

# Citizens' Panel Newsletter

Issue 3: June 2023



Dear Panel member...

Welcome to the Spring 2023 East Renfrewshire Citizens' Panel update. We are really grateful for our Panel members' time and effort and want to keep you up to date on results and other events that might be of interest. This issue updates you on the results of the recent Panel survey and other current consultations. We hope you find it interesting!

## The latest Panel results

The last Panel survey was conducted in autumn 2022. Below is a summary of findings - you can read the full Panel survey report at: [www.bit.ly/ercp22-report](http://www.bit.ly/ercp22-report)

### Life in East Renfrewshire

#### Key messages

85% were satisfied with the area as a place to live

92% have seen cost of living increases, mainly due to food, gas/electricity and fuel prices

90% have made changes to cope, but most still expect their finances to get worse

#### How we are responding

- £4.4 million spent on cost-of-living packages delivered to help our most vulnerable residents
- £100 gift cards distributed to more than 4,500 households
- Additional funding to support direct financial advice and winter support to residents

### Council services and our values

#### Key messages

63% were satisfied with Council services, and 59% felt the standard of service had stayed the same

Most felt that Council employees represent the three Council values to some extent, especially 'kindness' (61%) and 'trust' (57%).

**You were most positive about...**education, libraries, public parks/open spaces and recycling

**You were less positive about...**roads maintenance and footpath maintenance

#### How we are responding

- £3.5 million will be spent each year for the next 5 years on upgrading roads and pavements – and 64 road resurfacing projects to be completed this year
- Work has started on the new Neilston Learning Campus creating two excellent new schools & family centre, and maintaining Education's positive performance
- £60,000 of new investment to support our most vulnerable children, with parents and carers working with us to determine how best to use the money
- Upgraded sports pitch at Isobel Mair School and over £1 million to expand the school

## Your local area and community

### Key messages

84% are concerned about online and local scams

53% feel a strong sense of belonging to their community

81% agree it is important for them to be able to influence decisions affecting their local area – but most don't feel able to do so

### Key positives...

- 65% have people in their community they can rely on for help
- 64% feel people from different backgrounds get on well in their communities
- Three quarters have volunteered to help clubs, charities or other organisations

### Issues to address...

- 87% agreed that preventing scams should be a priority
- Less than half agreed their community supports vulnerable adults
- Nearly 1/3 felt lonely in the last week although this is better than the 50% in 2021

### How we are responding

- 33 Warm and Welcome spaces to support those affected by the cost-of-living crisis
- More than £1 million invested in a new Telecare system - the first Council to introduce a next-generation Telecare system to enable people to live independently in their own homes
- 1,000 call blocker units installed - preventing one million nuisance and scam calls
- An extra £150,000 invested in grant making participatory budgeting with a focus on community-led wellbeing and resilience

## Climate change

### Key messages

75% feel that climate change is an immediate and urgent problem

64% are more concerned about climate change now than 12 months ago

### Positives...

- 88% feel they could make a change to reduce their climate impact – e.g. reduce food/other waste, reduce energy use
- 85% have made changes in the last two years to reduce their climate impact

### Issues to address...

- Reducing the Council's own climate impact and raising awareness through schools were seen as the top priorities for reducing the impact of climate change

### How we are responding

- We continue to rank top in Scotland for recycling – a rate of 58% vs the average of 42.7%
- We are setting up a community partnership to help local people and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint - including councillors, residents, young citizens, businesses and others
- We continue to embed climate change in the primary & secondary curriculum, strengthen the Green Flag scheme in schools and support pupils to make climate-friendly choices

## Digital inclusion

### Key messages

54% were interested in finding out about virtual reality headsets to show how doing some things online can support health & wellbeing

17% were aware of local services that support digital learning and access – and 37% would like to find out more

### How we are responding

- We are rolling out an information campaign to promote digital inclusion at public venues across East Renfrewshire
- Virtual reality taster sessions are held in libraries throughout the year

## Focus group feedback

In March this year we held two focus groups with Panel members to explore survey findings in more detail – including satisfaction with Council services, views on East Renfrewshire as a place to live, and whether members feel able to influence local decisions.

Participants generally had a positive impression of Council services, especially Council staff and specific services such as education, social care and the Money, Advice & Rights Team. Discussion of future priorities raised concerns around longer-term pressure on Council budgets, although it was noted that these pressures have been felt across Scotland.

Several changes were suggested to help improve perceptions of the Council. These were focused around:

- Improvements to specific services, such as roads maintenance.
- Improvements to the quality of the environment including access to good quality green space, and raising awareness of how residents can contribute to maintaining the quality and appearance of their local neighbourhoods.
- The Council being more open to resident views and feedback.

The Council is already addressing some of these issues, as highlighted above. Our new online citizen engagement platform – Commonplace – will also allow us to better engage with residents and promote interaction and conversation.

You can read more about the focus groups at: [www.bit.ly/ercp22-fg-report](http://www.bit.ly/ercp22-fg-report).

## Other opportunities to share your views

The Council will be running several consultations over the next few weeks where you can give us your views. Here are just some of them to look out for:

- Food Growing Strategy - live until 16 June
- Gaelic Language Plan - live until 26 June
- Get to Zero Action Plan - live until 22 June
- Local Transport Strategy - forthcoming

You can find these on Commonplace at: [erinventory.commonplace.is](http://erinventory.commonplace.is)

The next Panel survey will be developed later in the year.

## Your information

All the information you provide as a Panel member is completely confidential and will be used only for Citizens' Panel purposes. Your information is held and processed by Engage Scotland on the Council's behalf and will not be shared outside of the contractor and council staff undertaking relevant research projects.

You can find out more about how your information is used by contacting Engage Scotland on 0800 433 7212 or email [ercp@engagescotland.co.uk](mailto:ercp@engagescotland.co.uk).

### Need to get in touch?

For any change of address, email or telephone contact Engage Scotland on 0800 433 7212 or [ercp@engagescotland.co.uk](mailto:ercp@engagescotland.co.uk).

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## Call for members

Do you know anyone who would like to get involved?

We want the Citizens' Panel to include as wide a mix of members as possible and are always looking for new people to join. The Panel is open to anyone aged 16+ who lives in East Renfrewshire.

If you have any family, friends or neighbours who might be interested in taking part, please pass on the link:

[www.bit.ly/ercp-join](http://www.bit.ly/ercp-join)