

**Report To: Policy and Resources Committee**

**Date: 19 June 2012**

**Report By: Corporate Director,  
Education, Communities and  
Organisational Development**

**Report No: PR061/12/AH/LF**

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**Subject: Results from Winter 2012 Citizens' Panel Survey**

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## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with details of the headline results from the Winter 2012 Citizens' Panel Survey.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

2.1 The Winter 2012 Citizens' Panel survey focused on the following topics:

- Cleaner, Greener, Safer and Stronger Winter campaign
- Recycling
- Town Centre Parking Strategy
- Managing your Money
- Financial Information and Advice

2.2 A total of 643 Panel members completed and returned the Winter 2012 questionnaire. This is a response rate of 64% which is very good for this type of consultation. The previous survey carried out in Autumn 2011 achieved a response rate of 61%. It is very encouraging that the response rate remains high indicating that members of the Citizens' Panel are still enthusiastic and keen to take part.

2.3 The results from the questionnaire were mainly very positive.

- 96% of Panel members said they liked the design of the leaflet we used to promote the 2011 Cleaner, Greener, Safer and Stronger Winter campaign.
- Satisfaction with the recycling facilities available in Inverclyde was very high with 81% expressing their satisfaction.
- The majority of respondents (81%) said that they agree or strongly agree with the introduction of an inner town centre area for short stay parking that will be free of charge.

2.4 There were a number of issues that emerged from the survey. For example:

- Members of the Citizen's Panel said that they would like to be able to recycle glass (76%), food waste (53%) and textiles (49%) at the kerbside.
- Respondents told us that they would like us to free up parking in Greenock town centre for shoppers. 60% of Panel members said they would visit the shops if it was easier to get a parking space.
- There is poor awareness of the services provided by the local Credit Union in Inverclyde. 64% of Panel members said they were not aware of it.

2.5 A summary of the results from the Winter 2012 survey is contained within Appendix 1.

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2.6 This report only provides details of the headline results from the survey. It highlights some of the positive results that have emerged and also areas where further action will be required. Where this is the case, action will be taken by the appropriate Council services.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- a. Note the content of this report.
- b. Agree that the feedback from the Citizens' Panel is taken on board by the appropriate services and used to improve service delivery.

**Albert Henderson**

**Corporate Director**

**Education, Communities and Organisational Development**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The eleventh Citizens' Panel survey was carried out in Winter 2012 and focused on the following topics:

- Cleaner, Greener, Safer and Stronger Winter campaign
- Recycling
- Town Centre Parking Strategy
- Managing your Money
- Financial Information and Advice

4.2 The Citizens' Panel comprises 1,000 members. A total of 643 Panel members completed and returned the Winter 2012 questionnaire. This is a response rate of 64% which is very good for this type of consultation. The previous survey carried out in Autumn 2011 achieved a response rate of 61%.

4.3 A number of very positive results emerged from the Winter 2012 survey. For example:

- 96% of Panel members said they liked the design of the leaflet we used to promote the 2011 Cleaner, Greener, Safer and Stronger Winter campaign.
- Satisfaction with the recycling facilities available in Inverclyde was very high with 81% expressing their satisfaction.
- Just over half (56%) of all respondents said that they believe implementing a parking system to manage parking will benefit Greenock town centre.
- The majority of respondents (81%) said that they agree or strongly agree with the introduction of an inner town centre area for short stay parking that will be free of charge.
- Just over two thirds (69%) of all respondents said they think they are managing their money well.

4.4 The results from the Winter survey also highlighted areas where we could improve. Please note that in some of these areas work is already underway to address some of the issues that have been raised by the Citizens' Panel and further detail is contained within section 5.0.

- Members of the Citizen's Panel said that they would like to be able to recycle glass (76%), food waste (53%) and textiles (49%) at the kerbside.
- Respondents told us that they would like us to free up parking in Greenock town centre for shoppers. 60% of Panel members said they would visit the shops if it was easier to get a parking space.
- There is poor awareness of the services provided by the local Credit Union in Inverclyde. 64% of Panel members said they were not aware of it.
- Approximately one third of Panel members told us that they are not confident they are receiving all the tax or welfare benefits that they might be entitled to.
- Respondents told us that they would like information about protecting homes from frozen pipes, information from the Police and information from Strathclyde Fire and Rescue to be included in the Council's Cleaner, Greener, Safer and Stronger Winter campaign.

