

Feedback on the 18th Citizens' Panel Survey

Dear Panel member,

Thank you for continuing to support the Citizens' Panel for East Renfrewshire, and particular thanks for the very strong response to the recent 18th Panel survey. The Panel is a really useful way for the Council to hear people's views, and your feedback helps us make sure that we continue to improve our services and meet the needs and expectations of our residents.

We do however want to make sure that communication through the Panel is not just "one way". This newsletter gives you some feedback on what we found out from the 18th survey, and more importantly how the Council is using your responses to shape our services and activities.

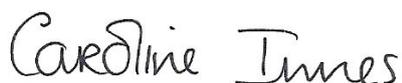
The 18th East Renfrewshire Citizens' Panel survey covered a range of topics relating to life in the area, such as:

- » Life in East Renfrewshire...including your views on the area as a place to live, issues affecting your quality of life, and financial issues;
- » Local priorities...including the main issues for you and your family, issues for particular parts of the local population, and priorities for the Council and partners;
- » Your local community...including views on your community, and on community safety;
- » Your views on the Council and its services...including the quality of Council services, value for money, and Council attributes;
- » Your views on preventative services; and
- » Participating and communicating with the Council...including information on services, performance information, and electronic communication.

This newsletter highlights the key findings across each of these topics. If you are interested in reading more about the survey results you can access the full report at: <http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/citizenspanel>.

If you have any questions about the Panel you can contact Craigforth – who manage the Citizens' Panel on our behalf – on freephone 0800 027 2245 or email ERCP@craigforth.co.uk, or you can contact Leanne Dunlop at the Council's Policy & Improvement Unit on 0141 577 3660 or 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

- » 93% of Panel members were satisfied with East Renfrewshire as a place to live, continuing the trend of the past 5 years, with a small increase in the proportion "very satisfied".
- » East Renfrewshire's good reputation, good educational opportunities and safe/clean environment continue to be the most common reasons for living in the area. 48% also mentioned good transport;
- » Members score their personal quality of life an avg 7.76 out of 10, the highest rating over the past 4 years;
- » Most Panel members are managing fairly well financially. 58% are managing "very well" or "quite well", and a further 35% are "getting by all right". 10% were not managing well or in financial difficulty.

Our response to your views

We are delighted that so many have a positive experience of living in East Renfrewshire. To maintain high levels of educational attainment and positive experiences for our young people we will continue to support schools to improve further. Our schools work hard to maximise attainment for all learners and to support all young people to enter positive school leaver destinations (Higher/Further Education, Employment, Training and Volunteering). Most recent data shows 95.3% of school leavers entered positive destinations in 11-12.

We also strive for an environment which is safe and clean. To achieve this, our community wardens patrol litter hot spots; we are working to maximise street cleaning service by reviewing our routes, and we organise litter picks and initiatives in schools to engage young people in environmental issues. We are committed to achieving national recycling targets, and will continue managed weekly collections to maximise recycling and reduce waste going to landfill. Most recent data shows we are second in Scotland for our recycling rates. During 2013 we will be working to introduce recycling facilities into flats which it is envisaged will improve recycling even further.

We have been awarded Heritage Lottery Funding for a complete refurbishment of Rouken Glen Park by March 2016. This will include improvements to the pavilion and children's play park, and we will also be making improvements to Busby and Aurs Glen. We will be using funding from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport to improve our transport links, ensuring more accessible bus routes by improving kerbs and providing real time information at bus stops.

We have noted that some of our residents are experiencing financial issues. The Council provides free, confidential, impartial and independent money advice for all residents, and will carry out a confidential check to find out if you are entitled to additional benefits. Advice may be given face to face, by phone or by e-mail and if you have mobility or access issues, we can visit you in your home. Call us free on [0800 052 1023](tel:08000521023), email money@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk or text "money" to freetext 80800 and add your name. More information on recent welfare reform can also be found at www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/welfare_reform.

Your views on...Local Priorities

- » The three main priorities for local families/households are health and healthcare, crime and antisocial behaviour, and cost of living/financial issues;
- » Crime, antisocial behaviour and education should be the Council's top three priorities;
- » Priorities for the wider Community Planning Partnership were similar being crime and antisocial behaviour, health and health care, a strong local economy, and clean neighbourhood/environment.

Our response to your views

On health issues, a key focus of the Council is to ensure that our residents live active, healthy, independent lives. To do this we will continue to deliver local public health programmes including the development of our new Eastwood Health and Care Centre; schemes such as ACES (Active Children Eating Smart) and Healthier Wealthier Children, and organising events within Dams to Darnley Country Park and Whitelee Windfarm to encourage better health and wellbeing. We also want to ensure that residents have choice and control over their care and support and offer a range of self directed support options.

Our Community Wardens, working closely with the Police, provide a 24/7 service to ensure the safety of residents. To reduce further already low levels of crime in the area, we will continue to target hot spot areas, respond to and resolve complaints of antisocial behaviour, issue fixed penalty notices (including littering and dog fouling), provide diversionary activities for young people at risk of taking part in antisocial behaviour (including a mobile pitch to encourage physical activity and sports like football and basketball), and monitor our CCTV cameras. Our Trading Standards team are implementing initiatives such as 'no cold calling' to protect our vulnerable residents.

