

Report To: Policy and Resources Committee

Date: 21 September 2010

**Report By: Corporate Director
Organisational Improvement and Resources**

Report No: POL/16/10/PW/KMcC

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Subject: Results from Fifth Citizens' Panel Survey

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the results from the fifth Citizens' Panel Survey which focused on Quality of Life issues. The report also provides details of how these results compare with those from the first Citizens' Panel Quality of Life Survey, conducted in December 2007.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The latest Citizens' Panel survey was issued to all 1000 members of the Panel in June 2010.

- 2.2 The survey asked a number of questions in relation to key quality of life issues such as:

- Involvement in the Local Community
- Libraries and Museum
- Training and Employment
- Health
- Carers
- Sport and Leisure
- The Environment
- Council Services
- Housing

- 2.3 A total of 592 Panel members completed and returned a questionnaire which is a response rate of 59%. This is slightly lower than the overall average response rate for previous surveys (63%). Response rates to surveys are usually lower during the summer holiday period and this accounts for the slight decrease in the percentage of Panel members who completed the survey. In addition, people who have been members of the Panel for several years can begin to lose interest. Membership of the Panel will be refreshed by a third in the Autumn to recruit new members who will replace people who have been members for the last three years. This should lead to an increase in the response rate to the next survey that is carried out.

- 2.4 This report only provides an overview of the headline results from the Survey. A full summary of the results is provided in Appendix 1. A table highlighting the change in response rates between the first survey in 2007 and the most recent survey is provided in Appendix 2.

- 2.5 Analysis of the survey results is encouraging with a number of positive results emerging:

- 71% of respondents rate the quality of their neighbourhood as good or very good, an improvement of 5% since 2007.
- Satisfaction with the quality and provision of recycling facilities remains very high at 79%.
- There has been an increase of 5% in both the percentage of respondents who are satisfied with the services provided by the Council and those that believe services offer good value for money.
- 4 in 5 respondents have visited the McLean Museum and Art Gallery.
- There has been an increase of 3% in the number of carers who feel that they are receiving appropriate support.

2.6 The results also raise a number of issues that pose challenges for the Council:

- An overwhelming 93% of respondents feel that excessive alcohol drinking is a particular problem in Inverclyde.
- 61% of respondents are dissatisfied with the maintenance of roads and pavements.
- 40% of respondents have considered leaving Inverclyde due to employment opportunities, crime, anti-social behaviour and poor selection of shops.
- Usage of Inverclyde libraries by respondents has fallen by 7%.
- More than 1 in 5 (22%) of respondents feel that they have received poor customer service from the Council.

2.7 The Council has implemented a number of key plans and strategies such as the Community Plan, the SOA, the Corporate Plan and the Organisational Improvement Plan. Within these plans are specific workstreams and projects which once fully implemented, will help to address these issues.

2.8 It is also the responsibility of each Directorate to take appropriate action to address the key issues arising from the survey which impact on their service.

2.9 The three year contract for the management of Inverclyde Citizens' Panel is coming to an end and a tender to appoint a market research company to refresh and manage the panel for the next three years is currently being drawn up. A report on this issue is on the agenda of this Committee.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- a. Note the content of this report.
- b. Agree that the SOA Outcome Delivery Groups, OIP Reference Groups and where appropriate Services, take the necessary action to address the issues arising from the Citizens' Panel survey.

Paul Wallace
Corporate Director
Organisational Improvement and Resources

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The fifth Citizens' Panel survey was issued to panel members in June 2010.
- 4.2 This was the second survey that sought to gather the views of Inverclyde residents on key quality of life issues. The previous Quality of Life survey was conducted in December 2007. A full summary of the results is provided in Appendix 1. A table highlighting the change in response rates between the first survey in 2007 and the most recent survey is provided in Appendix 2.
- 4.3 A total of 592 Panel members completed and returned a questionnaire, which is a response rate of approximately 59%. This is slightly lower than the overall average response rate for previous surveys (63%).
- 4.4 As with previous Citizens' Panel surveys, a number of positive results were obtained that portray the Council in a positive light and demonstrate high levels of satisfaction with service delivery.
- 4.5 A number of challenges for the Council have also emerged and these will be addressed through the delivery of the Council's Community Plan, the SOA, the Corporate Plan, the Organisational Improvement Plan and also as part of individual Directorates ongoing improvement activity.
- 4.6 The contract for the management of Inverclyde Citizens' Panel is coming to an end and a tender to appoint a market research company to manage and refresh the panel over the next three years is currently being drawn up. A full report on this is also on the agenda of this Committee.

5.0 KEY ISSUES

5.1 Involvement in the local community

The survey included questions about involvement in local events and activities.

