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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 February 2018</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Inclusive Education, Culture and Corporate Policy</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/01/18/GMcG/KB</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Results from the Citizens' Panel Summer 2017 Survey</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the headline results from the Citizens' Panel Summer 2017 Survey.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

2.1 The Survey focused on the following topics:

- protection of vulnerable children and young people
- biodiversity and community food growing
- satisfaction with Council services.

2.2 Throughout the report, commentaries on the results are included from the appropriate Council Service.

2.3 A number of significant points emerged from the Summer 2017 Survey:

- 70% of Panel members said they were very or fairly confident that the relevant services in Inverclyde will protect children and young people and help them if they are at risk of harm;
- 61% of respondents expressed an interest in growing their own fruit, vegetables, herbs or flowers; and
- Panel members' satisfaction with seven Council services is mostly high, with six of the seven services attracting a scoring of more than 70%.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a. notes the main findings from the Summer 2017 Citizens' Panel Survey; and
- b. takes account of the results when reviewing service delivery.

**Wilma Bain**  
**Corporate Director – Education, Communities and Organisational Development**

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Citizens' Panel was established in 2007 to enable the Council to regularly consult with Inverclyde residents on a wide range of issues and to obtain feedback to improve and develop services to meet the needs of local people. The Panel comprises 1,000 local residents, with membership refreshed annually by one third.
- 4.2 The return rate of 65% for the Summer 2017 Survey is one of the highest response rates we have received.

## **5.0 SURVEY TOPICS, FINDINGS AND COMMENTARIES**

### **5.1 Protection of vulnerable children and young people**

This section of the Survey comprised two parts: child protection and Corporate Parenting. We advised the Panel that we wanted to find out what they thought about services to protect children to help us improve those services.

### **5.2 Child protection**

We introduced this section of the questionnaire by outlining the membership and purpose of the Inverclyde Child Protection Committee. We also advised that, working with the local community, we try to make sure all children in Inverclyde are protected from harm.

- 5.3 Eighty per cent of respondents said that, if they had concerns regarding the safety of a child or young person, they would report those concerns to a police officer. This is followed by 50% who would report concerns to a social worker and 28% who would contact a teacher. Smaller numbers of respondents said they would report their concerns to a doctor (21%), a health visitor (18%) or some other person (7%).
- 5.4 Just over half (53%) of respondents said that nothing would prevent them reporting concerns they may have about a child or young person. However, the main issues that *would* prevent people from reporting a concern are 'fear of getting it wrong' (25%), 'not having enough "evidence" or information' (24%) and 'concerns about confidentiality being maintained' (17%).
- 5.5 Seventy per cent of Panel members said they were very or fairly confident that the relevant services in Inverclyde will protect children and young people and help them if they are at risk of harm. Only a very small number (5%) were not confident or not at all confident that services in Inverclyde will protect children and young people and help them if they are at risk of harm.
- 5.6 When asked if they thought the necessary action would be taken if they did contact an agency with a concern, 71% of Panel members said they were very or fairly confident that the necessary action would be taken. Only 3% were not at all confident the necessary action would be taken.
- 5.7 Respondents were then asked to indicate how important they felt a variety of factors were in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Most factors scored highly with the majority of Panel members agreeing that they are very important:

	<b>Very important %</b>
• Professionals sharing information with each other	89
• Professionals working together to support children and families	85
• Professionals providing extra support to families where a child is at risk	79
• Listening to children and young people and taking their views into account when making decisions that affect them	74
• Friends, neighbours, carers, passers by etc reporting concerns about a child's well-being	67.

Only one factor scored lower (at 35%): Raising awareness through public campaigns, for example, using posters and leaflets.

- 5.8 The next question in this section of the Survey asked the Panel if they were aware of the Council's work to support looked after children and young people; 41% of respondents said they were aware of this work. We then asked those Panel members how well they thought young people in Inverclyde are looked after and their responses, together with the responses to when question was last asked in 2015, were:

	<b>2015 %</b>	<b>2017 %</b>	<b>Difference %</b>
Very well looked after	67	17	- 50
Fairly well looked after	18	59	+ 41
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>- 9.</b>

- 5.9 The penultimate question in this part of the Survey asked respondents if they thought there was a lack of understanding and stigma attached to young people who are in care. Just over two thirds (68%) of Panel members think there is a lack of understanding and stigma attached to young people who are in care. Respondents went on to outline what action they think could be taken to tackle the stigma that young people in care may experience.

#### 5.10 Corporate Parenting

- 5.11 We introduced this part of the questionnaire by advising that Corporate Parenting is the collective responsibility of the Council, our Elected Members, employees and partner agencies to make Inverclyde the best place in Scotland for children and young people who are looked after and who are leaving care.

- 5.12 We also explained that the Inverclyde Corporate Parenting Group works together to listen to the views and experiences of looked after children and those leaving care, adding that work with the local community is also important to ensure that looked after children and young people live safely and, through education, leisure and access to work, grow up to be healthy, confident, responsible and able to contribute as effective citizens in the local area.

