Inverclyde Council Citizens' Panel Newsletter

Summary 2023

Dear Panel Member
Welcome to the latest Citizens' Panel Newsletter.

Thank you for responding to the survey issued in Autumn 2022. Sixty-three per cent of you completed a questionnaire and provided valuable feedback that we will use to improve services provided by the Council.

Topics in the Autumn 2022 survey were:

- *Covid-19 recovery – Inverclyde Council events and initiatives*
- *Inverclyde Council Plan 2023/28 and Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33*
- *digital inclusion.*

The Summer 2023 questionnaire focuses on recycling; the Advice 1st service; and Inverclyde Council's performance. We look forward to receiving your completed survey.

This Newsletter outlines the key results from the Autumn 2022 survey and our response to your feedback.

1. Covid-19 recovery – Inverclyde Council events and initiatives

We introduced the first part of the survey by advising Panel members that the Council provided a number of new and additional services to support local residents during the Covid-19 pandemic. The top three services that respondents used were: food deliveries for vulnerable residents; health and social care support for extremely vulnerable local residents, including those on the *shielding* list; and the telephone helpline to support residents in need (in partnership with CVS Inverclyde).

Just over half (51%) of Panel members said they were satisfied with the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, a very small number (9%) said they were dissatisfied, while 40% chose the *neither/nor* option in response to this question.

Around two thirds (63%) of respondents said they have been well supported by the Council during the pandemic. Where Panel members (37%) indicated that they did not feel well supported by the Council during the pandemic, they were asked to indicate what else they thought could have been done. There were a range of responses to this question including improved communication, stronger enforcement of Covid-19 related rules, and different approaches to closing services.

We then advised respondents that the Covid-19 section of the Council's website had links to essential public health information, including NHS Inform and Public Health Scotland, as well as updates on services in Inverclyde and details of support and advice for businesses and residents.

Just over a third (38%) of Panel members told us they had looked at the Covid-19 information on the website and, on the whole, most people (84%) who had done so said they found it helpful.

The top three challenges that respondents faced during the pandemic were: concerns about my family and friends being exposed to Covid-19 – 69%; concerns about being exposed to Covid-19 – 55%; and my or others' adherence to safety measures (handwashing/sanitising; physical/social distancing; enhanced cleaning requirements) – 43%

Our response to your feedback

It is pleasing to note that more half (51%) of Panel members were satisfied with the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and that approximately two thirds (63%) of respondents felt they had been well supported by the Council during that time. Similarly, of the Panel members who had looked at the Covid-19 section on the Council's website, the majority (84%) found the information helpful.

2. Inverclyde Council Plan 2023/28 and Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33

We introduced the second part of the questionnaire by informing the Panel that the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22 sets out the ways in which the Council aims to deliver better outcomes for the people of Inverclyde. We explained that the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017/22 sets out the outcomes that Partnership Planning Partners in Inverclyde, known

at the Inverclyde Alliance, seek to improve and which should, in turn, improve the wellbeing and quality of life of the residents of Inverclyde.

We also told the Panel that the Council (and its Partners) need to devise new versions of both Plans and that we would like their views on what should be included in the documents.

Respondents were firstly asked what one thing would make the biggest difference to Inverclyde. The main issues raised were: increasing the number and quality of employment opportunities; improved access to suitable and affordable housing; addressing anti-social behaviour; and improving town centres, including retail and shopping provision.

The Panel was then asked what key policy areas they think the Council, our Partners and communities should develop to make the biggest difference in Inverclyde. The top three responses to this question were: increasing employment levels – 67%; supporting the creation of good jobs with fair pay and conditions – 47%; and reducing drugs and alcohol misuse – 42%.

When asked about the current shared vision across the Council and community in the local area - *Getting it right for every child, citizen and community in Inverclyde* – 86% of Panel members said they agreed with it.

Our response to your feedback
The questions posed in this part of the Citizens' Panel survey are consistent with those that were included on this topic in the wider public consultation and the Inverclyde Council Employee Survey 2022. The responses from all three surveys therefore allowed us to collate common themes, and thereafter compile an overall Council and Partnership Plan Consultation Report. This Report was used to inform the Council and the Inverclyde Alliance's decision-making process on the priorities within these strategic plans. The outcome of this process was the devising of a new Council Plan 2023/28 (available to view here: Council Plan 2023/28 - www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/strategies-policies-and-plans/council-plan and a new Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33. (which can be viewed here: Inverclyde Partnership Plan 2023/33 - www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/community-planning-partnership/inverclyde-outcome-improvement-plan).

3. Digital inclusion
The final section of the survey centred on the topic of digital inclusion. We introduced this part of the questionnaire by saying that the internet and access to technology are now a huge part of everyday life for many people, both at home and in the workplace, and that we wanted to ask Panel members' views on digital inclusion.

Ninety-four per cent of respondents told us they have access to the internet at home. The top three devices Panel members use to assess the internet at home are: mobile 'phone – 45%; laptop – 32%; and tablet – 27%.

When asked if they have used the IT facilities at a number of Council buildings, the responses were: library – 29%; school – 15%; and community hub – 12%. Twenty-nine per cent of Panel members also told us that they use the internet to assist with their child's education.

When asked about their preferred methods of interacting with the Council, the top four responses from Panel members were: telephone – 72%; face-to-face – 66%; Council website – 60%; and email – 57%.

The next two questions were about the format of Council Tax Bills. Three quarters of Citizens' Panel members receive their Council Tax Bills by post. Just under half (46%) of those respondents said they would be interested in receiving their Council Tax Bill electronically, an increase of 3% from when the question was posed to Panel members in 2018.

Our response to your feedback

The results from digital inclusion section of the Citizens' Panel Autumn 2022 survey confirm the Council's understanding of the levels of availability and uptake of internet-based services within the local community. The use of mobile 'phones and tablets is by far the main source of access which confirms the continued move from traditional PC-based devices.

These results will be fed into an updated Customer Services Strategy and will be used as further evidence to support the Council's current ICT and Digital Strategies which aim to provide a wider range of options to interact with the Council, while retaining as many of the existing channels as possible.

The results also have relevance to the Council's Communication Strategy 2023/25 and will inform how we can best ensure residents can easily access services.

The Council's Education Service, aware of the wider Council Digital Access Strategy, has considered its operations and the different methodologies required to deliver remote learning and blended learning. Ultimately, in response to the Digital Access Strategy, a new Education Services Digital Learning Strategy has been created which is available to view here: Education Services Digital Learning Strategy 2021/28 - www.inverclyde.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2393 (agenda item 13). It is designed to improve the ability of early learning and childcare establishments and schools to work more responsively, flexibly and effectively through the use of digital devices and platforms.