

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL CITIZENS' PANEL NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2018/19

Dear Panel Member

Welcome to the latest Citizens' Panel newsletter.

We were pleased with the response to the survey issued in Spring 2018. Sixty-three per cent of you completed a questionnaire and provided valuable feedback that we will use to improve services provided by the Council.

Topics in the Spring 2018 survey were:

- *Inverclyde Council's Customer Services Centre*
- *Inverclyde Council's reputation*
- *community safety*
- *alcohol.*

The Winter 2018/19 questionnaire focuses on domestic abuse; roads and street lighting; community justice; and Inverclyde Council's performance. We look forward to receiving your completed survey.

Inverclyde
council



This newsletter outlines the key results from the Spring 2018 survey and our response to your feedback.

1. Inverclyde Council's Customer Services Centre

The first section of the report covered a variety of issues relating to Inverclyde Council's Customer Services Centre (CSC).

Forty-four per cent of respondents said they had contacted the Council's CSC in the last 12 months. The most common means of getting in touch was by telephone (64%), followed by in person (34%) and by email (8%). The most common reason for getting in touch was Council Tax payments (19%), followed by refuse collection (14%) and pavement or road repairs (10%). Sixty-five per cent of respondents said their question was answered/the issue was resolved during the initial contact.

The Panel was then asked to consider a number of aspects of their most recent contact with the CSC and to indicate how they would rate their visit. Across the majority of aspects – including knowledge of staff; helpfulness of staff; understanding your needs; speed of response; accuracy of information received; and the level of courtesy received from staff – respondents said their experience was very good or good. In contrast, the highest level of dissatisfaction was found with the opportunity to provide feedback about services.

The next question asked the Panel how satisfied they were with a number of aspects of their last visit to the CSC. Satisfaction was highest regarding accessibility of the Centre; staff appearance and attitude; and opening hours. In contrast, the three main issues that respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with were: waiting times; availability of staff; and privacy of consultation.

Other than in person and by telephone, the main ways in which respondents are interested in interacting with the Council are by e-mail (66%) and via our website (50%). Additionally, 43% of respondents said they would be interested in receiving their Council Tax bill electronically.

Panel members were then asked about their awareness of our mobile app which was launched in 2016 to allow residents and visitors to request services, make payments and report a variety of issues such as potholes and dog fouling directly from their mobile telephones to the Council. Only 15% of respondents said they were aware of the app, of which, just over a fifth (21%) said they had used it.

Respondents were also asked whether they had heard of *MyAccount*, a simple and secure sign-in service which allows people to set up an on-line account to access the range of public services provided by Councils, the NHS, the Scottish Government and other public service bodies. Eighty-four per cent of respondents said they were not aware of *MyAccount*. A very small number (2%) said they are aware of it and have registered, while 10% of respondents are aware of it but do not plan on registering to use it.

Our response to your feedback

The feedback from the Citizens' Panel will help inform the way forward to promote channel shift (the process of moving transactions to the most efficient and effective channel of engagement), particularly around our mobile app and *MyAccount* which are either not known about or not used, even by those who have an awareness of the initiatives.

The Survey's results indicate that many Inverclyde residents are not clamouring for change in terms of channels of contact with the Council and these views need to be factored in as we continue to drive channel shift forward. It is likely that significant engagement with our customers will be required to encourage the use of new or alternative channels.

We are pleased to note the Citizens' Panel's responses relating to the knowledge of CSC employees; helpfulness of staff; speed of response; accuracy of information received; and the level of courtesy received.

2. Inverclyde Council's reputation

The second section of the Survey asked the Panel about the Council and its reputation.

Respondents were asked to look at a list of statements regarding the Council and to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with each of them. The top three statements that respondents agreed or strongly agreed with were: the Council's staff are professional; the Council is helpful; and the Council promotes environmental sustainability. It is pleasing to note that two thirds (66%) of Citizens' Panel members agreed that the Council's staff are professional. We are encouraged also to note that more than half of respondents agreed both that the Council is helpful (58%) and that it promotes environmental sustainability (55%).

The top three statements that respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed

with were: the Council keeps costs down; the Council's reputation is good; and the Council is efficient. However, it should be noted that only 27% of Panel members disagreed that the Council keeps costs down, with the same number (27%) disagreeing that our reputation is good. An even smaller number (24%) disagreed that the Council is efficient. Additionally, it is worth pointing out that fairly high numbers (between 32% and 39%) of respondents chose the *neither/nor* option when they responded to this question.

Our response to your feedback

The Citizens' Panel's responses to questions in this section of the Survey will be used in the long term measurement of the Council's reputation.

The Council's reputation rests on a vast range of factors from how individuals interact with services on a day to day basis, its media reputation, to how local government in Scotland and across the UK is viewed collectively. The reputation information and responses to the Citizens' Panel questions will help to shape how the Council promotes and markets its services locally and outside Inverclyde.

