

# Feedback on the 19th Citizens' Panel Survey

Dear Panel member,

Thanks for the very strong response to the recent 19th Citizens' Panel survey for East Renfrewshire. We'd also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new members.

The panel allows us to hear people's views and your feedback helps us make sure that we continue to improve our services to meet the needs of our community.

The survey's findings are made available on our website once the questionnaires have been analysed independently. These findings are also presented to services within the council so they can develop work to be done in response to your views.

As participants, we value your feedback and we want to make sure you are provided with a summary of our findings from the 19th survey and work being done.

The 19th survey covered a range of topics including:

- » Life in East Renfrewshire... including satisfaction with the area, local priorities and views on support for people who live here;
- » The council and its services... including satisfaction with services, value for money and how we are improving and protecting our area;
- » Finances and welfare changes... including how you are managing financially, how we can support you and awareness of welfare reform;
- » How the council communicates with local people... including how you get information on services, contacting us and your involvement in local decision making; and
- » How we are modernising our services... including using digital technology and developing services online.

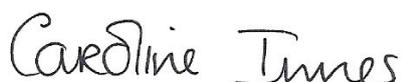
In this newsletter, you'll find highlights of some of the findings and some information on how the council is shaping our services and activities based on the feedback we've received.

You can access the full report on our website: [www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/citizenspanel](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/citizenspanel).

If you have any questions you can contact Craigforth who manage the Citizens' Panel on our behalf. Call them on freephone 0800 027 2245 or email [ERCP@craigforth.co.uk](mailto:ERCP@craigforth.co.uk).

You can also contact the council's Policy & Improvement Unit on 0141 577 3660 or email [policyandimprovement@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:policyandimprovement@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely



Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive

***Over the following pages we provide a summary of what you told us through the survey, and how the Council is responding to your views...***

## Your views on...Life in East Renfrewshire

- » 95% of you were satisfied with East Renfrewshire as a place to live. This is the highest percentage we've reached over the past 5 years.
- » The most common reasons for living in East Renfrewshire are: the area's good reputation (58%), good educational opportunities (51%) safe/clean environment (48%) and good transport links (44%).
- » You thought there is less support for young people and working age residents compared to other ages.

## Our response to your views

We are committed to ensuring people who live in East Renfrewshire have a positive experience. Our schools achieved their highest ever examination results this year and we were the highest performing local authority on a number of levels. Our education department received an outstanding award for Customer Service Excellence and our aim is to keep up this good work and deliver first-class education to our young people.

### Did you know?

96% of our school leavers went on to positive destinations (education, employment or training) last year. This is our most successful year so far!

To ensure we protect our natural and built environment, we are carrying out monthly air quality monitoring and are taking active steps to improve this. We are developing the Glasgow Road Corridor and M77 Corridor to help improve our transport links. We also encourage our community to think about healthier, environmentally and economically friendly ways to travel including providing a new footway/cycleway in Barrhead which links the town to the Renfrewshire area. We're also upgrading paths in Eastwood Park and are seeking funding to further improve our cycling and walking routes across the area.

We've taken your views into account regarding young and working age residents. We encourage young people to take part in a number of award schemes. These include Youth Achievement, Duke of Edinburgh, Saltire and Sports Leadership Awards. We also offer volunteer and work experience opportunities. We work hard to reduce youth unemployment through programmes like our graduate internship programme which recently won a national award. In addition to this, our initiatives like WorkER and a Place to Work provide employment support and opportunities for people of all ages within East Renfrewshire.

## Your views on...Local Priorities

- » The most important issues for local families remain health and healthcare, the cost of living/financial issues and crime and antisocial behaviour.
- » For the first time a need for housing and perceived shortage of affordable housing were amongst the most commonly mentioned priorities.
- » Your top priorities for us to address with our partners was crime and antisocial behaviour, health and healthcare, education and a strong local economy.

## Our response to your views

Health issues are a priority for us also. We help residents look after their health throughout their lives through various programmes including pre and post natal projects, Active Children Eating Smart, Vitality programme and Reshaping Care for Older People. The new Eastwood Health and Care Centre is expected to open in summer 2015. We also support those who want to stop smoking and encourage residents to take up activities to help improve their health.

Our sports services are currently under review and we have invested in new and upgraded facilities, synthetic sports pitches, tennis courts and indoor facilities at the new Eastwood High. We are also investing £3.8m to transform Barrhead Sports Centre into Barrhead Foundry - a fantastic new facility in the heart of Barrhead with upgraded sports facilities, a state-of-the-art library, IT suite, learning opportunities, an improved café, WiFi, business zone, on-site support and employment advice and a diverse programme of activities for the entire community.

We are working hard to ensure all council houses meet national standards by 2015. We are also making improvements to the housing repairs service. Delivering additional affordable housing is a priority for us. We are securing land or homes from developers where new homes are being built and are making better use of existing homes (e.g. purchasing these houses for use for social rent).

We help residents develop skills necessary for employment, education or training. Our Place to Grow campaign supports businesses and attracts investors and visitors to the area. We are also reviving our town centres and communities through our I Love Clarkston and Giffnock Village campaigns and promoting East Renfrewshire as a top day and short-stay place to visit through our events programme. This includes Electric Glen lighting festival, FeastRen food festival and one-off events such as the Queens Baton Relay celebrations.

#### Did you know?

We welcomed 27,000 people to the Electric Glen lighting festival in Rouken Glen this year.