- 5.13 The top three elements that respondents stated already exist in their community to help young people to be healthy, active and included are schools (82%), play parks (72%) and health services (64%).

- 5.14 When asked how confident they were that Corporate Parents in Inverclyde safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of looked after children and those leaving care, 53% of Panel members said they were very or fairly confident in this respect.
- 5.15 Respondents were then asked to consider a number of factors and indicate how important they thought they were in safeguarding and promoting the welfare and wellbeing of looked after children and young people; the responses were as follows:

	<b>Very important %</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionals working together</li> </ul>	91
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening to children and young people and taking their views into account when making decisions that affect them</li> </ul>	78
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionals providing extra support to families in their local neighbourhood</li> </ul>	73
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends, neighbours, carers and local people having a supportive role</li> </ul>	65
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising awareness through public campaigns, for example, using posters and leaflets</li> </ul>	38.

- 5.16 In terms of Inverclyde's Corporate Parenting Strategy, almost two thirds (64%) of all respondents said that they were not aware of the document before they received the Citizens' Panel Survey, a further 22% said that they think they have heard of it and 14% said that they were aware of it.

***Protection of vulnerable children and young people – Service commentary***

*Good Corporate Parents take responsibility for promoting the wellbeing of all care experienced children and young people by working collaboratively to reduce barriers and inequalities experienced by looked after children throughout their care journey. Corporate Parenting was a focus area for the recent Inspection of Children's Services carried out by the Care Inspectorate.*

*The Citizens' Panel questionnaire provided the opportunity to consult with local people on the Council's Corporate Parenting duties. The responses provided valuable messages that we can use to inform future communication and training around the needs of looked after children and young people and the effectiveness of Inverclyde's Corporate Parenting planning.*

*A key issue that looked after children and care leavers often tell us about is the lack of understanding and stigma attached to being in care; more than two thirds (68%) of respondents agreed with this. Fifty-nine per cent of Panel members said they were not aware of the Council's work to support looked after children and young people, confirming that reducing the stigma and barriers experienced by looked after children should continue as a priority for Corporate Parents.*

*Focusing on how best we can safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of looked after children and those leaving care, the majority of respondents (91%) rated the need for professionals to work together and the need to listen to children and young people (78%) as being very important. Inverclyde's proposed "Champions' Board" approach to Corporate Parenting will be a key driver in enabling looked after children and care leavers to work with Corporate Parents in shaping and delivering services. Additionally, the Child Protection Committee recognised the potential need to promote the concept of a citizen's role in accessing 'early help' and this shall be taken this forward as a priority in 2018.*

## 6.0 Biodiversity and community food growing

### 6.1 Biodiversity

6.2 We introduced this part of the Survey by explaining that biodiversity is the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat and that a high level of biodiversity is usually considered to be important and desirable. We went on to explain that, while some human activities have benefited biodiversity, many have resulted in its decline, adding that, today in Scotland, biodiversity is under pressure from climate change, development, habitat loss and pollution.

6.3 The first question in this part of the questionnaire asked Panel members how concerned they are about any potential loss of biodiversity in Scotland in general and in Inverclyde in particular and their responses were:

#### **How concerned are you about any potential loss of biodiversity in Scotland in general and in Inverclyde in particular?**

	<b>% who are very or slightly concerned about any potential loss of biodiversity</b>
• Scotland	82
• Inverclyde	80.

6.4 We introduced the second question by advising the Panel that bees and other insects such as butterflies rely on flowers for food. Insect numbers are declining globally and one way of helping is to plant wild flowers in towns and cities to create small areas known as urban meadows. When we asked how interested respondents would be in seeing urban meadows in Inverclyde, 87% said they would be very or quite interested in seeing urban meadows in the local area.

### 6.5 Community food growing

6.6 At the beginning of this section of the questionnaire, we acknowledge that interest in 'growing your own food' has increased in recent years. We advised the Panel that, as part of our duties under The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, the Council is required to prepare a Food Growing Strategy and identify land that may be used as allotment sites, together with other areas of Inverclyde that could be used by the local community for the cultivation of fruit, vegetables, herbs or flowers.

6.7 The first question asked Panel members how interested they are in growing their own fruit, vegetables, herbs or flowers; 61% of respondents said they are very or quite interested in doing so.

6.8 We then asked respondents if there are any barriers to them growing their own produce and the top three responses were:

#### **Are there any barriers to you growing your own produce?**

	<b>%</b>
• Lack of knowledge	45
• Lack of time	30
• Lack of a garden	29.

Additionally, a smaller number of Panel members said lack of availability of nearby allotments (20%) was a barrier to them growing their own produce while 14% said there were no allotments nearby. A smaller number again (9%) said the waiting list for allotments was too long.