The promotion of Inverclyde as an area and of the Council's services is important in helping to promote the area as a place to do business, visit and live – key factors in supporting the Inverclyde Alliance's (the Community Planning Partnership) repopulation plans.

3. Community safety

A selection of questions about community safety issues formed the next part of the Survey. Panel members were firstly asked about their satisfaction with Inverclyde as a place to live and, secondly, with their neighbourhood as a place to live. Just under three quarters (74%) of Panel members said they are satisfied with Inverclyde as a place to live, while 86% of respondents said they are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

When asked if they have ever considered leaving Inverclyde, just over a third (36%) of respondents said they have considered leaving the area.

Just under half (47%) of Panel members said they thought their life was a little or a lot better than it was 5-10 years ago. A further 22% thought it was worse and almost one in three (32%) said it was neither better nor worse.

Our response to your feedback

It is encouraging to note that almost three quarters (74%) of Panel members are satisfied with Inverclyde as a place to live.

For the first time, Panel members were asked if they have ever considered leaving the area and if they believed their life is better than it was 5-10 years ago. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide reasons for their responses and, where appropriate, these have been passed to the relevant Council Services for action.

While the Council cannot respond directly to comments made by the Panel regarding additional Police patrols, we have shared this information, as appropriate. Police Scotland advise that, across Inverclyde, there are neighbourhood policing teams who engage with many communities and frequently attend community meetings and events in their respective neighbourhoods. The Council works closely with Police Scotland including attending meetings to arrange joint partnership working between the Community Wardens and neighbourhood policing teams.

4. Alcohol

The final section of the Survey asked about alcohol and alcohol misuse. The first question asked Panel members how far from their home they normally travel to buy alcohol. Twenty-seven per cent of respondents said they travel less than one mile to buy alcohol, 40% said they travel

between one and five miles and 5% travel more than five miles. The remainder of the respondents (28%) said they do not buy alcohol.

When asked if alcohol caused any problems in their neighbourhood, 41% of respondents said it does not. The main issues that alcohol does cause in neighbourhoods are *problems associated with underage drinking* (29%); followed by an *increase in incidents of anti-social behaviour* (27%); and *drinking in public places* (24%).

Panel members were then asked what action they thought should be taken to tackle alcohol problems. Almost three quarters (73%) of respondents think that underage drinking needs to be tackled, compared to 50% when the same question was asked in 2015. This was followed by 67% of respondents who believe that education in schools should be undertaken, compared to 57% in 2015. Two thirds of Panel members (66%) said that changing attitudes towards alcohol in the West of Scotland is required, compared to 57% in 2015. Meanwhile, just over a third (36%) said that the availability of alcohol should be reduced, down from 40% in 2015.

In this section of the Survey, the top three issues that respondents stated they have experienced in the past 12 months were: *teenagers or children causing a nuisance* (50%); *witnessed drinking in public places* (44%); and *rowdy behaviour, for example, drunkenness, hooliganism or loutish conduct* (42%).

Panel members were then asked what impact they thought a number of initiatives would have on reducing the harm caused by excessive alcohol consumption. The initiative which the greatest number of respondents feel would have the highest impact is *youth projects to divert young people away from underage drinking, for example, Midnight League (football), positive youth activities etc* with 82% of respondents selecting this option.

The final question in the Survey asked Panel Members to indicate whether they thought there were too few or too many of a variety of licenced premises (i.e. pubs, nightclubs, restaurants, off-licences and supermarkets) in Inverclyde. In general, between half and two thirds of all respondents thought there was an adequate number of premises. Thirty-one per cent said there were too few restaurants and the same number (31%) think there are too many off-licences in the area.

Our response to your feedback

The results from this section of the Survey provide the Council with information about the wider community impact of alcohol misuse and the community's perspective on what we should do to prevent and address problematic alcohol use. The Panel's responses also provide the Council with information about the purchase of alcohol - including how far people travel to purchase alcohol - together with views on the supply of opportunities to purchase alcohol in Inverclyde.

A key aim in the Inverclyde Alcohol and Drug Partnership (IADP) Strategy is to reduce the impact of alcohol misuse on our community. IADP partners work together to deliver a whole population approach to alcohol misuse. This approach recognises that the health and social problems caused by alcohol misuse do not only impact on the person who drinks and their families, but also on the wider community. In particular, this can manifest itself as anti-social behaviour and, more seriously, criminal activity.

The IADP Strategy has a focus on treatment, prevention and education. Partners work to address individuals' alcohol misuse issues through the Health and Social Care Partnership services and community recovery services. IADP partners also deliver a comprehensive range of alcohol education prevention inputs to young people in primary and secondary schools and in youth venues.