

Feedback on the 21st Citizens' Panel Survey

Dear panel member,

Thanks for the very strong response to the recent 21st 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 provide you with a summary of our findings from the 21st survey and work being done.

The 21st 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 accessing local businesses/services, 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.

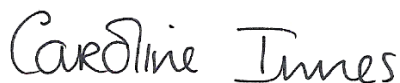
In this newsletter you'll find highlights of some of the findings, and information on how the council is shaping our services and activities which responds to the feedback we've received.

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

- » 94% were satisfied with the area as a place to live – up 3% on the previous year.
- » Your most common reasons for living in the area are its good reputation (42%), good educational opportunities (41%), safe environment (41%), and because family/friends also live here (39%).
- » The most important issues for you and your families were health & healthcare, education and cost of living/financial issues. Education was a top three issue for the first time in 6 years while crime and antisocial behaviour became less of a priority.
- » You thought that education, roads and crime and antisocial behaviour should be the top three priorities for the council and its partners. Roads were considered a high priority for the first time in recent years.
- » Most are managing fairly well financially, although nearly 1 in 10 respondents are experiencing financial difficulties and 1 in 5 reported having some difficulties paying their energy bills.

Our response to your views

We asked for your views to **make sure the experience of living in East Renfrewshire remains positive**. We are delighted many mention the safe environment as a reason for living in the area. Residents can report antisocial behaviour through our confidential Ring and Report hotline (0800 013 0076) - open 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. We also support young people as they leave school to move into **positive destinations** including **further education, training and employment**.

Did you know?

96.2% of East Renfrewshire school leavers moved into positive destinations...our best result to date!

We know **health issues** are important to you. We are committed to supporting residents' health and wellbeing and providing quality health care services. The new state of the art Eastwood Health and Care Centre will be opening in Spring 2016 and will provide a wide range of services including children's services, physiotherapy, podiatry and district nursing, and host local GP Practices. We are focused on supporting local people to be active and maximise their health and wellbeing. We aim to increase participation in sport and leisure activities by expanding the number of Community Sports Hubs.

We recognise that the condition of **roads and footways** is a key issue for people going about their daily lives. We are committed to the ongoing maintenance and improvement of roads and footways. Over the next two years we will invest some £3m in roads plus a further £21.9m from the Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal for a new link road between the M77 and Barrhead. We continue to encourage residents to report any faults via our website or by telephone.

We are concerned that the level of local residents experiencing **financial difficulties** continues at the same rate. Our money advice and income maximisation services provide free, confidential, independent advice. Call free on 0800 052 1023 (quote 'money advice'), email money@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk or visit www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/money. Weekly drop in money advice clinics are also held at Barrhead and Eastwood Park offices or we can visit you at home if you have mobility/access issues. We can provide help with benefit forms, appeals, budgeting and/or debts. For advice and help to save energy visit www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/saving-energy or call 0141 577 8529. We are also supporting people into work, attracting local businesses and strengthening the local economy through working with companies like ASDA, our Work EastRen programme, graduate intern scheme, and supporting young people to help reduce youth unemployment.

Your views on...Council services

- » Three quarters of respondents were satisfied with council services overall, however there was a slight drop in the number of you that felt that services are good value for money (45% compared with 49% last year).
- » Satisfaction remained highest with education services, libraries, public parks & open spaces and theatre/arts (96-93%). You were less positive about planning/building standards although the satisfaction rating was 75% and showed improvement on previous years.
- » Satisfaction with maintenance of roads and footpaths was low at 29% and 41% respectively. However, residents were most positive in relation to maintenance of street lighting (86%) and wheeled bin refuse collection (75%). And 84% felt that recycling is 'very good' or 'good' in East Renfrewshire.

Our response to your views

Councils across Scotland are working hard to do more with less, and the council needs to make further savings in response to Scottish Government's latest grant settlement. Despite this we are always trying to provide high quality services, and our services have been recognised by local government awards.

Did you know?

We recycled 56% of household waste last year - amongst top Council performers in Scotland.

We are proud that satisfaction with services is so high but we are not complacent and continue to look to improve. The recently upgraded facilities at Barrhead Foundry and Giffnock Library have been proving very popular with steady increases in visitor numbers. Our project to upgrade Rouken Glen park is nearing completion. We have achieved Green Flag status for the fourth consecutive year and were runners-up in the Green Flag People's Choice Award for Scotland's favourite green space. Work on a new state-of-the-art Barrhead High School will start this year. This will be a fantastic new facility for young people in Barrhead.