## **5.0 KEY ISSUES – WINTER 2012 SURVEY**

### **5.1 Cleaner, Greener, Safer and Stronger Winter Campaign**

The Council's Cleaner, Greener, Safer and Stronger Winter Campaign runs throughout December each year and aims to help local people stay safe and help the environment during the holiday period. Winter Campaign leaflets include the festive bin collection arrangements, details of gritting routes and information on recycling at Christmas and New Year.

Members of the Citizens' Panel were asked for feedback on the Winter Campaign as part of an evaluation that is being carried out to establish how useful local residents find the Campaign's messages and how the 2012 campaign could be improved.

- A large number of Panel members said they had seen or heard about the Winter campaign through news items in the local press (40%), the winter campaign leaflets (33%), the Council newspaper In View (22%), Public Notices (13%) and the Council's web site (13%).
- The majority of Panel members (72%) said that they would be interested in receiving information about future winter campaigns. E-mail, Facebook and text messages were the most popular methods of receiving information.
- The top three types of information that people stated they would find it useful to find out about over the festive period are "festive bin collection arrangements" (96%), "information on recycling at Christmas and New Year" (86%) and "recycling centre opening hours" (82%).
- Respondents also told us that they would be interested in receiving information about "protecting homes from frozen pipes", "information from the Police" and information from "Strathclyde Fire and Rescue".

#### **Service Commentary**

The feedback from members of the Citizens' Panel will be used to improve the 2012 campaign. We plan to review the content of the 2012 leaflet and the views of the Citizens' Panel will be taken into account. In addition, we will also carry out a review of the methods that we use to promote the campaign.

### **5.2 Recycling**

- Glass, food waste and textiles were the main materials that members of the Panel said they would like to be able to recycle at the kerbside.
- Respondents told us that "lack of kerbside recycling facilities" and "lack of information about what can be recycled in Inverclyde" are the main barriers that stop them from recycling.
- The majority of respondents (85%) said they have become more aware of the household waste that they produce and 63% said they have taken steps to reduce the amount of waste they produce at home.
- 79% of Panel members have visited a recycling centre in the last six months and the top 3 items that people have taken to a recycling centre are textiles, small electrical items and television and computer monitors.
- Overall, 81% of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the facilities

available in Inverclyde for recycling.

### **Service Commentary**

A kerbside food waste collection service will be introduced during 2012/13. Significant progress has already been made with the procurement of containers, vehicles and liners. In addition, tenders have been issued for the processing of food waste and several expressions of interest have been received.

Discussions are ongoing with Zero Waste Scotland regarding the development of a glass collection service and the extension of recycling services across Inverclyde.

We have developed a communication plan to encourage Inverclyde residents to recycle and we will use the feedback from members of the Citizens' Panel to improve our education and awareness raising activities.

### **5.3 Town Centre Parking Strategy**

Members of the Citizens' Panel were asked for their views on the proposed parking system that has been developed for Greenock Town Centre.

- Just over half of all respondents (56%) believe that implementing a parking system will benefit Greenock town centre. 27% said they didn't believe it will benefit the town centre and 17% didn't have any opinion.
- The majority of Panel members (81%) agree with the introduction of an inner town centre area for short stay parking that will be free of charge. 13% disagreed and 7% didn't have any opinion.
- 57% of panel members agree with the introduction of an outer town centre area for long stay parking. 28% disagreed and 15% had no opinion.
- Respondents told us that more car parks, encouraging workers to park further away in order to free up parking in the inner town centre for shoppers and better enforcement of parking rules would improve their experience in Greenock town centre.
- Almost two thirds of Panel members (60%) said that if it was easier to get a parking space in Greenock town centre it would encourage them to visit the shops.

### **Service Commentary**

The information gained from this consultation will be used in the future development of the strategy. A draft business case has been prepared and further work is being undertaken. A report will be sent to the Environment & Regeneration Committee on 7 June to provide an update on the strategy and outline the way forward.

### **5.4 Managing your Money**

A set of questions about Managing your Money and Financial Information and Advice were asked in 2009. These questions were repeated in the Winter 2012 survey and below are the key results:

- In 2009 19% of Panel members said that they had been affected a little by the credit crunch and this rose to 50% in 2012. The top two concerns about the credit crunch in 2009 were paying utility bills and rising food costs. These remained the top two concerns in 2012.

