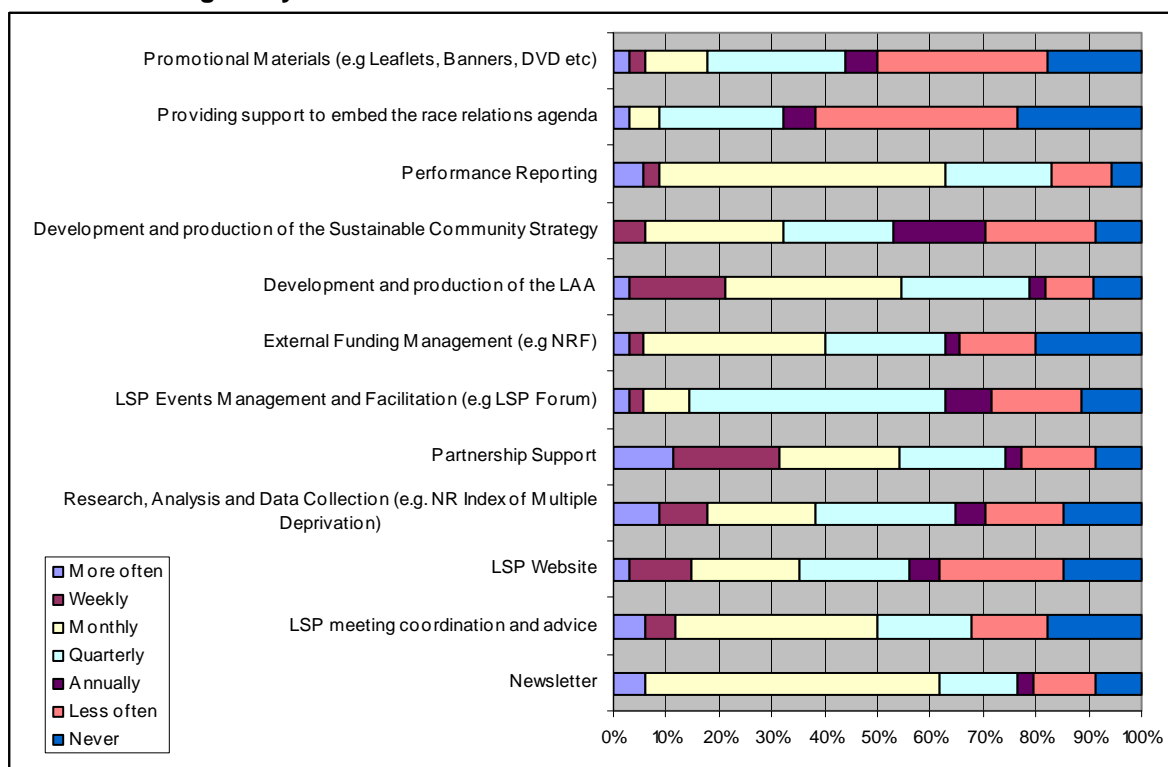


Source: LSP Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire
Base: 35 respondents (multiple responses)

Chart Two shows that in total the majority of respondents rated the majority of the LSP’s current services as excellent, good or satisfactory. More specifically, 10 of the 35 respondents (29%) rated the LSP’s partnership support as excellent, whilst nine respondents (26%) also felt that the LSP’s performance reporting was excellent. The LSP’s development and production of the LAA was rated by 18 respondents (51%) as good, whilst 17 respondents (48%) also rated the LSP’s management and facilitation of events as good. Less positively, seven respondents (20%) felt that the LSP’s meeting coordination and advice was unsatisfactory whilst six of the 35 (17%) also felt that the LSP’s support to embed the race relations agenda was unsatisfactory. It is of particular note, however, that 11 (31%) respondents claimed that they had not attempted to access support particularly in relation to the race relation agenda.

Respondents were also asked to indicate how often they use the range of services the LSP provides. The percentages of responses and service types are shown below in Chart Three:

Chart Three: Regularity of LSP Service Use



Source: LSP Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire
Base: 35 respondents (multiple responses)

As shown above, the majority of respondents access the range of services offered by P2020 LSP on a monthly and quarterly basis. More specifically, 19 respondents (54%) stated that they access performance reporting on a monthly basis, and 17 respondents (49%) attend LSP coordinated events on a quarterly basis. Of those services accessed on a weekly or more often basis, the development and production of the LAA and general partnership support seems common. However, a large number of respondents (21 of 35 representing 60% of the sample) stated that they access services related to the race relations agenda less often, if at all. Promotional materials also seem to be accessed less frequently with 17 of 35 respondents (49%) stating that they access this service on a less than often basis, if at all.

