

Report To: Policy and Resources Committee

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

Report No: PR/097/13/AH/KMC

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Subject: Results from Summer 2013 Citizens' Panel Survey

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 Summer 2013 Citizens' Panel Survey.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 The survey focused on the following areas:

- Customer Service Centre
- Adult Protection
- Child Protection

2.2 A total of 679 Panel members completed and returned the Summer 2013 questionnaire. This is a response rate of 68% which is very good for this type of consultation. The previous survey, which was carried out in Autumn 2012, achieved a response rate of 63%. 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 A number of the questions included in the survey were originally asked in the Citizens' Panel Surveys that were carried out in 2011. Questions are repeated every two years to ascertain whether improvements have been achieved. The 2013 Survey also included a number of new questions around the Customer Service Centre.

2.4 The majority of the questions in the summer 2013 survey related to the Customer Service Centre and a number of very positive results emerged, for example:

- The top aspects that respondents thought were good or very good were, 'level of courtesy received' (90%, an increase of 6% from 2011), 'helpfulness of staff' (89%, an increase of 13% from 2011), 'knowledge of staff' (89%, an increase of 21% from 2011) and 'professionalism of staff' (82%, an increase of 10% from 2011).
- 94% of respondents stated that they received a friendly, courteous and helpful service when contacting the Council whilst 85% of respondents said that the level of customer service provided by the Council had met or exceeded their expectations. These questions were not asked in the 2011 Citizens' Panel Survey.

2.5 The results from the summer survey also highlighted areas where we could improve. Where people said that their experience of contacting the Customer Service Centre was poor, the main reasons for this were 'opportunity to provide feedback about services' (22%) and 'follow up'(18%). The main areas of dissatisfaction expressed were 'privacy of consultation' (18%), 'waiting time at the office' (14%) and 'availability of members of staff' (12%).

- 2.6 The remaining questions focused on Adult and Child Protection services. 29% of respondents said that they were aware that the Council has new powers to protect adults and 15% of respondents said that they had seen the campaigns regarding adult protection. In 2011, 19% of respondents were aware of the Council's powers to protect adults and 14% of respondents had seen the campaigns regarding adult protection.
- 2.7 The top two factors that were regarded as being very important in protecting children and young people from neglect are 'professionals sharing information with each other to help protect children from abuse or neglect' (90%) and 'professionals working together to support children and families' (87%). Similar views were expressed in 2011.
- 2.8 A summary of the results from the summer 2013 survey is contained in Appendix 1.
- 2.9 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. The results have been shared with the appropriate services and where an area for improvement has been identified, action will be taken by the appropriate Council service.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a. Notes the content of this report.
 - b. Agrees that the feedback from the Summer 2013 Citizens' Panel Survey is used to inform the Council's approach to the continued development of the Customer Service Centre and adult and child protection.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Citizens' Panel comprises 1,000 members who are representative of the population of Inverclyde based on variables such as age, gender and geographic area.
- 4.2 The latest Citizens' Panel survey was carried out over the period June / July 2013. The survey covered a number of topics including customer service. Members of the Citizens' Panel were asked to provide feedback on their experience of using the Customer Service Centre and make suggestions regarding how we could improve our approach to customer service.
- 4.3 The questionnaire also contained questions about Adult and Child Protection. The purpose of these questions was to gauge awareness around the Council's new powers to protect adults and to find out what members of the Citizens' Panel thought about the services we provide to protect children.
- 4.4 A total of 679 Panel members completed and returned the questionnaire. This is a response rate of 68% which is very good for this type of consultation.