- 29% of respondents stated that they regularly attended events or activities in their local area every couple of weeks or more often, a slight decrease on the 2007 figure of 31%.
- The number of people that act as a volunteer or organiser for local community or representative groups has increased very slightly from 9% in 2007 to 10% in 2010.
- 82% of respondents said that they do not attend any local community or representative group. Almost a quarter of these (24%), cited lack of information about community activities as the reason for this, whilst one fifth of respondents stated that they were not interested.

Service Commentary

The survey findings reflect the level of involvement that Citizens' Panel members have and do not necessarily capture the range and depth of involvement within specific geographical communities, for example, in the first quarter of 2010, there were 654 new local residents of SIMD neighbourhoods active in community activities / events.

Since April 2010, Inverclyde Council has provided support for 5 new community representative groups which may account for the slight increase in the numbers acting as a volunteer or organiser. During the same period, over 180 local people became newly active within local community groups.

A survey conducted for SOA outcomes 2 and 5 (June – Aug 2010) revealed that 36% of respondents felt that the local groups in their area were making things better in their community and, of those, 19.4% cited community influence / involvement as the main way in which community groups were making things better.

5.2 Libraries and Museum

Questions on the usage of Inverclyde libraries and the McLean Museum and Art Gallery were also included within the survey.

- Just under half (47%) of all respondents said that they used their local library. This represents a 7% decline in usage levels from 2007.
- The number of borrowers of library books however increased from 59% in 2007 to 65% in 2010.
- When panel members were asked what would encourage them to use libraries more often the most popular answers included longer opening hours (41%) and a different range of books / materials (29%).
- The number of respondents who had visited the McLean Museum and Art Gallery increased slightly by 3% and remains very high at 80%.
- Of those that haven't visited the Gallery, more than half (56%), cited that this is because they are unaware of what is on offer.

Service Commentary

The survey finding of a 7% decline in library usage is not consistent with actual recorded figures. Actual visitor figures are up from 220,057 in 2007/8 to 254,114 in 2009/10, which represents an increase of 15%. If 'virtual' visits are counted, as many library transactions are now carried out online, the figure increases to 271,106, an increase in library usage of 23% from the 2007 figure.

Longer opening hours would not be possible within the current budget, however it may be possible to offer *different* hours from the status quo. Inverclyde Libraries will shortly be carrying out a full customer survey and we will take this opportunity to consult the public on their preferred opening hours.

Following the additional funding for the book budget in 2007, a huge effort has been put into stock selection, promotion and improvement. Positive feedback is regularly received from users about these improvements. An extremely varied selection of both fiction and non-fiction titles are bought from our book supplier and multiple copies of all upcoming bestsellers are pre-ordered from Amazon (for speed and best value). Investment has been made in staff training to better promote stock using imaginative displays and various special collections have been purchased in the last few years including our Books on Prescription collection, graphic novel collection and several Scottish literature promotions.

Inverclyde libraries run three book groups in Inverclyde and provide sets of books for a number of independent book groups. It also runs a stock suggestion service for library members to suggest books for us to buy, around 80% of which are subsequently bought. Finally, Inverclyde Libraries has recently been the recipient of a grant from the Scottish Government which will allow us to purchase evidence-based stock management software. This software will help to maximise the budget by monitoring procurement performance and identifying the correct location and rotation of stock, to meet each community library's needs. Stock improvement has only been possible due to the increased funding received in 2007. As 53% of survey respondents claim not to use their local library, it may well be that they have not visited the library since that time and therefore have not seen for themselves the improvements made to the service.

While we are delighted to see such a high percentage of respondents have visited the McLean Museum, clearly more needs to be done to let residents know about the events being held. To this end, a Marketing Working Group has recently been set up within the Museum. Options are limited however by budgetary constraints. As much use as possible is made of free advertising, such as the Telegraph and Inverclyde Now, and we advertise in a West of Scotland Gallery Guide. The Tourist Group also work hard to promote the museum to tourists on the cruise ships. The use of new media to reach a wider audience is also being explored. This includes one of the most comprehensive museum websites for a facility of its size in Scotland, a Flickr account for old photographs, and a blog to promote events and acquisitions.

5.3 Training and Employment

Employability and improving access to opportunities within the labour market is a key element of the SOA.

- The number of respondents who said that they had taken part in any training or learning experience in the last 2 years has remained fairly steady at 36%.
- There has been a shift in where the largest proportion of training or learning has taken place, from college / university in 2007 (39%), to the workplace in 2010 (36%). Work based training increased by 12% over the period.
- In both surveys, the number one aspect that would assist people to take up employment is 'wages above a certain level'. There has however been a significant increase in the number of respondents citing this as their main priority, from 17% in 2007 to 33% in 2010. Permanent contracts and local jobs also rated highly in both surveys.