- In 2009 30% of respondents thought that they would be mostly fine, even through the recession. By 2012, this had decreased to 27%. However, the percentage of Panel members who told us that a few minor tweaks should see them through has increased from 8% in 2009 to 23% in 2012.
- The percentage of Panel members who said they were managing their money well in 2009 was 67% and this increased to 69% in 2012. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of people who are just getting by, this increased from 6% in 2009 to 27% in 2012. However, there has been a decrease in the number of people who are getting into difficulties. This decreased from 25% in 2009 to 3% in 2012.
- We asked members of the Panel in both 2009 and 2012 how easy they find it to manage their fuel bills and their responses have more or less stayed the same. In 2009, 10% said they found it very easy, 54% quite easy and 28% said they were having some difficulty. In 2012, 11% said they find it very easy, 55% quite easy and 30% said they were having some difficulty.
- The top three issues that have resulted in members of the Panel experiencing financial difficulties have not changed between 2009 and 2012. Unemployment or redundancy, income not being enough to cover all expenses, ill health/disabilities and retirement were the top four answers in both 2009 and 2012.

### **Service commentary**

A new Financial Inclusion Strategy for 2012-17 was approved by the Alliance Board on 26 March 2012.

The draft Financial Inclusion Strategy sets out a clear vision:

We will work in partnership to ensure that all residents of Inverclyde are:

- Able to maximise their money;
- Able to access appropriate financial services and products, enabling them to manage their money on a day to day basis;
- Able to plan for the future and deal effectively with unexpected financial pressures; and
- Encouraged and supported to achieve their potential and make a positive contribution to the social and economic life of the area.

In order to help deliver this vision, the Strategy sets out six outcomes:

- Income is maximised and protected
- Problem Debt is better managed
- Access is increased to appropriate financial services
- Fuel poverty and inability to afford warmth is tackled
- Financial Capability is increased
- The Financial Inclusion Partnership is ready to respond to the impact of Welfare Reform

Work is now ongoing to finalise the action plan for the strategy and the results from the Citizens' Panel will be used to inform the development of the action plan.

The SOA Outcome Delivery Group for Social Regeneration (SOA 2) is responsible for financial inclusion and there is an action in their Outcome Delivery Plan to increase levels of financial inclusion in Inverclyde. Progress made in achieving this is reported to the SOA Programme Board and Alliance Board on a quarterly basis.

## 5.5 Financial Information and Advice

- The percentage of Panel members who have sought advice about money matters has increased between 2009 and 2012. The percentage of respondents who sought financial advice from a bank increased from 16% to 21%. The percentage of respondents who consulted a financial advisor increased from 12% to 16% and the percentage of people who went to a building society increased from 7% to 11%.
- In 2009 members of the Panel told us that they would be most interested in advice on welfare benefits and more information about financial matters. In 2012 they told us they would be interested in advice about how to reduce household energy bills and advice on welfare benefits.
- There has been a slight increase in the percentage of people who are not confident they are receiving all the different tax or welfare benefits that they might be entitled to. It increased from 30% in 2009 to 32% in 2012.
- The majority of Panel members are not aware of the local Credit Unions in Inverclyde. In 2009, 53% said they were not aware of them and this rose to 64% in 2012.
- In the 2012 survey we asked a new question about what method people would prefer to use to contact an organisation regarding their money. 75% said on a face to face basis, 14% by telephone, 7% by e-mail and 4% said web based.

### Service Commentary

A review was commissioned by the Council of all aspects of financial advice and support in Inverclyde in October 2011 following discussions on the future allocation of funding from the Regeneration Fund and the potential implications for service delivery.

As a result of the Review the following recommendations were made:

- **Establish Strategic Management** - The establishment of the Financial Inclusion Partnership and the approval of a new Financial Inclusion Strategy will help facilitate the introduction of a coherent approach to strategic planning and performance management.
- **Improving Operational Management** - It is recommended the proposal to establish a single Advice Team which will provide welfare benefits; money/debt advice and welfare rights representation reporting to the Service Manager Health Improvement, Inequalities and Personalisation, is approved.
- **Enhancing Operational Delivery** - To support the work of the Partnership and delivery of the Strategy it is proposed that a pipeline model is developed and implemented on a phased basis in 2012/2013.
- **Effective Resource Deployment** - In the medium term it would make sense to utilise all of the resources deployed to support financial advice and support services more effectively through the creation of a single Financial Inclusion Budget that could be directed by the Partnership to deliver the pipeline model and a new financial education programme.