5.0 KEY ISSUES – SUMMER 2013 SURVEY

5.1 Customer Service Centre

- 5.2
- 44% of respondents in the 2013 survey said they had contacted the Customer Service Centre within the previous 12 months compared to 26% of respondents in 2011. The most common reason for getting in touch was to discuss Council Tax payments and enquiries, streets, road repairs and enquiries/ street lighting and refuse collection enquiries.
 - The top aspects that respondents thought were good or very good were, 'level of courtesy received' (90%, an increase of 6% from 2011), 'helpfulness of staff' (89%, an increase of 13% from 2011), 'knowledge of staff' (89%, an increase of 21% from 2011) and 'professionalism of staff' (82%, an increase of 10% from 2011).
 - Where people said that their experience was either poor or very poor, the main reason for this was due to opportunity to provide feedback about services (22%) and 'follow up' (18%). This represents an improvement on the 2011 survey results where 25% of respondents rated 'feedback about services' as poor or very poor and 30% of respondents rated 'follow up' as poor or very poor.
 - 94% of respondents stated that they received a friendly, courteous and helpful service when contacting the Council whilst 85% of respondents said that they level of customer service provided by the Council had met or exceeded their expectations. These questions were not asked in the 2011 Survey.
 - High levels of satisfaction were expressed for 'accessibility of the office' (92%), 'staff appearance and attitude' (88%) and general office environment (86%). The three main issues that respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with were, 'privacy of consultation' (18%), 'waiting time at the office' (14%) and availability of members of staff (12%). This question on satisfaction with the Customer Service Centre was not asked in 2011.
 - The top three services regarded as being important or very important to be provided by the Customer Service Centre were 'Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour', 'Roads and Lighting Faults' and 'Registration of Birth, Death or Marriage'. In 2011 the top three services were 'Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour', 'Registration of Birth, Death or Marriage' and 'Refuse Collection / Special uplift'.

- The main public / voluntary organisations that respondents would like to contact through the Customer Service Centre are Inverclyde Council on Disability (38%), Inverclyde Leisure (38%) and Department for Work and Pensions (37%). This is similar to the response received in 2011.
- The top two services that respondents feel should be provided via the internet / website are 'voter registration' (40%) and 'property banding and electoral roll enquiries' (35%). This question was not asked in the 2011 survey.
- 59% of respondents said they are most likely to want to contact the Customer Contact Centre during the day (9am-6pm). This is lower than the 2011 response where 68% of respondents said that they are most likely to want to contact the Customer Service Centre during the day.
- There has been a small increase (4%) in the number of respondents who would be interested in receiving information from the Council via text message. In 2013, just under a quarter of respondents, 23%, said they would be interested in receiving Council information in this way compared to 19% in 2011.
- There was a larger increase (8%) in the number of respondents who said that they would be interested in making enquiries to the Council via text message. This increased from 16% in 2011 to 24% in 2013.
- 51% of respondents said they would expect the Council to respond to their telephone enquiry within a minute. In 2011, 47% of respondents said they would expect the Council to respond to their telephone enquiry within a minute. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of respondents that would expect a reply to a letter within 10 working days, from 51% in 2011 to 90% in 2013. The percentage of respondents that would expect a reply to an e-mail within 3 working days has remained relatively steady: 94% in 2011 compared to 91% in 2013.

5.3 Service Commentary

The feedback from the Citizens' Panel will be used to inform the development and delivery of the Customer Services Strategy specifically around how services are accessed, the services available at the Customer Service Centre and the development of performance measures. Specific attention will be given to those aspects identified via the survey as requiring attention such as the ability for customers to provide feedback, privacy at the Customer Service Centre and waiting times.

5.4 Adult Protection

- The number of respondents who were aware that the Council had new powers to protect adults increased by 10% between 2011 and 2013 to 29%.
- 15% of respondents had seen the campaigns regarding adult protection, the majority of which was through local newspaper adverts / articles and television adverts. There was a similar response in 2011 when 14% of respondents had seen the campaigns.
- The main group of adults that respondents thought would be covered by adult protection powers is 'any adult with a physical or mental infirmity who is not as able as others to protect themselves' (67%).
- The police would be the organisation most likely to be contacted with any concerns about an adult being harmed or abused (89%), followed by Social Work (46%) and then a GP (12%). In 2011, 85% of respondents said that they would contact the Police, 44% would contact Social Work and 8% of respondents said that they would contact a GP.

5.5 Service Commentary

Results have confirmed a need to have further awareness raising campaign. Panel members were asked if they had seen any of the previous campaigns and if they had what material had they seen. Responses given will now inform future campaigns and types of publicity material used.

Of note was that a number of respondents had stated that they would contact their GP regarding an adult being abused. This further confirms the current view on both a national and local level of the key role GPs have to play in adult protection. It is anticipated that there will now be GP representation on the Inverclyde Adult Protection Committee and further consideration given to local training requirements.