## **Biodiversity and community food growing – Service commentary**

### Biodiversity

*The Citizens' Panel responses to the questions about biodiversity show a substantial degree of concern relating to the environment. Inverclyde Council can continue to meet those concerns through its statutory obligations relating to The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, which charges all public bodies to give consideration to biodiversity within their day-to-day operations. Therefore, in Inverclyde, biodiversity should remain a component of land and open space management, and form part of the planning process and regeneration programmes.*

*One relatively simple action that can be undertaken is the planting of pollinator-friendly species. This is currently a high profile concept in Scotland with the recent publication of The Pollinator Strategy for Scotland 2017/27. The Council should continue to work with local groups to encourage, where appropriate, planting of species that encourage higher numbers and an easy transit of insect pollinators in Inverclyde, thus encouraging the spread and increase of biodiversity. A report to the Environment and Regeneration Committee on 18 January 2018 entitled 'Property Assets Management Report' included the proposal to create an informal pollinator-friendly garden on the site of the former Hector McNeil Baths. Pollinators, however, are only one strand of the wider biodiversity web, and the overall importance of all forms of biodiversity will continue to be encouraged by promoting a local green network, for the benefit of people and wildlife.*

### Community food growing

*The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a duty on local authorities to produce a Food Growing Strategy, which can also include an Allotment Strategy. The responses from the Citizens' Panel offer some insight into perceived barriers to people growing their own food, chief among these being a lack of knowledge and a lack of time; the weather was also cited as being a barrier. This would suggest that any Food Growing Strategy should pursue a wider agenda than simply land supply, and should also encompass issues such as lifelong learning, inter-generational working, active lifestyles, sustainable communities and climate change adaptations. It is nevertheless encouraging to note that more than 60% of respondents expressed an interest in growing their own fruit, vegetables, herbs or flowers.*

## **7.0 SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL SERVICES**

7.1 The final section of the Survey asked Panel members how satisfied they were with seven Council services: parks and open spaces in Inverclyde; refuse collection; leisure services, for example, swimming pools, local gyms etc; libraries in Inverclyde; local schools; the McLean Museum and Art Gallery; and social care or social work services. Panel members were asked to respond to this question only if they had used the service(s) in the last year.

The following table outlines the 2015 responses of the Panel to this question, together with their responses in 2017:

Council service	% who were satisfied or very satisfied		Difference %
	2015	2017	
Parks and open spaces	82	87	+ 5
Refuse collection	84	84	performance maintained
Leisure services	81	83	+ 2

Libraries	81	79	- 2
Local schools	81	77	- 4
The McLean Museum and Art Gallery	87	74	- 13
Social care or social work	64	53	- 11.

### **Satisfaction with Council services – Commentary**

*Inverclyde Council is acutely aware of the importance of providing high quality services to local residents and visitors to the area, particularly with the aim of retaining and enhancing Inverclyde's population. It is therefore pleasing to note that Panel members' satisfaction with the seven Council services is generally high, with six of the seven services attracting a scoring of more than 70%.*

*The biggest increase (5%) in satisfaction was with parks and open spaces which achieved a score of 87%. This may reflect the development of our Play Area Strategy which aims to bring our play areas up to an acceptable standard and fill any gaps in provision. In the last few years, significant sums have been spent on refurbishing or installing new play areas; it is therefore pleasing to note that this investment has been acknowledged by Panel members.*

*Social care or social work services attracted the lowest satisfaction rating in both years; this may reflect the fact that respondents had not used this particular service in the last year and therefore responded to the question accordingly. Additionally, it should be noted that our performance in this area compares favourably with the national figure for this measure of 50.67% in 2015/16 (the most recent available).*

*The biggest drop in satisfaction was with the McLean Museum and Art Gallery; this is perhaps unsurprising given that the facility was closed for essential repairs and renovation work during part of July 2016 and between January and March 2017. However, it should be noted that almost three quarters (74%) of Panel members still said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the McLean Museum and Art Gallery.*

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS**

### 8.1 Financial implications - one-off costs:

Cost centre	Budget heading	Budget year	Proposed spend this report	Virement from	Other comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

### Financial implications - annually recurring costs/(savings):

Cost centre	Budget heading	With effect from	Annual net impact	Virement from	Other comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

8.2 Human Resources: There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

8.3 Legal: There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8.4 Equalities: There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

8.5 Repopulation: Provision of Council Services which are subject to close scrutiny with the aim of delivering continuous improvement for current and potential citizens of Inverclyde support the Council's aim of retaining and enhancing the area's population.

## **9.0 CONSULTATION**

9.1 The appropriate Council Services were consulted on the development of the Summer 2017 Citizens' Panel Survey. Commentaries on the results of Survey from the respective Council Service are included in this report.

## **10.0 CONCLUSION**

10.1 The results of the Citizens' Panel Summer 2017 questionnaire are presented for the Committee's consideration, with the recommendation that they are taken into account when reviewing service delivery, as appropriate.

## **11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Citizens' Panel Summer 2017 Survey Results.