

Feedback on the 20th Citizens' Panel Survey

Dear panel member,

Thanks for the very strong response to the recent 20th Citizens' Panel survey for East Renfrewshire. The panel allows us to hear people's views and what local priorities are. Your feedback helps us continue to improve our services to meet the needs of our community.

The survey's findings are 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 how to respond to your views.

As participants, we value your feedback and want to let you know a summary of our findings from the 20th survey and work being done.

The 20th survey covered a range of topics including views on:

- » Life in East Renfrewshire and local priorities... including satisfaction with the area, personal experiences and local priorities;
- » Council services, standards, and our values... including satisfaction with services and our service standards, value for money and council values/attributes;
- » The local area and environment... including community safety, housing and street cleanliness;
- » Communicating with the council... including views on our website, how you get information on services and contact us; and
- » Volunteering and contributing to decisions... including your involvement in local decision making and your experience as a panel member.

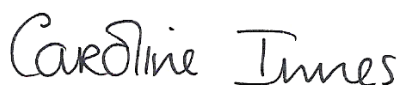
In this newsletter you'll find highlights of some of the findings, and information on how the council is shaping our services and activities which responds to the feedback we've received.

You can access the full report on our website: 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.

You can also contact the council's policy & improvement unit on 0141 577 3660 or email 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 and local priorities

- » Your most common reasons for living in the area are its safe/clean environment (55%), good reputation (52%) and good education (48%). More people mentioned a safe/clean environment this year (+7%);
- » 91% were satisfied with the area as a place to live. While high, it is lower than previous surveys;
- » The most important issues for you and your families remain health & healthcare, cost of living/financial issues, and crime & antisocial behaviour (ASB);
- » You thought crime and antisocial behaviour, health/health care and education should be the top three priorities for the council and its partners;
- » Most are managing fairly well financially, although slightly more reported experiencing financial difficulties.

Our response to your views

We ask for your views to **make sure the experience of living in East Renfrewshire remains positive**. We are delighted more of you mention the safe/clean environment as a reason for living in the area. We are reviewing our waste collection routes to improve waste disposal and recycling further. In terms of safety, we encourage our residents to report antisocial behaviour through our confidential Ring and Report hotline ([0800 013 0076](tel:08000130076)) where an operator is available 24/7, 365 days a year. Council officers also meet with partners regularly to discuss antisocial behaviour issues and develop effective ways to address these.

On **local priorities**, our education services remain among the best in Scotland. To maintain this, our Education Department will continue to challenge and support schools to further improve outcomes for children and young people. This includes supporting schools to implement the Recognising Achievement Raising Attainment and Curriculum for Excellence action plans, and focus on raising attainment of the lowest performing children and young people. The council also supports some young people for when they leave school through activities like youth work programmes, to improve their chances of finding work and build on the high proportion of pupils going on to positive destinations post school (e.g. further education, training, employment).

Did you know?

96% of our school leavers went on to positive destinations last year...our most successful year so far!

We know **health issues** are important to you. We are committed to supporting residents' health and wellbeing and providing health care services. Nationally, the way health services are provided is changing and this is expected to bring improvements locally. The new state of the art Eastwood Health and Care Centre is expected to be completed in Spring 2016 and will provide services including children's services, physiotherapy, podiatry and district nursing, and host local GP Practices. We organise events in Dams to Darnley Country Park and Whitelee Access Project to encourage people to take part in activities promoting health and wellbeing. Our new Barrhead Foundry opened in January with fantastic sports and leisure facilities to help people to live healthier lives. We are also expanding business/education services at the Foundry, and investing £44M in infrastructure including improving travel between Barrhead and Newton Mearns and a future new Barrhead train station.

We are concerned more of you were experiencing **financial difficulties** than in previous surveys. Our money advice and income maximisation services provide free, confidential, independent advice. This 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'), email money@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk or visit www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/money. Weekly drop in money advice clinics (no appointment needed) are also held at Barrhead and Eastwood Park offices. We can provide help with benefit forms, appeals, budgeting and/or debts. We are also supporting people into work, attracting local businesses and strengthening the local economy through for example working in partnership with companies (like ASDA), our WorkER programme, graduate intern scheme, and supporting young people to help reduce youth unemployment. We hope the work going on will make a difference to people's lives and improve their financial situation.

Your views on...Council services

- » Three quarters were satisfied with council services overall and views that these are good value for money shows an improving trend (49% compared to 44% last year);
- » Satisfaction remained highest with education services, theatre/arts, public parks & open spaces and libraries (100-92%). You were least positive about planning/building standards (67%);
- » Satisfaction with maintenance of roads and footpaths, although low (36% and 44%), have shown significant improvement over the last few years; +14% and +10% since 2011/12.