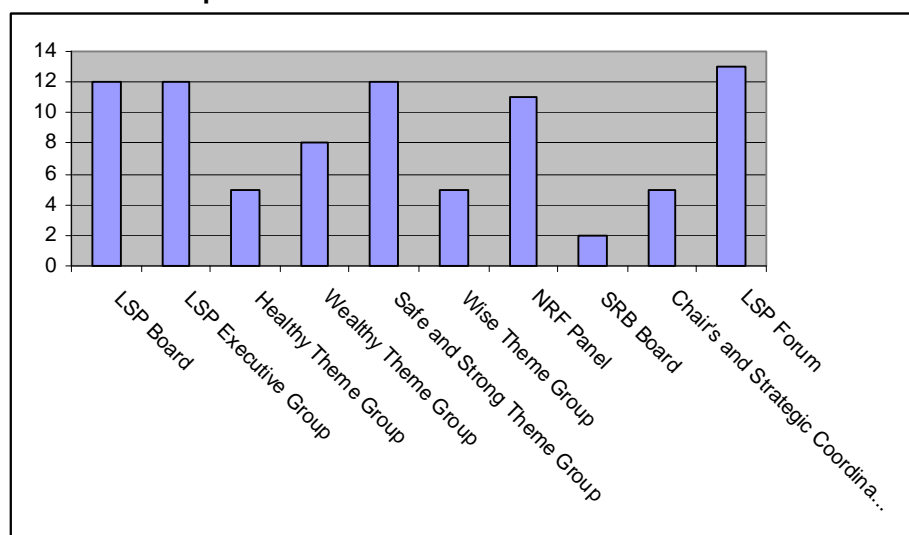
3.4 Financial contribution to P2020 LSP

Respondents were asked whether their organisation would consider making a financial contribution to the P2020 LSP in the future. Fifteen respondents/organisations (43%) stated that they would not make a financial contribution, closely followed by 14 respondents (40%) who claimed they 'maybe' would make a contribution. Six respondents/organisations (17%) confirmed that they would make a financial contribution to the LSP.

3.5 Respondent perspectives on P2020 meetings

Respondents were asked to indicate which LSP meetings they attend. Chart Four below shows that a large number of respondents attend the LSP Board, the Executive Group, the Safe and Strong Theme Group, the NRF Panel and LSP Forum. The Single Regeneration Budget Board was the least frequently attended by respondents.

Chart Four: Respondents Attendance at P2020 LSP



Source: Local Strategic Partnership Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire
Base: 35 Respondents (multiple responses)

Respondents were then invited to rate the quality of each meeting. The findings are summarised below, per meeting:³

- **LSP Board:** Only two respondents rated this meeting as excellent. Six respondents rated the meeting as good and a further six rated it as satisfactory. Less positively, six respondents rated the LSP Board as unsatisfactory.
- **LSP Executive Group:** Four respondents rated this meeting as excellent, whilst five provided a 'good' rating and six provided a 'satisfactory' rating. Only two respondents rated this meeting as unsatisfactory.
- **Healthy Theme Group:** With only one respondent rating this meeting as excellent, three provided a 'good' rating and seven provided a satisfactory rating. No respondents rated this meeting as unsatisfactory.