5.6 Child Protection

- There has been an increase in the number of respondents that would contact a Police Officer to report concerns regarding the safety of a child; from 78% in 2011 to 86% in 2013. This was followed by an increase in the number of respondents who would contact a Social Worker, 37% in 2011 which increased to 54% in 2013 and then a Teacher, 11% in 2011 increasing to 25% in 2013.
- 65% of respondents said that nothing would prevent them from reporting any concerns that they may have. The main reason that would prevent someone reporting a concern was 'not having enough evidence' 18%.
- The number of respondents that are fairly or very confident that services in Inverclyde will protect children and young people and help them if they are at risk of harm increased from 60% in 2011 to 73% in 2013.
- Similarly, the percentage of respondents that were fairly or very confident that the contacted agency would take the necessary action increased from 68% in 2011 to 79% of respondents in 2013.
- The top two factors that were regarded as being very important in protecting children and young people from neglect are 'professionals sharing information with each other to help protect children from abuse or neglect' (90%) and 'professionals working together to support children and families' (87%). Similar views were expressed in 2011.

5.7 Service Commentary

The Child Protection Committee was pleased to have the opportunity to have their questions included in the 2013 summer citizen's panel survey.

It is encouraging to note that the proportion of people who were either very confident or fairly confident that the necessary action would be taken if they were to contact an agency with a concern about child abuse or neglect had risen from 68% in 2011 to 79% in the 2013 survey.

The findings will be fully reviewed alongside those from the 2008 and 2011 questionnaires, when Child Protection questions were also included, and a report will be taken to the Child Protection Committee.

The findings from the 2011 panel informed our public awareness campaign which took place in March 2013 and the Child Protection Committee will use the results of this survey to inform future public awareness activity to continue to ensure it is targeted at the issues that are important to members of the public and also to help us address some of the very real concerns people have that might prevent them reporting a concern about a child.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Finance

One Off Costs – None

Annually recurring costs/ savings – None

6.2 Human Resources

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.

6.5 Repopulation

None

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 Spring / Summer 2013

Summer 2013 Survey Responses

Customer Contact Centre

Just under half (44%) of all respondents said that they had contacted the Inverclyde Council Customer Service Centre in Clyde Square, Greenock within the last 12 months. A further 9% had contacted the Customer Service Centre more than 12 months ago. The remaining 47% stated that they had never contacted the Customer Service Centre.

The most common means by which people contacted the Customer Service Centre was by phone (64%), this is followed by in person (38%) and by email (7%). A further 10% of respondents contacted the council via the Council's website/email.

The three most common reasons for people to contact the council were Council Tax payments and enquiries (25%), Street, road repairs and enquiries/street lighting (23%) and Refuse collection enquiries (18%).

For 70% of respondents the initial contact with the Customer Service Centre resolved their question/issue. Just over a fifth (22%), stated that another contact had to be made to resolve the question/issue. Finally, 7% of respondents said that the Council contacted them directly to resolve their question/issue.

Ninety percent of respondents stated that the courtesy of staff was good or very good and 89% of respondents stated that the knowledge and helpfulness of staff was good or very good. In contrast to this, the two aspects where larger numbers of respondents stated that their experience was either poor or very poor are "opportunity to provide feedback about services" (22%) and "follow up" (18%). Ninety four percent of respondents stated that they received a friendly, courteous and helpful service when contacting the Council.

Overall, 74% of respondents said that the level of customer service provided by the Council satisfied their expectations, with a further 11% stating that it exceeded their expectations. Fifteen percent of respondents said that the level of customer service did not live up to their expectations.

Just under half (46%) of all respondents said that they had visited the Customer Service Centre in person in the past 2 years. Satisfaction regarding various aspects of respondents personal visits to the Customer Service Centre are generally good, example satisfaction ratings included, Accessibility of the office (92%), Staff appearance and attitude (88%) and General office environment (86%).

The three main issues that respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with were, Privacy of consultation (18%), Waiting time at the office (14%) and Availability of members of staff (12%).

The two main issues that respondents indicated were barriers to dealing with the Customer Service Centre were, Engaged/unanswered phones (16%) and Being constantly referred to another member of staff (14%).

Respondents were asked to indicate how important they felt it was to provide access to a range of Council services through the Customer Service Centre. The top 3 services that people stated were either fairly or very important to be provided through the Customer Service Centre were Community safety and anti social behaviour (94%), Roads and street lighting faults (93%) and Registration of birth, death or marriage (92%).