Our response to your views

Scottish Councils are working hard to do more with less. We need to make around £22m savings over the next 3 years in response to Scottish Government Grant settlement. Despite this we are always trying to provide high quality value services, and some have been recognised by local government awards. We are proud and hope you are too, but still want to improve. Our programme for a modern, ambitious council is helping us focus on better customer experience, digital services, and making services more efficient/cost effective. We will continue to explore opportunities for joint funding with partners. We are also improving play areas, and will complete upgrades to Rouken Glen Park in 2016.

Did you know?

We are investing to improve services and the local area, including a new Barrhead High School, denominational school (Mearns); Eastwood Health & Care Centre; Auchenback Family Centre; early years services; and roads investment.

We are pleased more of you are satisfied with our roads, but we are not complacent with investment of £3.7m over the next 3 years and planned improvement to walking and cycling infrastructure. Culture & Leisure Services moves to a trust in the summer and we expect further service improvements. We note satisfaction with Planning & Building Standards was relatively low and are working hard to provide a modern and efficient service; all feedback is used to improve. We know some decisions are not popular with everyone but we use a range of approaches so more residents can contribute to planning. This includes recently on developments in Newton Mearns and Barrhead, and our new Local Development Plan.

Your views on...Council service standards and values

- » The values most likely to be associated with the council were *reputable, helpful, professional staff, and fair/provides equal opportunities* (79-75%);
- » The council was least likely to be associated with *works to reduce bureaucracy, works with residents to solve problems; and keeps costs down* (46-57%);
- » The majority (94%) thought it was important the council had a set of service standards;
- » Most know how to raise a concern/give feedback on council services (69%).

Our response to your views

We are committed to providing quality services. To help us, we are reviewing our service standards. You were clear it is important that we have these and suggested what was important. New standards will be considered by councillors in the summer and promoted thereafter.

We hear your views on reducing bureaucracy and keeping cost down and continue to work to do better. Some of this is highlighted above but other projects include making homecare services more person-centred and flexible, and multi-use facilities like our innovative Foundry where a range of services work together to deliver better customer service. You were generally positive on giving feedback and complaints but highlighted areas to improve - we will make sure details on how to complain are more visible across the council.

Did you know?

Most complaints are resolved in 5 days, and this feedback is used to improve services.

Your views on...the local area and environment

- » Views on the quality of street cleaning and litter patrol in East Renfrewshire were generally positive, particularly about your own street (71%) and local neighbourhood (66%);
- » The majority view their current home as “wholly suitable” for their household’s needs (71%);
- » More felt there had been an increase in crime (+6%) and antisocial behaviour (+4%) compared to last year;
- » Most were aware of our ‘Say No to Cold Callers’ campaign and felt our stickers would deter cold callers.

Our response to your views

We are committed to making the area clean, safe and secure. We work closely with Police, our community wardens deal with issues like ASB, and our CCTV control room provides support to the Police. Services like our award-winning Cold Call blocking, Challenge 25, our Prevention Team and Campus Cops are making communities safe. Our Telecare services enable people to send for help in an emergency 24/7.

For housing in mixed tenure estates we are improving fencing, gutter cleaning and landscaping. We are also improving council housing and are well on our way to 100% of council homes meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. We will also be introducing Recycling On The Go, using data from chipped bins, feedback etc to improve, and installing public recycling bins throughout the area.

Did you know?

We have relatively lower crime levels compared to other council areas.

Your views on...communicating with the Council

- » Most preferred contacting us by telephone (76%). The council’s website is also commonly used (38%);
- » ER magazine was how most accessed service information (77%), followed by newspapers and our website;
- » Feedback suggests some might like to access information or contact us online who do not currently do so.

Our response to your views

Did you know?

For the 2nd year running the council’s website got top marks. Only 3 other Scottish councils scored 4 stars this year!

It is important that you can contact us when and how is best for you. Our Customer First team is available 8am-6pm Mon-Fri to resolve queries. We are also improving services available online. The council recently faced some tough decisions in agreeing its 2015-18 budget. This included changing how we communicate and providing more information online at www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk. This means information is available 24/7, rather than through quarterly hard copy ER magazines. Call [0141 577 3500](tel:01415773500) or go to www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/adultlearning for help with IT skills.

Your views on...volunteering and contributing to decisions

- » 67% have volunteered to help clubs, charities or other organisations, including 44% in the last year;
- » Around 2 in 5 (41%) felt you can influence decisions affecting your local area;
- » Most of you find panel surveys interesting and easy to complete, but 43% felt it was too long and only 39% were clear that results are making a difference.

Our response to your views

We want people to get involved in their communities and influence decisions. People give their views in a range of ways such as the Citizens’ Panel, Citizens’ Space (our online engagement tool), through schools, our Youth Forum, litter surgeries, community groups, etc. We encourage all residents to get involved and hope you enjoy giving your views: we value and take these on board. We have already shortened panel surveys, and will use your feedback to further improve. We hope this newsletter shows our commitment to listening and acting on your views.

Did you know?

700+ people shared their views through our recent budget consultation.