The feedback from members of the Citizens' Panel will be used to inform further development work that will be carried out in order to implement the recommendations outlined above.

## **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 Winter 2012 Survey



**Winter 2012 Survey Responses****Cleaner, Greener, Safer and Stronger Winter Campaign**

The main way in which people have seen or heard about the winter campaign was through news items in the local press, 40% stating this. This is followed by winter campaign leaflets (33%), Council newspaper 'In View' (22%), Public Notices (13%) and Council website (13%).

Seventy two percent of all respondents said that they would be interested in receiving information about future winter campaigns. The main way in which people would be interested in receiving information is by email (61%), followed by Facebook (20%) and Text (18%).

The top 3 types of information that people stated they would find it useful to find out about over the festive period are "Festive bin collection arrangements" (96%), "Information on recycling at Christmas and New Year" (86%) and "Recycling centre opening hours" (82%).

In addition to the information already contained in the Winter campaign leaflet, respondents were also asked to consider if any other types of information would be useful to them. The main additional types of information that people thought would be useful were "Protecting homes from frozen pipes" (71%), "Information from the Police" (70%) and "Information from Strathclyde Fire and Rescue" (62%).

A copy of the Winter 2011 leaflet was enclosed with the questionnaire. Ninety six percent of respondents said that they liked the design of the leaflet. Ninety two percent of respondents thought that the size of the text was just right, 1% thought it was too small and 7% had no opinion.

When asked if they would prefer photographs to be used rather than the kind of images used in this years leaflet, 19% of respondents said yes. Ninety nine percent of respondents said that they found the leaflet either very or quite easy to read and understand. Only 1% said that they found it difficult to read.

In addition to finding the leaflet easy to read and understand, 90% of respondents said that they found it either very or quite useful. Seven percent of respondents said it was neither useful nor not useful and 4% said it was not useful.

**Recycling**

The main additional material that respondents would like to recycle from the kerbside is glass (76%). This is followed by food waste (53%) and textiles (49%).

The main barriers preventing people from recycling are "lack of kerbside recycling facilities" (23%) and "lack of information about what can be recycled in Inverclyde" (20%).

Fifty percent of respondents said that additional recycling facilities would encourage them to recycle more. Twenty eight percent said that "more information on Inverclyde's recycling facilities would encourage them and 24% said "easier access to recycling centres and neighbourhood recycling points".

Eighty five percent of respondents said that they have become more aware of the household waste that they produce. Sixty three percent of respondents said that they have taken steps to reduce the amount of waste they produce at home. The main place that respondents prefer to take any additional materials they have for recycling is the neighbourhood recycling points (50%). A further 35% said both the neighbourhood recycling points and the local supermarket and 16% said the local supermarket.

Ninety one percent of respondents said that they are aware that there is no charge to householders who use the facilities at the Council's recycling centres. Seventy nine percent of respondents said that they have

visited a recycling centre in the past 6 months. The top 3 items that people have taken to a recycling centre were textiles (58%), small electrical items (kettles, irons, games consoles) (55%) and televisions and computer monitors (43%).

Respondents were informed that “Contamination in blue bins can pose a health and safety risk to staff and damage machinery”. They were then asked what they consider as being contamination in the blue bin. The main types of responses people gave were the wrong type of items in the recycling bin and uncleaned food jars and tins or other food stuffs.

Twenty five percent of respondents said that they knew householders can have an additional blue bin free of charge.

Overall, 81% of respondents said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the facilities available in Inverclyde for recycling. A further 13% said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 5% said they were dissatisfied.

### **Town Centre Parking Strategy**

Eight percent of respondents said that they are a resident within the area of the plan, with a further 72% indicating that they use the area on the plan for shopping, business or leisure.

When asked “How easy is it for you to find a parking space in the area on the plan at a place and time to suit you”, 13% said that it was Easy – I can usually find a suitable place straight away. A further 45% said it was Moderate - it usually takes me a few minutes to find a suitable space, or I have to park a little further away than I would like and 43% said it was Difficult - it usually takes me a significant time to find a suitable space, or I have to park much further away than I would like.