## Your views on...the Council and Council Services

- » You were most positive about our education services, theatre/arts, public parks/open spaces, and libraries (98% to 90%). For services used by all, satisfaction was highest with wheeled bin refuse collection (82%).
- » Satisfaction was lower for roads and footpaths (30% and 40%), although both show some improvement.
- » The council was most likely to be associated with being “helpful” (81%) and least likely to be associated with “works to reduce bureaucracy” (45%).
- » 76% of you were satisfied with council services overall, however less than half of you suggested they were good value for money. This was 44% compared to 59% last year.

## Our response to your views

We are delighted that so many of you are satisfied with our services but this does not make us complacent. We are investing in services. We have transformed Giffnock Library into a state-of-the-art community facility which has extended opening hours. We are also improving Rouken Glen Park over the next two years.

We recognise your views on value for money and reducing bureaucracy. We are working hard to continue to meet government efficiency targets and our Public Service Excellence projects are important here. These aim to improve processes and review how we do things to make sure they're as cost-effective and efficient as possible.

We are investing in our roads network and footpaths and committed more than £4million in additional resources over the past three years. We are also comparing ourselves with other councils and partners to identify any areas we could do better. To make sure satisfaction remains high with refuse collection, we are introducing managed weekly collections to flats and work hard to maintain our high recycling rates.

#### Did you know?

We recycled 53% of household waste last year

## Your views on...Financial situation and welfare changes

- » Most of you said you're managing fairly well, while 7% said you are not managing well.
- » For council assistance, interest was strongest for energy efficiency advice (77%).
- » Almost 90% of you had heard of benefit changes, with 1 in 10 of you affected/expecting to be affected.

## Our response to your views

We offer financial support through our money advice and income maximisation services. We have introduced a free welfare rights and money advice drop-in service in Barrhead every Wednesday and in Eastwood every Thursday. Experts provide free, confidential and independent advice. Advice is available by phone, e-mail, or we can visit you at home if you have mobility/access issues. Call free on [0800 052 1023](tel:08000521023) (quote 'money advice') or email [money@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:money@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk) Three out of four respondents wanted to know more on how to save money on energy bills. More information can be found at [www.homeenergyscotland.org](http://www.homeenergyscotland.org) or [0808 808 2282](tel:08088082282).

## Your views on... Protecting the environment

- » Views were most positive about street cleaning at a local level, particularly in your own streets (72% satisfied). Although in general it was felt there had been no change in standards over the past year.
- » More than three quarters of you felt that greater enforcement on those who drop litter would have an impact on street cleanliness (77%), with half of you thinking this would have the greatest impact (49%).
- » There has been a 21% drop in those of you suggesting there had been an increase in local crime levels and a 14% drop in those of you suggesting there had been an increase in antisocial behaviour since 2011/12.

## Our response to your views

We wanted to find out more about what you think of street cleanliness. To improve we are working with the community through litter surgeries, analysing and responding to customer feedback as well as creating volunteer opportunities for people to get involved.

### Did you know?

The Council recently won an award for how it was improving the condition of our streets.

We are working with our partners (e.g. police and fire) to make sure our community is safe. We help prevent cold calling and 'scams' in the area and provide our Telecare (community alarm) system to our most vulnerable residents to help keep them safe in their own home. We enforce litter and parking regulations so our roads and streets are safe and ensure community wardens are visible throughout our towns and target more troubled areas. We fully support the Challenge 25 scheme which prevents the illegal sale of tobacco and alcohol to under 18's and discourage antisocial behaviour through our Streetwork programme. Our mobile sports pitch is also popular with football night leagues providing alternative activities for young people.

## Your views on...Communicating with the Council

- » The panel most commonly used our ER magazine (70%) and the website (65%), although there has been a move to our website being used more frequently.
- » Most of you preferred contacting us by telephone (76%) although this has been falling (9% since 2011/12).
- » More felt you can influence decisions affecting your area (41%) – up 6% on last year & 17% since 2011/12.

## Our response to your views

We want to continue to be modern, accessible and responsive to our community. The news section of our website publishes all of our announcements and we are working on a project to make our website even easier to use. We use social media on a daily basis to update our followers with news and information regarding any changes to services (e.g. an emergency, bad weather). We also provide answers to enquiries 'on the go' and out-with traditional office hours. Look out for our new short film Your Council, Your Future in spring 2014 which lets everyone know our key priorities for the future. It also shows how our services work around the clock for our community throughout their lives.

### Did you know?

We have c8,800 Twitter followers and have sent over 5,500 tweets.

We make sure East Renfrewshire's residents can influence local decisions and the services we provide. We assist local community groups and hold community consultations (e.g. on priorities for sport services and community sport projects and on local arrangements for the new law which joins up health and social care for adults). We encourage young people to participate in local decision making and campaign on issues important to them through the East Renfrewshire Youth Forum, supporting our Big ShoutERs influence services for young people and assist East Renfrewshire MSYPs represent young people at the Scottish Youth Parliament.

## Your views on...Modernising Council services

- » Around 9 in 10 of you were interested in or had already used at least one type of electronic communication (e.g. automated telephone, booking services online).
- » Around 9 in 10 of you have access to the internet at home (88%). The majority of you (76%) were confident using this while around a quarter were unsure.
- » Paying for services online has increased (up +4% since last year and +7% since 2011/12).

## Our response to your views

We want to make sure our services are modern and we are taking advantage of digital technology. To do this we are improving our online self-service function based on customer feedback and encouraging customers to sign up for an account to make future requests easier. We are also developing our online school payments facility and sports booking system. A new website for Eastwood Park Theatre will also be launched making it easier to buy tickets online. The library service has launched their library app providing easy access to the catalogue, e-books, e-magazines, newspapers and a wealth of information 24 hours a day at the click of a button. Our libraries provide sessions to teach skills in using the internet and mobile devices so residents can enjoy the benefits of these exciting new developments and be introduced to council services online.