We are also working to deliver economic recovery and growth for the area through our Place to Grow campaign which aims to support local businesses during difficult economic times, attract new businesses, investment and visitors to the area, and develop job opportunities. We provide business support, advice and grants, the provision of modern business facilities and are involved in the development of the Glasgow Road and M77 Corridor. In February 2013 over 12,500 people attended our Electric Glen lighting festival and we will work to build on our events calendar including our annual food festival and Highland Games event to increase visitors and spend in the area.

Your views on...Your Community

- » Respondents most commonly described their local community as "Safe", "Clean/Pleasant environment", "Friendly/Caring" and "Good amenities/services". This also aligned with the kind of communities Panel members said that they would like to live.
- » Panel members reporting an increase in crime and antisocial behaviour levels have decreased since 2011/12 and more than half were satisfied with our work to tackle community safety issues (56%);
- » Panel members felt school aged children were best supported by local communities (82%) followed by pre-school children (63%) and older people (52%). Fewer felt they lived in a community that was supportive of young people and people of working age (40% and 34% respectively).

Our response to your views

We are committed to supporting our older population and have secured an additional £650,000 for services to ensure our older residents enjoy a better quality of life living as confidently and independently as possible. Panel members had clear views on support for young people and residents of working age. In response to this, the Council is expanding its Graduate Internship Programme, providing life skills programmes, and ensuring our Worker service continues to help residents secure and maintain employment, training or education. Alongside other partners such as Renfrewshire Council and Jobcentre Plus we are working to engage and support those who are furthest away from the labour market to enable them to find employment. We are trying to prevent youth unemployment and have recently piloted a programme in St Luke's High to provide targeted support and training for those ready to leave school.

Your views on...the Council and Council Services

- » "Helpful", "reputable", "professional staff" and "works in partnership" (79%, 79%, 79%, and 77% respectively) were words most associated with the Council, although there has been a 12% decrease in "works to reduced bureaucracy";
- » More respondents (78%) were satisfied with Council services overall and felt that Council services represent good value for money (59% compared to 53% last year);
- » Members were particularly satisfied with education services (100%-96%), libraries (98%) and recycling (93%) services but less so for maintenance of roads and footpaths (29% and 36%);
- » Providing services for children/young people and preventing crime and antisocial behaviour were considered to be high priority;
- » 83% agreed that we should "use more resources on preventative services, even if it may take a number of years before we see the benefits"; although views were less positive if this meant reducing investment in other services.

Our response to your views

To reduce bureaucracy, improve efficiency and ensure value for money, we are continuing to implement our Public Service Excellence (PSE) programme to ensure our resources and services are managed effectively to meet the needs of our customers. This will involve further simplification of processes, making better use of technology and further developing online services.

We strive to provide high quality services and were recently awarded the national Customer Service Excellence Award. A 'skills routing' system has also been introduced to ensure that your requests are sent to the most appropriate member of staff. Work is ongoing to develop the Barrhead Library and Learning Hub expected to be complete in summer 2014. We also introduced a new complaints handling procedure which ensures that your feedback is used more effectively to improve our services.

We also asked for your views on how we should meet the Scottish Government's focus on providing services to prevent social problems before they arise. To do this, we are focusing on delivering excellent early years provision for children under five, identifying vulnerable children at an early stage, taking action to prevent issues escalating, and working to deliver plans in a collaborative way to improve outcomes. We are also developing a pre-five activity programme to improve the health of local children, will continue to protect our young people and keep them safe through our Streetwork programme, and will work with local businesses to implement 'challenge 25' (to reduce the number of sales of alcohol and tobacco sold to young people illegally). Your responses also highlighted clear views about our roads. Already improvements have been made to the road network and we have secured an additional £1.15m for 13/14 to improve our roads further.

Your views on...Participating and Communicating with the Council

- » Phone, website and email were the preferred ways to contact the Council [81%, 51% and 45%];
- » 41% of respondents preferred to use our website to access information on the Council and its services, but most used our ER magazine. Interest in booking/paying online for services was strong;
- » Panel members were clear that it is important for them to be able to influence decisions affecting their local area (80%). More (35%) felt able to do this – up 10% on last year.

Our response to your views

We are working hard to increase the number of online services, including the facility to make payments, apply for registration certificates, pest control, free school meals and clothing grants. Over the coming months, we are further reviewing the effectiveness of our website and online services. This will involve speaking to users to identify what is important to them and ensuring content is easy to understand and accessible.

You were clear that it is important for residents to influence local decisions. Panel members' views have been used extensively to inform the services the Council will offer over the next few years – as set out in our new Single Outcome Agreement [2013-16] and Outcome Delivery Plan [2013-16]. The Community Planning team also met with community members from across the area to speak to them about their aspirations and issues, including Community Councils, Tenants and Residents Associations, Faith Forums, Youth Groups and many more (see www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/communityplanning). East Renfrewshire Council also works to ensure that the area has a full complement of community councils; support young people to participate in local decision making and campaign in issues important to them; and ensure local community groups can access training and support to help them influence Council decisions.

Any questions?

To find out more about the East Renfrewshire Citizens' Panel please contact **Leanne Dunlop, Policy & Improvement Unit**, East Renfrewshire Council on 0141 577 3075 or email policyandimprovement@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk - or you can visit the Panel website at <http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/citizenspanel>

For questions about survey results, Panel membership or how to get involved please contact **Chris Thornton, Director, Craigforth** on 01786 448610 or email c.thornton@craigforth.co.uk