Satisfaction with roads and footpaths was relatively low. We are working hard to ensure we have a first class maintenance and resurfacing programme in place. Our Roads Asset Management Plan ensures that we will use our resources efficiently and prioritise work based on thorough assessment. Our response time between a fault being reported and repair work being completed has reduced over the past year.

Your views on...Council services standards and values

- » The council has 5 stated values that it aims to embody. Three quarters of you agreed that the council is 'caring', 'efficient' and 'trustworthy' to a great extent or to some extent. Lower numbers agreed that the council is 'people-centred' (64%) or 'innovative' (54%).
- » Broader attributes most likely to be associated with the council were 'helpful', 'reputable', 'professional staff', and 'customer focused' (76-70%).
- » The council was least likely to be associated with 'works to reduce bureaucracy', 'works with residents to solve problems'; and 'keeps costs down' (45-53%).

Our response to your views

We have recently developed new Customer Care Standards which have been rolled out across the council. These set out the minimum level of service you can expect when contacting us. We use an external organisation to test how well we are delivering the standards.

Did you know?

80% of frontline complaints are resolved in 5 days, and feedback is used to improve services.

We are listening to your views on reducing bureaucracy, keeping cost down and innovation and continue to work to do better. We are undertaking a holistic programme for change, the council's 'Modern Ambitious Programme', which is redesigning the way the council works and interacts with customers. The programme is focused on removing duplication and bureaucratic practices, developing digital approaches, personalising services for customers and contributing to necessary financial savings.

Your views on...your local area and environment

- » Views on the quality of street cleaning and litter patrol in East Renfrewshire were generally positive, 58% rated positively (down 3% compared to last year).
- » Perceptions of crime improved compared with last year. Fewer people felt that there had been an increase in crime in their local area (down 4%). Perception of local antisocial behaviour stayed roughly the same.
- » On local town centres, you were positive that they are pleasant places to visit/spend time (62%) and are easily accessible on foot (83%) or bike (62%). However, you were less positive about the range of shops and services available in your local area (45%) and whether it is easy to park in your local town (39%).

Our response to your views

We are committed to making sure the area is clean, safe and secure. We have been redesigning our mechanical street sweeper service, reviewing our litter squads and pavement sweeper service, raising awareness in primary schools and installation of 'recycle on the go' bins. Our 24/7 community wardens deal with issues like ASB, and CCTV control provides support to the Police.

We want our local town centres to be thriving, attractive places that meet the needs of our communities. We promote the development of our local town centres by supporting the work of our Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) at Clarkston and Giffnock and the establishment of new BIDs elsewhere in East Renfrewshire. We also provide support and advice for local start-ups and encourage business investment into the area.

Did you know?

Glasgow & Clyde City Deal will see £44m investment in ER to support local economic growth

Your views on...Communicating with the Council

- » Most people use the telephone as the main way of contacting the council (72%) although the council's website is also commonly used (38%).
- » Nearly two thirds (64%) had accessed the council's website at least once in the past year. Most people use the website to access information on services (e.g. bin collection details, school holidays, opening times).
- » Many of you are using the website to request a service, report a problem (e.g. roads/paths), or pay a bill.

Our response to your views

It is important that you can contact us when and how you prefer. Our Customer First team is available 8am-6pm Mon-Fri. Around 9 in 10 survey respondents have access to the internet and more than 3/4 use a mobile device to access the internet. We are currently trialling 'Live Chat' where the public can get support from staff members live online. We are increasing the volume of activities available on our website such as downloading/completing forms, making payments, booking services, renewing library books etc. Information on council services is available at www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk whenever you need it. You can get help with IT skills by calling 0800 052 0239 or online at www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/adultlearning.

Did you know?

The Council's website is one of the best in the country with a 4 star rating which is the highest achievable.

Your views on... Volunteering and contributing to decisions

- » 73% have volunteered to help clubs, charities or other organisations, including 49% in the last year.
- » The vast majority of you (81%) agreed that it's important to be able to influence decisions affecting your local area. However, fewer than 2 in 5 (37%) felt you can influence decisions affecting your local area.

Our response to your views

We want people to get involved in their communities and influence local decisions. Residents can give their views through the Citizens' Panel, Citizens' Space (the council's online engagement tool), schools, community groups, health services, etc. We hope you enjoy giving your views, we value and take these on board. We hope this newsletter shows our commitment to listening and acting on your views.