Service Commentary

Inverclyde Council and its partners deliver significant and effective employability support to the Inverclyde economy, incorporating programmes through Fairer Scotland Funds, European Structural Funds, Future Jobs and mainstream Jobcentre plus activity. This represents a considerable input of resources to Inverclyde and a wide range of services. The Future Jobs programme has excelled, on schedule and projected to create 480 new jobs by March 2011. These posts have brought a range of community benefits, at a wage rate in excess of the minimum wage and including significant skills development.

This is against a backdrop of a severe economic downturn which affected the entire UK economy and there is evidence that the recovery in Scotland has been at a slower pace than other parts of the UK.

In 2008 at the point of entering the recession, Inverclyde was recording the lowest levels of JSA claimants in recent years. However, that figure has now reached pre-recession levels, with an average of just over 2000 claimants in any given period.

Figures for hardest to reach clients on other benefits remain higher than the national average and indeed reflect the changing job market with more applicants per available vacancy as laid off workers take up lower level posts.

The proportion of Inverclyde employees receiving job-related training has fallen to a level below the national averages since the start of the recession. Training is proportionately concentrated within managerial and professional occupations in both Inverclyde and Scotland as a whole.

Skills and qualification levels have a direct impact on an individual's likelihood of being in work and their earning potential. Individuals with at least some form of qualification are much more likely to be in work than those with no qualifications at all.

Inverclyde's low employment rate is therefore likely to be linked to the relatively high proportion of residents with no qualifications at all. Success in reducing the numbers with no qualifications would help increase the employment prospects and earning potential of many residents.

Relative to Scotland as a whole however, Inverclyde's school leavers are more likely to enter further or higher education or training, and less likely to go into employment or unemployment. School leavers in the area are less likely to enter unemployment than across Scotland as a whole.

The next year and beyond represent a considerable challenge for Inverclyde as the agencies and organisations involved in employability support are subject to reductions in public funding at exactly the point when they will be required to support individuals and the community through difficult economic and social circumstances.

5.4 Health

A series of questions were included about people's perception of their own health and wellbeing and the impact that this has on their quality of life.

- There has been a decrease in the number of respondents who feel that their health has been good over the last 12 months, from 59% in 2007 to 54% in 2010. The number of respondents who feel that they are in fairly good health however increased from 30% to 34%.
- The percentage of respondents that felt that their health was not good increased slightly from 11% in 2007 to 13% in 2010.
- The number of respondents who have a long term illness, health problem or disability that limits their daily activities or the work that they do increased from just over a quarter (27%) to just over a third (34%).
- An overwhelming 93% of respondents feel that excessive drinking of alcohol is a particular problem in Inverclyde.

Service Commentary

Inverclyde Council and its Alliance partners are committed to working together to tackle health inequalities. High level leadership for tackling health inequalities across the Alliance is being delivered through the SOA Health Inequalities Outcome Delivery Group. The stark health inequalities that exist between communities in Inverclyde are deep rooted and a long term approach is being taken to address this complex problem. Locally however, we see a strength and willingness in communities and individuals to turn the situation around and take the view across the Alliance that an 'asset-based' model, focussing on positives and opportunities, is key to addressing poor health outcomes, particularly for our most excluded and vulnerable residents.

A workshop on the policy, *Good Places: Better Health*, was held on 23 April 2010 to focus thinking amongst partners on the linkages between health outcomes, health inequalities, the environment and social regeneration. A sub-group was formed following this event and a bid will be submitted to the Public Health Research Institute in September 2010 to further develop local work in this area.

The SOA Health Inequalities Outcome Delivery Group is focussed on improving opportunities for 'active living' in Inverclyde, recognising the links between increased physical activity and improved physical and emotional health and wellbeing. An Active Living Strategy is being developed by a multi-agency sub group and an action plan has been established.

Positive steps have been taken to further reduce the harm caused by smoking and second hand smoke. Partners in the CHP, Inverclyde Council's Safer Communities and SPT are exploring opportunities to make the new Greenock Bus Station a smoke-free zone. Smoking continues to be the largest, most avoidable cause of death in Scotland, so any steps to reduce the numbers of people at risk of harm from smoking in our community are important.

