

**Residents, Employees and Visitors
in the South Bank neighbourhood
Autumn – Winter 2008/09
Final report**

Research report on behalf of the
South Bank Partnership

8 May 2009

Executive summary

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Introduction

This report presents the findings of research conducted on behalf of the South Bank Partnership in late 2008 to early 2009 among residents, employees and visitors in the South Bank Partnership neighbourhood. The neighbourhood is bounded by the River Thames, Lambeth Road, south to St George's Circus and follows the railway line to the east of Blackfriars Road. This section offers an overview of the key findings of the surveys.

Satisfaction with the South Bank as an area in which to live, work and visit

- Satisfaction with the South Bank is high among residents, employees and visitors.
- The proportion of residents who consider the South Bank a nice place to live has increased since 1999 to 92% very or fairly satisfied. This is especially impressive given that a high proportion in 1999 (84%) already expressed a positive opinion.
- Nearly two in five residents feel the area has improved over the past five years. Conversely, more than one in ten feel that the area has got worse over the past five years; and the proportion who feel it has improved in the past five years is lower among longer term residents.
- Residents and employees are both happy with the South Bank environment and its cleanliness; however, there are still issues with public toilet provision; parking; and people sleeping rough. Just over a quarter of residents are also unhappy at the level of noise.
- Residents exhibit high levels of satisfaction with local services, and three out of ten residents have seen an improvement in local services over the past five years.
- The highest level of dissatisfaction with local facilities among residents were with swimming facilities (or the lack of them). This is the only matter on which net dissatisfaction has increased since 1999. There was also a significant level of dissatisfaction among residents with indoor and outdoor sports facilities.
- Satisfaction with health and education services is fairly high across all groups, although NHS dentistry and services for young people could both be improved.

- Employees are generally very happy to be working on the South Bank. Half are very satisfied, and two fifths feel that the area has improved over the past five years. Only a small minority think it has got worse.
- Satisfaction with restaurants, cafés and bars is high, although less than one third of visitors use these facilities. There is a marked difference in the preferred destinations of residents, employees and visitors, with residents and employees tending to go to Lower Marsh and The Cut for refreshments, where very few visitors go to.
- A high proportion of visitors would recommend the area to others, and many return for repeat visits.
- Attractions such as the London Eye and Southbank Centre are a big draw. A sizeable proportion of visitors come to the area to see a specific attraction, while the majority of residents and employees also make use of these attractions.

Priority areas for improvement

- Residents and employees share many similar views on what needs to be improved in the area. Both groups are particularly keen to see swimming facilities improved.
- A lack of public toilets is a major issue. Both residents and employees complain about this, as well as spontaneous complaints by some visitors. A more appropriate provision of public toilets would improve the general environment for all using the South Bank.
- The low satisfaction for sports provision and especially swimming facilities among residents and employees is a cause for concern.
- Residents are satisfied with most aspects of NHS healthcare in the area, with one exception: NHS dentistry. For this, the proportion satisfied is almost identical to that dissatisfied.
- The high incidence of returning visitors demonstrates the strong appeal of the South Bank area to visitors. Worth consideration are the isolated complaints about litter and a lack of bins around the crowded London Eye and London Aquarium areas; and a few requests for greater communication about upcoming events.
- It is also apparent that shopping facilities are not widely used by visitors or employees. Residents also expressed lower levels of satisfaction with shopping facilities than other services. Clearly visitors are pulled by attractions other than

shopping or refreshments. It was beyond the remit of the current research to explore the shopping needs of each of the three groups surveyed. It is therefore recommended that the needs of user groups are assessed in greater detail before making firm decisions on the appropriateness of current shopping facilities.