

# INVERCLYDE COUNCIL CITIZENS' PANEL NEWSLETTER

## AUTUMN 2021

### Dear Panel Member

#### Welcome to the latest Citizens' Panel newsletter.

Thank you for responding to the survey issued in Winter 2020/21. Sixty-one 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 Winter 2020/21 survey were:

- *community safety*
- *tackling poverty.*
- *Inverclyde Council's performance*

The Autumn 2021 questionnaire focuses on historic links to slavery and Inverclyde's libraries. We look forward to receiving your completed survey.

### This newsletter outlines the key results from the Winter 2020/21 survey and our response to your feedback.

#### 1. Community safety

Panel members were firstly asked about their satisfaction with Inverclyde as a place to live and, secondly, about their satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live. Three quarters (75%) of respondents said they are satisfied with Inverclyde as a place to live, while 86% told us they are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live. Respondents were next asked to consider a variety of issues and state how concerned they were about those issues in their neighbourhood. The top three issues that people are most concerned about are: theft/robbery (40%); vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property (39%); and people hanging around the street (29%).

Panel members were then asked about their feelings of safety. Ninety-four per cent of people said they feel safe outside during the day, while 70% of people said they feel safe in their neighbourhood outside at night.

Just under a fifth (19%) of respondents told us that they had noticed a reduction in anti-social behaviour in their neighbourhood in the last year. Additionally, slightly less than half of Panel members (48%) said that anti-social behaviour is not an issue in their neighbourhood.

#### Our response to your feedback

It is pleasing to note that three quarters (75%) of Panel members are satisfied with Inverclyde as a place to live. Similarly, the number of respondents who are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live is very high at 86%.

It is encouraging to note that high numbers of Panel members feel safe outside during the day and at night.

Furthermore, just under half (48%) of Panel members said that anti-social behaviour has not been an issue in their neighbourhood in the last year. While these results are very positive, the Inverclyde Community Safety Partnership is not complacent about the impact of anti-social behaviour on the lives of residents and the community of Inverclyde. In October 2020, the Partnership therefore published the Inverclyde Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2020/25 which brings together the key Partners in Inverclyde who respond to anti-social behaviour. The Strategy 2020/25 will be complemented by an Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Document which will set out in detail how the Partners will respond to anti-social behaviour in the local area.

#### 2. Inverclyde Council's performance

We advised the Panel that the second section of the survey comprised questions about some areas that the Council measures its performance against.

Fifty-eight per cent of Panel members told us that they are satisfied with the services provided by the Council, while almost a half (47%) of Panel members agreed that, by working together, local people can influence decisions that affect the local area.

Also in terms of influencing decisions, around a third of respondents (32%) are satisfied with the way Inverclyde Council takes residents' views into account when making decisions that affect the local area, while a broadly similar number (30%) agree that the Council works with local residents to solve problems.

## **Our response to your feedback**

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on service delivery at the Council, examples of which include the provision of public health information; the delivery of key health and social care services; the processing of Scottish Government business support interventions including, for example, the business grant scheme and support for the hospitality sector; changes to registration services; waste collection and disposal; and the temporary suspension of some Council Committees and Sub-Committees.

Additionally, the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions initially prohibited the opportunity for face-to-face engagement which meant that any engagement took place via a digital device or by telephone. The Council's Community Learning and Development staff were also deployed to support a variety of Covid-19 response projects such as free school meals, prescription delivery, childcare hubs, and supporting the helpline.

It is worth bearing in mind that these are some examples which could perhaps have influenced Panel members' responses to the questions in this part of the survey.

## **3. Tackling poverty**

We introduced the final part of the survey by explaining that we wanted to ask the Panel about how the area can unite to improve the lives of those experiencing the greatest challenges locally. We then went on to ask questions about services that will have an impact on improving the lives of people in Inverclyde who are living in poverty and deprivation, adding that some of the proposed actions will be delivered on an Inverclyde-wide basis while others will focus on the area's most deprived localities.

The first question in this section of the survey listed a number of key policy areas that may be developed further to improve the lives of local people who are living in poverty and deprivation, with Panel members asked to rank them on a scale of 1-7 (*1 = most important and 7 = least important*). The top three responses to this question were: employability programmes and training apprenticeships for long-term unemployed people (66%); apprenticeships for young people (59%); and affordable food and household energy (51%).

In response to the next question, respondents provided details of other action that they would like to see taken in Inverclyde and in their local community to help reduce poverty, with a number of themes emerging including access to essential items; employability; and amenities and housing.

The final question in the survey asked respondents if they would like to have a greater say about decisions that are made about their local community, with more than two thirds (69%) of Panel members indicating that they would welcome a greater say about decisions that are made about their local community.

## **Our response to your feedback**

We welcomed the opportunity to consult with the Citizens' Panel on the issue of tackling poverty. As part of the wider consultation on this subject, the Council supported six locality-based communication and engagement groups to facilitate community feedback events. The events provided participants with the chance to play a key part in the decision-making process; work with services to develop solutions to community issues; and ensure that communities are involved in decisions that are made about budget allocations.

The feedback from the Panel added depth and value to the discussions that took place at the community listening events. Additionally, the Panel's responses complemented the information collated from an online digital survey and helped to reinforce the outcomes of the engagement that has taken place.

It is encouraging to note that more than two thirds (69%) of Panel members said they would welcome a greater say about decisions that are made about their local community. We therefore look forward to engaging with members of the Citizens' Panel to encourage further participation with communities with the aim of ensuring they have a role in democratic decision-making and shaping the future of Inverclyde.