Alcohol is a major contributor to some of Inverclyde's biggest social problems and is also a significant factor in poor health and inequality. Alliance partners recognise and share the concerns expressed by 93% of respondents who consider excessive alcohol consumption a particular problem in Inverclyde. The SOA Outcome for Alcohol is being delivered through the new Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP), which is a high level multi-agency group responsible for Inverclyde Alliance's response to the impact of alcohol and drugs in our communities. The following efforts to tackle the problem of alcohol have been made:

- An Alcohol and Drug Strategy 2010-2013 will be developed in light of the new delivery arrangements set out by the Scottish Government.
- The Wellpark Centre has been completed and provides a range of joint alcohol services in a new state of the art facility in Greenock town centre.
- The Young Persons Alcohol Team has exceeded its target to engage with 70% of young people within the 15% most deprived SIMD areas. Referrals to counselling services have also increased.

- Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABIs) are offered via GPs and other health service staff to anyone stating that their alcohol consumption is high. ABIs help to raise an individuals awareness of the harm their drinking can cause and helps begin to address this behaviour.

5.5 Carers

Increasing the percentage of carers who feel supported and capable to continue in their role is one of the targets in the Corporate Plan. Since the Quality of Life Survey in 2007, there has been an increase both in the number of carers and those being cared for.

- The number of respondents who stated that a member of their family provides care for them has increased from 8% in 2007 to 12% in 2010. This rose to 15% for respondents living in the worst 15% of datazones.
- There has also been a 3% increase (to 29%) in the numbers of respondents who provide care to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long term physical /mental ill health or disability, or problems related to old age.
- 54% of respondents said they received enough support in their role as carer, an increase of 3% since 2007. The remaining 46% however do not feel supported enough.

Service Commentary

It is pleasing to see that there has been an increase in respondents stating that they feel more supported in their caring role. Social Work Services has developed key questions to be captured within the assessment and review processes which will give us a better indication of carers feeling supported in their caring role. This should provide us with more accurate and continuous information in relation to those users and carers to whom we provide a service.

In addition to the above, employees have undergone extensive training in relation to raising awareness on Carers issues, with Carers themselves assisting in the training programmes. Social Work Services also provides extensive support to Carers regarding benefits advice. We commission Inverclyde Carers Centre to provide support to carers in terms of emotional support, sign posting regarding benefits initiatives and services, and Counselling.

Work is also carried out with partners and the voluntary sector to help identify Carers in the community and through GP surgeries. The Carers Centre has seen an increase of 23% of registered Carers (now 1838).

As there are likely to be more vulnerable people within the most deprived datazones who require both formal and informal care, the difference found is not surprising. Similarly, an increase in the numbers of people being cared for by family members is not surprising given the increase of older and more vulnerable populations and resource restrictions within services.

5.6 Sport and Leisure

Increasing the number of people participating in sport and recreation activity is also a target in the Corporate Plan. Panel members were asked about their level and type of participation in sport and leisure. Analysis of the survey results show that both participation and non-participation levels have remained virtually unchanged.

- The numbers of respondents that participate in any kind of sport or recreational activity at least once a week has remained fairly steady at just over half (52%).
- Just over a third (36%) of respondents do not participate in any kind of recreational activity.
- Lack of time, financial costs of participation, ill health, injury or disability and the timing of activities are the most common issues cited by respondents that prevent them from being more physically active.

Service Commentary

The Active Schools/Sports Development Team continues to offer school children the motivation and opportunities to adapt active, healthy lifestyles now and into adulthood. The Team are driving forward a range of planned activity and sport in both school and community settings. This is achieved by building a sustainable network of volunteers, coaches, leaders and teachers who in turn deliver extra-curricular physical activity and sport before, during and after school, as well as in the wider community. In providing these opportunities, we enable the creation of pathways from school to the wider community.

Specific focus on increasing participation amongst hard to reach groups is being addressed through targeted programmes for girls and young women, children and young people with disabilities or living in areas of socio-economic disadvantages or children who do not participate in physical activity and sport.

The Active Schools Team works in partnership with Inverclyde Leisure (IL). Contrary to the survey results which found little change in participation rates, attendances at IL facilities in 2009/10 increased by 47,547 on the previous year taking the aggregate amount beyond the £1 million mark for the second year in a row, representing a growth of 4.3%.

Other particularly successful initiatives include:

- A huge 74% rise in the number of school children using swimming pools since the launch of the Juvenile Free Swimming programme in June 2005. The Over 60's Free Swimming programme has also seen a marked increase in use of swimming pools since it was introduced in April 2008, with almost 29,000, using the service during the year.
- Membership of the Birkmyre Gym in Kilmacolm increased by 5,500 during 2009/10.
- The Kilmacolm Race Day, the Super Fit Challenge at Ravenscraig Sports Centre, the Triathlon at Gourrock Pool, and the 5k Fun Run at the Waterfront Leisure Complex each attracted a large number of participants and are now established as part of the IL events programme.
- Almost 5000 people, mostly children, participated in the Learn to Swim programme within the IL pools during the year. Another 880 young people took part in the Rookie Lifeguard programme.

