

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services

Community Participation Committee : Wednesday 18 September, 2013

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Citizens' Panel - Evaluation

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report informs committee members about the evaluation of the West Dunbartonshire Citizens' Panel on two fronts :
- Evaluation of panel members' experiences.
 - Evaluation of panel users' experiences (people who commission survey questions and focus groups).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** Members of the committee are invited to note the contents of the report and in particular the continuing high number of panel members who agree there is evidence of community planning partners listening to and acting on their (Panel Members) feedback.

3. Background

- 3.1** Citizens' Panels are used widely in the public sector to gather the views of citizens on a range of subjects. Our Panel is an important consultation tool which enables us to:
- check if what we are already doing is working
 - test out new ideas
 - measure change
 - test awareness of services and new developments and
 - inform future planning of policies and services.

Using our Panel effectively helps to ensure that our services and policies reflect the needs of West Dunbartonshire residents.

- 3.2** West Dunbartonshire Citizens' Panel is run on a community planning partnership model. This approach maximises resources and helps coordinate partner consultation, contributing to delivering Best Value in consultation and engagement.
- 3.3** The Panel is administered by Hexagon Research & Consulting. We evaluate our panel regularly to ensure that it is working effectively and delivering value for money.

4. Main Issues

Survey Response Rates

- 4.1 During 2012-13, survey response rates have risen, with an average of 1020 respondents per survey (over four surveys).

Panel Members Evaluation

- 4.2 Panel members receive a summary of the findings of each survey with the next questionnaire. In addition, once a year, we provide an Annual Newsletter "Feedback" which goes into more detail on how community planning partners have responded to what Panel members tell them. Panel members are asked to read this before answering the evaluation questions.

- 4.3 Four surveys were carried out during 2012-13 and the vast majority of panel members regarded them as relevant and useful:

Community Safety, Access to GP Services, Town Centres and Managing Finances	97%
Health and Social Care Services and Feedback on how the Citizens' Panel works	93%
Community Involvement, Equalities and Adult Protection	87%
Council Services - roads and transportation, road maintenance, winter maintenance, your local area travel arrangements, grounds maintenance, parks and waste services	92%

- 4.4 On three key 'listening' measures there has been a improvement since 2011. We asked panel members if the Feedback Annual Newsletter provides evidence that community planning partners are listening to what they tell us:

'Feedback' Annual Newsletter provides evidence the Partnership is listening

	Regeneration Areas			Rest of West Dunbartonshire			West Dunbartonshire		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
Developing and changing the way we provide services	83%	76%	76%	71%	82%	80%	74%	80%	79%
Targeting resources at issues of concern	77%	74%	75%	65%	78%	71%	68%	77%	72%
Providing information in better ways	82%	77%	75%	70%	82%	79%	73%	80%	78%

Though this represents a slight reduction on 2012 responses, it still shows a good rise on 2011 figures of 5%, 4% and 5% respectively. It does, however,

emphasise the importance of providing meaningful feedback on how we respond to surveys in the Annual Newsletter and we should continue to work on improving this.

Panel Users Evaluation

- 4.5** An evaluation of panel users – those who commissioned surveys and focus groups during 2011/12 - was carried out early in 2012.

The full evaluation report is listed as a background paper, available on request. A small number of responses were received (7) with feedback very positive with key points as follows:

- High satisfaction with the administrative process for commissioning a survey with all respondents judging this very good or good (71% and 29% respectively).
- All respondents rated the quality of advice on developing questions very good or good (43% and 57% respectively).
- All respondents rated the quality of the report very good or good (57 % and 43% respectively).
- Six out of seven respondents rated the service from the Consultant as very good or good (3 and 3 respectively), with one rating it as average.
- Six out of seven respondents rated the service from Corporate and Community Planning as very good or good (4 and 2 respectively) with one rating it as average.

Information from both sets of evaluation will be used to further develop the Panel.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial implications.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** There are no risks associated with the issuing of this report. It is necessary to maintain the funding of the Panel and the officer resource, including partner input, to maintain the current high standard of operation.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** An Equalities screening has identified no significant issues in relation to this evaluation. The demographic information on panel membership provides the opportunity for analysis of survey results to assist with identifying equalities issues.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** The evaluation of the Citizens' Panel is a method of consulting with panel users and panel members on the working of the Panel. It provides information for the development of the Panel. It also provides evidence of impact, showing that the panel members agree there is evidence of listening to their feedback and acting on it. The Community Participation Committee also provides a level of scrutiny on the working of the Panel.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The Citizens' Panel is an important tool for consultation and can provide relevant information in relation to all the strategic priorities, which can be used to develop and improve services.

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: WD Citizens' Panel, Older People's Services, Measures of Satisfaction, Panel Feedback and Levensgrove Park Survey and Summary 2013
WD Citizens' Panel, Equalities Impact Screening, August 2013

Wards Affected: All wards