Just under two thirds of all respondents (60%) said that they think there is a parking problem in the area on the plan. Eighteen percent of respondents said that there is not a parking problem and 22% don't know/ have no opinion.

Just over half (56%) of all respondents said that they believe that implementing a parking system to manage parking will benefit the town centre. Twenty seven percent said they do not believe a parking system will benefit the town centre and 17% don't know/ have no opinion.

The majority of respondents (81%) said that they agree or strongly agree with the introduction of an inner town centre area for short stay parking that will be free of charge. Thirteen percent of people disagree with this and 7% neither agree nor disagree.

Fifty seven percent of respondents said that they agree with the introduction of an outer town centre area for long stay parking. Twenty eight percent disagree with this and 15% neither agree nor disagree.

The top three aspects that people said would improve their parking experience in Greenock town centre were “More car parks” (62%), “Encouraging workers to park further away and free up parking in the inner town centre for shoppers” (48%) and “Better enforcement of parking rules (parking attendants)” (36%).

Sixty nine percent of respondents stated that they come into Greenock town centre to visit the shops at least once a week or more often. A further 20% said that they come into Greenock once or a couple of times per month. The remaining 9% said that they rarely or never come into Greenock to visit the shops.

Almost two thirds of respondents (60%), said that if it was easier to get a parking space in Greenock Town Centre it would encourage them to visit the shops. Twenty seven percent said that it would not. The remaining 13% said don't know.

## **Managing your Money**

Just under a quarter (24%) of all respondents said that they have been significantly affected by the credit crunch. The two main factors that concern respondents most about the credit crunch are paying utility bills (36%) and rising food costs (27%).

Fifty percent of all respondents said that they would be “mostly fine, even through the recession” (27%) or “A few minor tweaks should see us through” (23%). A further 20% said it’ll be tough but we should survive.

At the other end of the scale, 20% of respondents said “it would need to be extreme before we felt it” (14%) and “No problems, no matter what” (6%). Ten percent of respondents indicated that they are being more seriously affected by the credit crunch, stating that it will be a great struggle even with cutbacks or worse.

Just over half (53%) of all respondents said that money worries do not impact upon their mental health at all. Just over two thirds (69%) of all respondents said that they think they are managing their money well.

Twenty seven percent of respondents overall feel they are just getting by, 36% “Worst 15% of datazones” and 23% “Rest of Inverclyde”. Of the remaining respondents 3% said they were getting into difficulties and 1% don’t know.

Ninety eight percent of respondents said that they have a bank account.

Two thirds (66%) of all respondents said that it was easy or very easy for them to manage their fuel bills at the moment. Thirty four percent of respondents said that it was difficult or very difficult to manage their fuel bills. The vast majority of respondents (83%) said that they paid their fuel bills by direct debit/standing order.

Overall, 94% of respondents said that they have never spent periods of time without access to gas or electricity, including times without a powercard.

Most people (81%) pay their other bills by direct debit/standing orders. Twenty two percent pay by cash and 15% by cheque.

The top three issues that have resulted in financial difficulties for people are “Unemployment, redundancy, short time working” (15%), “Income is not enough to cover all expenses” (15%) and “Retirement” (12%).

The debts that people consider to be the most important to deal with are Council tax (40%), credit card (35%), utilities (31%) and mortgage arrears (25%).

## **Financial Information and Advice**

Half of all respondents (50%) said that they not been anywhere for advice about money matters in the past couple of years. Twenty one percent of people had been to the bank, 16% to a financial advisor and 11% to a building society.

The two main aspects with regard to financial services that people would be interested in are measures to reduce household energy bills (25%) and advice on welfare benefits.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (98%) said that they were aware of how much they owe to different creditors and who they owe it to. In addition to knowing what they owe and who they owe it to, 98% are also aware of the consequences of not paying different debts.

Just over two thirds of all respondents (68%) said that they are very or quite confident that they are receiving all the different tax or welfare benefits that they might be entitled to. The remaining 32% said that they are

not very or not at all confident that they are receiving all the different tax or welfare benefits that they might be entitled to.

Just over a third (37%) of respondents said that they are either very or quite aware of the local Credit Union in Inverclyde. In contrast (64%) said that they were either not very or not at all aware of the local Credit Union.

The majority of people stated that if they had to contact an organisation for help regarding their money they would prefer to do so on a face to face basis (75%). This is followed by telephone (14%), email (7%) and web based (4%).