5.7 The Environment

Survey results show that respondents' perception of the quality of the environment in their neighbourhood varies quite considerably. Those in Kilmacolm and Inverkip are most likely to state that it is very good, whilst those living in Port Glasgow, Greenock and Gourrock are less likely to state this. Overall:

- A significant number (71%) of respondents rated the quality of the environment of their neighbourhood as being good or very good. This represents a 6% increase on the previous survey results.
- Satisfaction levels (i.e. fairly or very satisfied) with quality and provision of recycling facilities has also remained consistently high at 79%.
- Satisfaction levels with the maintenance of roads and pavements increased slightly by 2% from 25% to 27%, however dissatisfaction levels also increased by 2% from 59% to 61%.

Service Commentary

Cleanliness standards throughout Inverclyde are continuously monitored and the results externally validated. There is an overall positive trend which is confirmed with the latest figures available from LEAMS, which show an improved performance from the previous year – up from an overall score of 68 to 76.

In terms of recycling, Inverclyde Council continues to increase its levels of recycling year on year, with the result that in 2008/09 we were the second most improved Council. From 2005/06 to 2009/10 the amount of waste recycled by Inverclyde residents increased by 37%. As a result of this, the amount of waste going to landfill annually has reduced from 42,300 tonnes in 2005/06 to 32,600 tonnes 2009/10, when we diverted almost 14,200 tonnes of recycled material.

The amount of the Biodegradable waste (the materials which breaks down and causes greenhouse gases), that was sent to landfill reduced from 24,338 tonnes in 2008/09 to 19,767 tonnes in 2009/10, an improvement of 4,571 tonnes, or approximately 19% in one year.

With regard to roads and pavements, in response to a particularly harsh winter, and in an effort to address some of the damage caused by the snow and frost, the Council has committed an extra £400,000 towards the maintenance of the roads infrastructure.

5.8 Council Services

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the services provided by the Council.

- Just over half (53%) of all respondents are fairly or very satisfied with the services provided by the Council, an improvement of 5% on the 2007 baseline figure.
- The percentage of respondents that believe services offer either fairly or very good value for money also increased by 5% from 40% to 45%.
- In contrast, a quarter of all respondents rated services as poor value for money, although this is an improvement on the previous survey response of 29%.
- The percentage of respondents that felt that the overall quality of customer service they received was fairly good or good has fallen from just under three quarters (74%) to just over two thirds (69%).
- The percentage of respondents that felt that they had received poor customer service increased from 15% in 2007 to 22% in 2010.
- 33% of respondents are either fairly or very satisfied with the way the Council takes residents views into account when making decisions, representing an overall improvement of 4%.
- 29% of respondents however are dissatisfied, although dissatisfaction levels have improved by 6% since 2007.
- More than 1 in 10 contacts (13%) to the Council are made via the website.
- 40% of respondents have considered leaving Inverclyde due to employment opportunities, crime, anti-social behaviour and poor selection of shops. This is a slight increase on the 2007 figure of 38%.

Service Commentary

Inverclyde Council recognises the need to provide high quality customer service to its residents. While it is disappointing that there has been a decrease in satisfaction levels since 2007, the Council has already acknowledged the need to improve the quality and consistency of customer service to our residents. It is worth noting however that evidence from national surveys suggests that the public generally has a poor perception of local government. Respondents may have based their answer to this question on their perception of local government and not their actual experience of using Council services. Other contributing factors include the fact that respondents may not realise what services the Council provides and may not use or come into contact with many Council services.

As part of the Council's strategic approach to delivering high quality customer service, it opened its first ever Customer Service Centre (CSC), in Wallace Place, in October 2009. The CSC provides a limited range of services at present including Housing Benefit, Council Tax, some Environmental services and the main Council switchboard. The CSC will be developed further to be the first point of contact for all services provided by the Council.

For our Customer Service employees, we have also invested in a professional training programme which includes the SQA approved Customer Service Professional qualifications.

It is pleasing to see that the recently improved Council website is now being used by 13% of respondents. We will continue to develop the range of information and self service options on our website. Our customer service strategy includes the use of multiple channels such as phone, email, SMS, website and in person to provide a choice to our residents in how they contact the Council.

This issue of tackling depopulation linked to employment opportunities is a long standing one. The SOA Depopulation Outcome Delivery Group has recognised that the wider travel to work area from Inverclyde to Renfrewshire and Greater Glasgow needs to form part of the employment opportunities for the residents of Inverclyde. Given the current economic climate however, this is a particularly challenging issue.