Respondents were asked to consider the services available through the Customer Service Centre and to indicate the most appropriate channels that should be available through which the Council can provide access to these services. The four main access channels asked about were internet/website, automated telephone, face to face and telephone. The most popular method that respondents would prefer to use when contacting the Council about a variety of matters is generally face to face for issues such as Assistance with

the completion of forms (69%) and Registration of birth, death or marriage (59%). This is followed by telephone contact for Community safety and anti social behaviour (51%) and Roads and street lighting faults (48%)

With regards to the internet/website the top 2 services that respondents stated the council should provide access to in this manner were Voter Registration (40%) and Property Banding and Electoral roll enquiries (35%). Accessing services through an automated telephone service is the channel that the least number of respondents indicated as a preference. The two main services that people would access in this manner are Roads and street lighting faults (14%) and Grass cutting/grounds maintenance (13%).

The main public/voluntary organisations that respondents would like to be able to contact through the Customer Service Centre are Inverclyde Council on Disability (38%), Inverclyde Leisure (38%) and Department for Work and Pensions (37%).

Most people, 59% said that their first choice with regard to use or access to the Council Customer Centre was daytime (9am-5pm). This is followed by 39% whose first choice was early morning (8am-9am) and a further 28% stated early evening (5pm-6pm).

Just over a quarter (27%) of respondents stated they are most likely to want to contact the Customer Service Centre later in the evening five nights a week (6pm-8pm). This is followed by just over a fifth (21%) of all respondents who would want to use the Customer Service Centre either on a Saturday morning (9am – 12pm) or at lunch time (12pm-2pm).

Respondents are least likely to want to contact the Customer Service Centre on a Saturday afternoon or late evening one night a week.

In addition to contacting the Council by telephone, respondents indicated that they would also contact the Customer Service Centre by E-mail (54%) and Through the Council's website (www.inverclyde.gov.uk) (42%).

Just under a quarter (23%) of respondents said that they would be interested in receiving Council information via a text message. Twenty four percent of respondents said that they would be interested in making enquiries to the Council via a text message.

Just over half (51%) of respondents stated that they would expect the Council to respond to a telephone enquiry within 1 minute. This is followed by 32% who stated up to 5 minutes and 17% who said 30 seconds. Ninety percent of respondents said that the speed of response they would expect from a letter based enquiry would be 10 working days. Seven percent said 15 working days and 2% said 20 working days. With regard to an email enquiry, 91% stated that they would expect a response within 3 working days, 8% said 10 working days and 1% said 15 working days.

Adult Protection

Just over a quarter of all respondents (29%) said that they were aware that the Council has new powers to protect adults. Fifteen percent of respondents said that they had seen any of the campaigns regarding adult protection. Of those people who had seen adult protection campaign material, the 2 main elements they had seen were Local newspaper adverts/articles (52%) and Television advert (52%).

The three main groups of adults that respondents think would be covered by adult protection powers are "Any adult with a physical or mental infirmity who is not as able as others to protect themselves" (67%), "adults with mental health issues" (59%) and "adults with a learning disability" (57%).

If a respondent had concerns regarding an adult being harmed or abused the most likely organisation they would contact to report these is the Police (89%) followed by Social Work (46%) and then a G.P. (12%).

Child Protection

Most people stated that if they had concerns regarding the safety of a child or young person they would report it to a Police Officer (86%), a Social Worker (54%) or a teacher (25%).

Almost two thirds (65%) of all respondents said that nothing would prevent them reporting any concerns they may have about a child or young person. The main issues that would prevent people from reporting a concern are Not having enough “evidence” or information (18%), Concerns about confidentiality being maintained (15%) and Fear of getting it wrong (14%).

Seventy three percent of respondents said that they were either fairly or very confident that the services in Inverclyde will protect children and young people and help them if they are at risk of harm. Seventeen percent said neither/nor and 10% said they were not confident.

Seventy nine percent of respondents said that they were either fairly or very confident that the necessary action would be taken if they were to contact an agency with concern. Thirteen percent of respondents said neither/nor and 8% said they were not confident.

Respondents were asked to consider how important they felt a variety of factors are in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. No-one thought that any of the issues were not important, with 96% to 98% of all respondents stating that each factor was either fairly or very important.

The top 2 factors that respondents felt were very important in protecting children and young people from neglect are Professionals sharing information with each other to help protect children from abuse or neglect (90%) and Professionals working together to support children and families (87%).