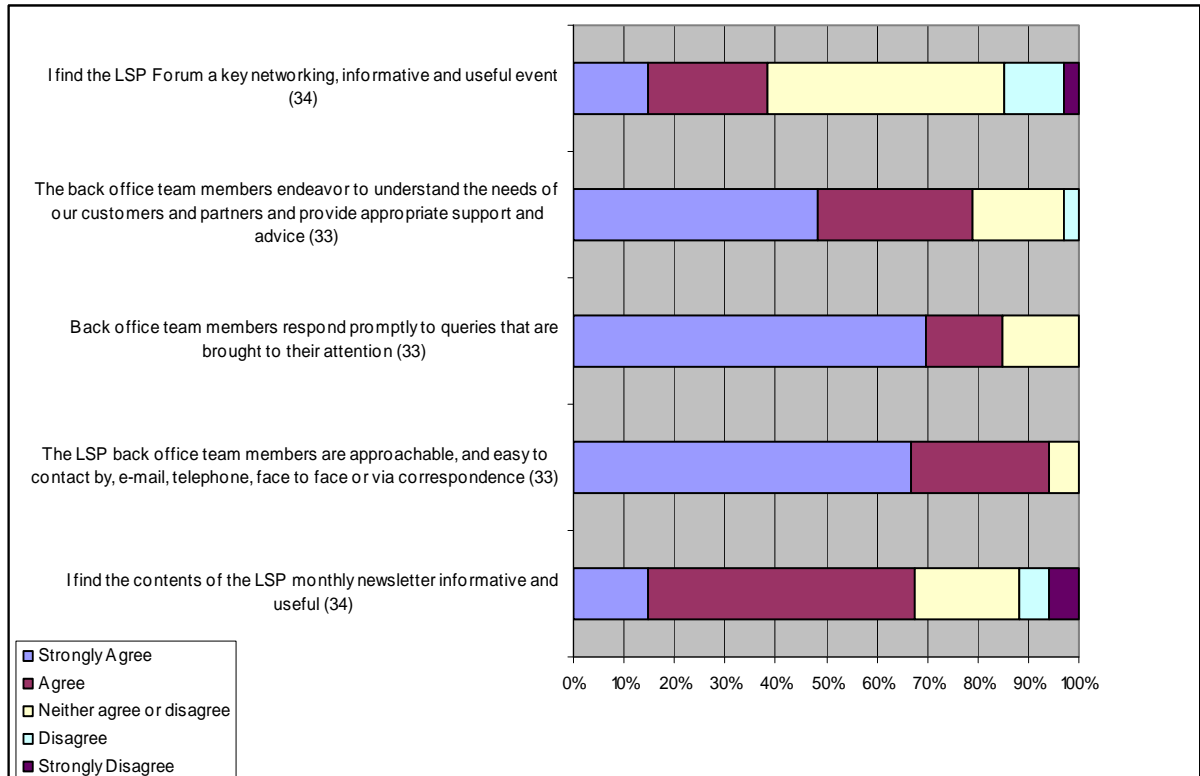
³ Please note that these findings are shown in number form as opposed to percentages. The reason for this is due to the fact that respondents are only able to provide responses regarding the meetings at which they have attended or are involved with. Therefore calculating percentages of ratings against the sample size would provide a misrepresentation of the data. This also accounts for why the data is presented in narrative form.

- **Wealthy Theme Group:** This meeting yielded 5 'good' ratings of and 5 'satisfactory' ratings. It is of particular note that no respondents rated this meeting as excellent or unsatisfactory.
- **Safe and Strong Theme Group:** Two respondents rated this meeting as excellent, whilst four provide a rating 'good' rating and eight provided a 'satisfactory' rating. Two respondents rated this meeting as unsatisfactory.
- **Wise Theme Group:** Again, the majority of respondents rated this meeting as either good (2) or satisfactory (7). Only one respondent rated this meeting as excellent. No respondents rated this meeting as unsatisfactory.
- **NRF Panel:** Four respondents rated this meeting as excellent, whilst six provided a 'good' rating and three provided a 'satisfactory' rating. No respondents rated this meeting as unsatisfactory.
- **SRB Board:** One respondent rated this meeting as excellent, whilst two provided a 'good' rating and three provided a satisfactory rating. Again, no respondents rated this meeting as unsatisfactory.
- **Chair's and Strategic Coordinator's Breakfast Meeting:** Three respondents rated this meeting as excellent, whilst 2 provided a 'good' rating of good and three provided a 'satisfactory' rating. No respondents rated this meeting as unsatisfactory.
- **LSP Forum:** Four respondents rated this meeting as excellent, whilst six rated the meeting as good and six provided a 'satisfactory' rating. Again, no respondents rated this meeting as unsatisfactory.

3.6 P2020's function and ability to deliver

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree with a series of statements regarding the function of the LSP and back office. Chart Five below shows the percentages of respondents either strongly agreeing, agreeing, neither agreeing nor disagreeing, disagreeing and strongly disagreeing with each statement:

Chart Five: Rating of LSP Function (expressed as rating against statement)



Source: Local Strategic Partnership Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire

*Please note that not all survey participants responded to this question. The numbers in brackets following each statement shows the number of responses for that particular statement.

As shown above, the majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the range of statements shown in Chart Five above. More specifically, 70% of respondents (23 of 33) strongly agreed that the ‘back office team members respond promptly to enquiries that are brought to their attention’. Sixty-seven percent of respondents (22 of 33) also strongly agreed that the ‘LSP back office team members are approachable, and easy to contact by email, telephone, face to face or via correspondence’. Only three respondents strongly disagreed with some of the statements: two respondents (6%) strongly disagreed what the statement that claims ‘I find the contents of the monthly newsletter informative and useful’, and one respondent strongly disagreed with the statement claiming ‘I find the LSP Forum a key networking, informative and useful event’. It is of note that this question also involved respondents proving a rating against the following statement: ‘where possible I access www.plymouth2020.co.uk to gain information on the LSP. However, it is recognised that this question is not appropriate for a rated response and has not been included in this analysis. The responses to this question are shown in Appendix A.