5.9 Housing

Questions on Housing were new for the 2010 Quality of Life Survey, therefore comparative information is not available. In response to questions on their housing circumstances:

- Just over half of respondents indicated that they pay a mortgage.
- 65% of respondents feel that their house is in a good neighbourhood.
- Slightly more than 1 in 5 (21%) respondents cited that their house is expensive to heat.
- Just over half (53%) of all respondents said they have no plans to move. Of those that would consider moving home, the top two preferences expressed are to move within the same town and to move away from Inverclyde, both 25%.

Service Commentary

The Citizens' Panel Survey has provided valuable information about Inverclyde's housing system and the attitudes of its residents. These results will help inform the preparation of next year's Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy (LHS).

A positive survey result, which may provide some support to the locality's efforts to halt its shrinking population, is that only 25% of respondents stated that they would leave Inverclyde if they were to move house. The rest said that they would either remain within the same street, neighbourhood or town they are in now. Furthermore, over half of respondents do not intend to move house again.

If more households do remain in their current homes for longer, many of them will face the financial challenge of maintaining dwellings over the longer term. Other responses to the survey confirm this as a potential issue because less than half of respondents describe their properties as easy to maintain.

It is surprising to find that one in seven of respondents living in the worst 15% datazones cited the cost of heating their home as a problem while one in four respondents elsewhere said their home was problematic because it is expensive to heat. Further study will allow us to confirm that, as this survey suggests, fuel poverty is more prevalent in the private sector and that Housing Association tenants have benefitted from the extensive modernisation works undertaken by their landlords.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Finance
None

6.2 Personnel
None

6.3 Legal
None

6.4 Equality and Diversity

The Citizens' Panel is representative of the population of Inverclyde in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 All services were fully consulted in the development of the Citizens' Panel survey and the results will be widely disseminated to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address issues of concern.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Citizens' Panel Summer 2010 Report.

Summary of Citizens' Panel Results - June 2010

Involvement in the Local Community

Twenty nine percent of respondents stated that they regularly attended events or activities in their local area either every couple of weeks or more often. A further 17% said that they attend events either every 3-4 weeks or every couple of months. Fifty five percent said that they did not regularly attend events or activities in their local area.

The most popular venue for attending events in the local area was a church (37%), this is followed by an other community (25%) and a community centre (20%).

Eighteen percent of respondents said that they spent time as a volunteer or organiser with charities, clubs or organisations. A further 14% of respondents said that they attended these organisations as a member. Sixty eight percent of respondents said that they did not volunteer or attend any organisations.

The number of people who state that they are a volunteer or organiser for local community/ representative groups was 10%. A further 8% of people said that they attend local community/representative groups as a member. Eighty two percent of respondents said that they do not attend any local community/representative groups.

The main reasons people gave for not taking part in community activities were, Lack of information about community activities (24%), Not interested (20%) and Timing of activities not suitable (17%).

Libraries and Museum

Just under half (47%) of all respondents said that they used their local library. For those people that used their local library, the most common method of transport was by car (45%), followed by walking (44%). For those people that do use a public library, the top 5 services that people used were, To borrow/return books (65%), To browse (13%), To borrow/return audio visual materials (8%), To study or work (8%) and To see exhibitions/participate in events (8%).

Respondents indicated that the main types of services that would encourage them to use libraries more often would be Longer opening hours (41%), Different range of books/materials (29%) and Increased programme of talks/events (21%).

Eighty percent of all respondents had visited the McLean Museum and Art Gallery. For those people that had visited the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, the main reason was to visit the collections (74%), this is followed by 49% who stated it was to visit special exhibitions.

In contrast to those people who visit the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, the reasons why people don't visit the gallery include, not being aware of what is on (56%) and not interested (33%).

In keeping with the response to the previous question, the largest number of people (64%) stated that information about what is on in the gallery would encourage them to visit the McLean Museum and Art Gallery. This is followed by receiving information about museum events and exhibitions by email (29%) and more activities for children and adults (19%).

Training and Employment

Just over a third of all respondents (36%) said they had taken part in any training or learning experience in the last 2 years. For the largest number of people (36%), they undertook a training or learning experience at work. This is followed by college/university (33%) and a local library (12%).

Fifty eight percent of all respondents said that they would be interested in taking part in any training or learning opportunities in the future. Just under half (49%) of respondents said that they would prefer to learn at a college/university, this is followed by a local library (37%) and at home (distance learning) (37%).

Developments that would encourage people to take part in training or learning opportunities included, Learning/training opportunities in the evenings (31%), Job opportunities at the end of training (30%) and Taster sessions (23%).

Just over a third of people who responded to the questionnaire (38%), indicated that they were retired, a further 50% of respondents stated that they worked either full time, part time or self employed.

The majority of people who have a job said that they normally travelled to work in a car as a driver (71%), this is followed by bus (8%) and walk (7%). Fifty four percent of respondents said that they travelled less than 5 miles to work.

When asked, "How far are you willing to travel to work or education", forty four percent of respondents said that they would be willing to travel more than 15 miles. The top 5 aspects that would assist people to take up employment are, Wages above a certain level (33%), Permanent contract (30%), Local job (27%), Learning new skills (23%) and Full time hours (21%).

Forty four percent of respondents said that they would use the internet for information or advice on employment, training or learning. A further 41% said they would contact Job Centre Plus and 17% would contact a local College.

The most popular organisation that people stated they would contact for information or assistance with funding if they were to start their own business were, Business Gateway (51%), Scottish Enterprise (42%), Bank (38%), Financial Adviser (28%) and Lawyer (19%).

Health

Fifty four percent of respondents said that over the last 12 months their health on the whole has been good, with a further 34% stating that it has been fairly good. Thirteen percent of all respondents said that their health was not good.

The most important factors that people stated would help them maintain good physical health and well being are, Good diet (78%), Friends and good family relationships (74%), Physical activity/exercise (71%), Financial security/income (62%) and A safe and pleasant community in which to live (53%).

Just over a third (34%) of all respondents said that they have a long term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or work that you can do.

Just over a third (38%) of all respondents said that they had accomplished less than they would like or had accomplished less that they would have liked while participating in sport and leisure activity. A further 19% said they were limited in the kind of work or other activities.

Ninety three percent of respondents indicated that they thought that excessive drinking of alcohol is a particular problem in Inverclyde.

Carers

Twelve percent of respondents stated that a member of their family provides personal care for them. This rose to 15% for respondents living in the worst 15% datazones and dropped to 11% for people in the rest of Inverclyde.

Just over a quarter (29%) of all respondents said that they looked after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long term physical or mental ill health or disability, or problems related to old age. Just over half (54%) of respondents who cared for a relative said that they received enough support in their role as a carer, the remaining 46% did not.

The main types of support that people would benefit from as a carer were, Awareness to entitlement to range of benefits (56%), Accessing relevant information regarding services, carers rights, advocacy (34%), Assistance with financial related issues (33%), Access to health checks (32%) and Stress management (32%).

Sport and Leisure

Just over half (52%) of all respondents said that they regularly participate in any kind of sport or recreational activity, at least once a week. Just over a third (36%) of respondents said that they do not participate in any kind of sport or recreational activity. The main types of sports, leisure or recreational activities that people participate in included Walking, Gardening, Swimming, Gym and Golf.

Respondents were asked to state how important a variety of issues were in preventing them from being more physically active. Overall, the top three issues that people stated were very or fairly important were, Lack of time due to other commitments (55%), Financial costs of participating in these activities (44%) and Timing of activities not suitable (43%).

The Environment

Seventy one percent of all respondents said that they would rate the quality of the environment of their neighbourhood as being good or very good. Seventy nine percent of respondents said that they were either fairly or very satisfied with the quality and provision of recycling facilities in their neighbourhood. Only 11% of respondents said that they were dissatisfied.

Respondents indicated that the main things that would encourage them to recycle more were, More kerbside collections (39%), Provision of containers (35%) and More information on facilities (16%).

Just over a quarter (27%) of respondents said that they were either fairly or very satisfied with the maintenance of roads and pavements in their neighbourhood. Sixty one percent of respondents in contrast were either fairly or very dissatisfied.

Council Services

Just over half (53%) of all respondents said that they were either fairly or very satisfied with the services provided by Inverclyde Council. Fifteen percent said that they were either fairly or very dissatisfied.

Forty five percent of respondents said that they believed the services to be either fairly or very good value for money. In contrast, 25% thought the services to be poor value for money and 30% thought they were neither good nor poor.

Forty nine percent of respondents said that they had contacted Inverclyde Council in the last 12 months. The most common means by which people contacted the Council was by phone (80%), this is followed by going in

person to a Council office (21%) and by letter (12%). Contacting the Council via the website accounted for 13% of contacts.

The main reasons people contacted the Council were, To make an enquiry (34%), To request action (30%), To request a service (24%), To make a complaint about a service (15%) and To get information or advice about a service (11%).