Respondents were also asked to rate the general function and ability of the back office to deliver. As shown in Chart Six below, the majority of responses were positive with 10 respondents (29%) providing an ‘excellent’ rating, 14 (40%) providing a ‘good’ rating and eight (23%) being satisfied with the LSP in this respect.

Chart Six: Rating of LSP Back Office's Function and Ability to Deliver



Source: Local Strategic Partnership Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire
Base: 35 Respondents (multiple responses)

3.7 Respondents' general comments regarding P2020 LSP

By way of conclusion respondents were asked if they would like to make any other comments, which would be of use in the current consultation process. Some respondents used this opportunity to make recommendations regarding the future of the LSP. For example: two respondents highlighted a need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the LSP Board and Executive Group, and the back office. A number of other respondents took this opportunity to praise the LSP: for example, one respondent stated ***'the support staff in the LSP are excellent'*** whilst another stated ***'the LSP back office always try and help and are extremely approachable... I would like to thank all the team for the work they do for us'***.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Evidence suggests that a range of LSP services and attributes are considered particularly useful and beneficial by partner organisations, including:

- Project facilitation;
- LSP meetings such as the Healthy Theme Group and LSP Forum
- LSP meeting coordination and advice;
- Research and analysis;
- General partnership support; and,
- The approachability and helpfulness of the back office team.

However, although the overall ability of the LSP to deliver is considered good or excellent, evidence suggests that some respondents felt some services were unsatisfactory and therefore need to be improved, including:⁴

- Support to embed the race relation agenda;
- The quality of the LSP board meeting and Executive Group meetings;
- The clarity of the roles of the LSP Board Executive Group and the back office amongst partners; and,
- LSP meeting coordination.

The latter of these points is of particular importance when considering that a large percentage of respondents' perceive the LSP's role to include the management of mechanisms to ensure collaborative working. The LSP must be perceived by partners and customers to be more than efficient in the area which is considered to be one of its main activities; therefore it is recommended that attention is given to this aspect of the LSP's services regardless of the fact that alongside these more negative responses regarding meeting coordination there were also a number of positive comments regarding this function of the Partnership.

However, changes to the LSP's service delivery and functions need to be based upon more in-depth and detailed research on the ways in which these proposals could be achieved (focusing on feasibilities and risks). The research could potentially involve hosting a series of focus groups with key stakeholders, using the survey findings to provide a discussion guide, to explore the more detailed reasons why certain services are perceived as unsatisfactory and how proposed recommendations to fill current gaps could be implemented.

There are also a number of improvements that could be made to the approach and methods used in the customer satisfaction survey in the future. These recommendations, which stand slightly aloof from the survey findings, are based on methodological principles and are listed below:

- It is recommended that a larger sample size be achieved in future surveys. To increase response rates it is recommended that: the deadline for completing the questionnaire is extended beyond one week to at least two

⁴ Please refer to p.7 of this report for a complete list of the recommendations made by respondents.

weeks, and that respondents are given the opportunity to complete paper-based questionnaires if desired. Increasing the response rates would increase the validity of the conclusions that could be drawn from the survey.

- It is also recommended that the questionnaire be designed so that respondents' names remain anonymous but their status in term of whether they are LSP customers, partners or staff is recorded. The reason for this is two-fold: firstly, the anonymity may increase response rates, and secondly this will allow sample stratification therefore ensuring that proportionate numbers of customers are surveyed as opposed to disproportionate numbers of LSP staff.
- There are also two particular questions included in the LSP Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire which need to be revised:
 - Respondents were asked to strongly agree, agree, neither disagree or agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: 'Where possible I access www.plymouth2020.co.uk to gain information on the LSP'. This particular statement is not suited to a scaled response and would be more suited to a closed question involving 'yes/no' response options.
 - Respondents were also asked to rate the LSP's overall ability to deliver according to the following scale: excellent, good, satisfied, unsatisfied, don't know. It is recognised that the scale used here is inconsistent and should be re-phrased as follows: excellent, good, average, poor, very poor.

Appendix A

Number of respondents strongly agreeing, agreeing, neither agreeing or disagreeing, disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the following statement: *'Where possible I access www.plymouth2020.co.uk to gain information on the LSP'*.

Table One: Number of respondents agreeing with using P2020 website

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly agree	7	21%
Agree	6	18%
Neither agree or disagree	9	26%
Disagree	10	29%
Strongly agree	2	6%

Source: LSP Customer Satisfaction Survey

References:

SuperSurvey (2203), 'Online Survey Response Rates and Times: background and guidance for industry', accessed at:

http://www.supersurvey.com/papers/supersurvey_white_paper_response_rates.pdf

[accessed on 7th July 2008]