Just over two thirds (69%) of all respondents said that the overall quality of customer service they received was either fairly or very good. Twenty two percent of respondents thought that the customer service was poor and 9% said neither/nor.

Fifty eight percent of respondents said that they would like to contact the Council by phone in the future. This is followed by 12% who said by going in person to a Council office. Overall, 21% of respondents said that they would want to contact the Council by email or through the website.

Most people (68%) said that they would be most likely to contact the Council during the daytime (9am-5pm) a further 24% would be most likely to do so on a Saturday morning (9am-12pm). The evening is the next most popular time to contact the Council, 18% stated late evening (6pm-8pm) and 11% stated early evening (5pm-6pm)

Thirty three percent of respondents said that they were either fairly or very satisfied with the way Inverclyde Council takes residents views into account when making decisions that affect this area. Twenty nine percent said that they are dissatisfied and 38% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Forty percent of all respondents said that they had considered leaving Inverclyde and living somewhere else.

The main reasons people cited for considering leaving Inverclyde and living somewhere else included, Employment opportunities, Crime and anti social behaviour and Poor selection of shops.

The types of things that people stated would encourage them to stay in Inverclyde include, Improvements to shops and leisure facilities, More jobs, Better housing, Address crime and antisocial behaviour and A nicer environment, clean surroundings.

Just under two thirds (64%) of all respondents said that they agree or strongly agree that by working together; local people can influence decisions that affect their local area. A further 47% agree with the statement, 'You can influence decisions affecting your local area'.

Twenty six percent of respondents said that they had visited the main council buildings within the last 12 months. For those people who had visited the main Council buildings 83% said that they found it fairly or very easy to access the Council buildings. Only 5% said that they found access to the Council buildings either fairly or very difficult. The types of reasons people gave for finding Council buildings difficult to access included, entrances not clearly signposted, poor parking, mobility issues and signage.

Housing

Just over half (56%) of all respondents indicated that they pay a mortgage. A further 31% said that they pay nothing for their accommodation and 15% pay rent to a housing association.

The top three aspects of peoples housing that respondents liked most were, It is in a good neighbourhood (65%), It is just the right size (54%) and It is well located for work, schools, shops etc (50%).

Respondents indicated that the main problems they experience with their house were, It is expensive to heat (21%), It needs to be repaired or modernised (17%), The neighbourhood is a cause for concern (14%), It is too small (6%) and It is too large (5%)

If people were to move, only 6% of respondents said that they would prefer to move within the same street. With regard to moving elsewhere, there is a fairly even split across the other 4 options of within the same neighbourhood, within the same town, within Inverclyde and away from Inverclyde.

Just over half (53%) of all respondents said that they have no plans to move. Twenty six percent of respondents said that if they were to move house it would be in the next 5 years, a further 11% said that it would be in the next 10 years or more and 9% said that it would be in the next year.

APPENDIX 2

Indicator	2007	2010	Movement
% of respondents that regularly attend events or activities in their local area	31%	29%	-2%
% of respondents that act as a volunteer or organiser for local community or representative groups	9%	10%	+1%
% of respondents that use their local library	54%	47%	-7%
% of respondents that have taken part in any training or learning experience in the last 2 years	37%	36%	-1%
% of respondents who stated that wages above a certain level would help them take up employment	17%	33%	+16%
% of respondents who stated that overall the past 12 months their health has been:			
- Good	59%	54%	-5%
- Fairly good	30%	34%	+4%
- Not good	11%	13%	+2%
% of respondents who think that excessive drinking of alcohol is a particular problem in Inverclyde	92%	93%	+1%
% of respondents who receive personal care from a family member	8%	12%	+4%
% of respondent who provide care to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long term physical or mental ill health or disability, or problems related to age	26%	29%	+3%
% of respondents who feel that they receive enough support in their role as carer	51%	54%	+3%
% of respondents that regularly participate in sport or recreational activity at least once a week	53%	52%	-1%
% of respondents who do not participate in sport or recreational activity	34%	36%	+2%
% of respondents that rate the quality of their environment as good or very good	65%	71%	+6%
% of respondents that are very or fairly satisfied with the services provided by Inverclyde Council	48%	53%	+5%
% of respondents who think that services represent value for money:			
- Fairly or very good	40%	45%	+5%
- Fairly or very poor	29%	25%	-4%
% of respondents who rated the quality of customer services as:			
- Good or fairly good	75%	69%	-6%
- Fairly or very poor	15%	22%	7%
% of respondents that are:			
- satisfied	29%	33%	+4%
- dissatisfied	35%	29%	-6%
with the way Inverclyde Council takes residents views into account when making decisions			
% of respondents who have considered leaving Inverclyde	38%	40%	+2%