

# Citizens' Panel newsletter



Issue 36 - September 2010

Informing citizens of our services....

## Welcome!

Hello and welcome to the September edition of the Citizens' Panel newsletter.

I want to start by saying another huge thank you to the 732 of you who took the time to complete the June survey.

The survey was mailed out to a total of 1134 of you and between 21st June and 9th July 732 of you completed and returned your surveys. This gave us a 65% response rate which is good.

Time really has flown by this year and I can't believe we are already on the last survey for 2010.

As you would expect, the Council is currently going through some tough times when it comes to cutting costs and making savings.

During these tough times it's really important for us to be able to feedback to departments what you, as our representatives of the borough, think about our services and the work we

do across Wigan Council.

As always we will use the feedback you have continuously provided us with, along with the results from this next survey, to feed back to departments in order to help focus services and make improvements and or changes wherever necessary and possible.

Your opinions really do matter and can make a real difference.

## Inside this issue..

Welcome!

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Thank you and Contact Details

## Special points of interest...

- 78% of you agreed that you live in a safe neighbourhood
- 82% of you stated that information on how to stop smoking was not relevant to you or your household.
- 64% of you prefer to receive your information about available services through Borough Life magazine.

## Looking back on 2010.....

For this section I have picked out some interesting facts and figures from the previous surveys in 2010.

- Over half of you (54%) have contacted the Council in the last year.
- 81% of you agree that the countryside in Wigan Borough is accessible to you.
- 90% of you are satisfied with your home as a place to live

Including this survey we have asked a total

of 11 sections, some of which I have mentioned below;

- Communications
- Social care Services
- Council Budgets

Some of these sections have also been asked in previous years. When sections are asked a number of times, this is usually so we can do some comparison work and feedback how, if at all, opinions or opinions have changed.

It may also be used to see whether a recent promotional campaign or change to certain services has impacted on residents.

For example, we are asking a section this time on communications, we have asked these questions previously and we are going to be working with our media and communication team to see what has changed and what may need to change according to the feedback you provide this time.



## Greenheart Project—Feedback

Linking with the Citizen's Panel survey allows us to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programme to date as well as provide recommendations on future strategic direction and delivery arrangements.

The results are directly feeding into the Greenheart action planning process.

### Key Findings

The first phase of works have increased local residents' access to the surrounding countryside, developed sustainable transport links for leisure and commuting, and enhanced / protected habitat of both national and European significance.



Feedback from the survey is very positive, for example 80% of the Panel agree that countryside sites are accessible to them and compared with the results in 2008, accessibility has increased significantly.

Panel members have indicated that what attracts them to visit the countryside is for walking and for general recreation purposes.

This has been recognised by the Partnership in developing a communications and marketing campaign for Greenheart, including Borough Life and

press features, and using Greenheart as a vehicle for countryside publicity in the 'My Council' campaign. We have also developed and launched the Greenheart website and have seen increased web site traffic with over 2000 hits in the first quarter of this year.

As part of the feedback from the Citizens' Panel results, we are now promoting this project further. You can now view our impressive new video and flickr account to promote Wigan's Greenheart - the 57 square kilometres of countryside at the heart of the borough at: [www.flickr.com/groups/visitgreenheart/pool/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/visitgreenheart/pool/) Or you can visit our new website at: [www.visitgreenheart.com](http://www.visitgreenheart.com)

## Parks & Open Spaces—Feedback

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust manages the borough's parks and open spaces, on behalf of Wigan Council.

This service includes grounds maintenance, organising events and activities for families, conservation and wildlife management, looking after play facilities as well as major parks refurbishment, such as that underway at Mesnes Park.

The work that we do in parks and open spaces is set out in our Parks and Greenspace Strategy – A Vision for 2020, in our Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans and in our site masterplans.

The questions that we ask within the Citizen Panel are all focussed on checking progress against our plans.

We have asked the same questions on parks and open spaces satisfaction in 2004, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

We are pleased to report the results are very positive and show year on year improvement.

For example, the numbers of visitors has increased from 75% to 80% of the population over 5 years, perceptions of safety are also getting better and there have been improvements in dog fouling and litter.

The Panel's satisfaction with play areas is however not so positive – but this will hopefully be addressed with the

investment in play areas during the last financial year. Overall satisfaction with parks and open spaces has increased and this gives us confidence that our efforts are paying off.

The way we analyse the information also lets us compare satisfaction and usage across the different parts of the borough – we can see that satisfaction is stronger in some areas than in others.

The parks and open spaces service sends out a big thank you to the Citizen Panel members for helping us to improve all parks and open spaces across the borough.



## Update and June 2010 survey

Thanks once again for taking the time to complete the last survey in June this year. We asked some questions which had been asked previously last year and so have been able to compare both sets of results and the services who asked the questions will use all of this information to make changes, improvements and look into any issues wherever possible.

I have pulled out some interesting facts in this section to feed back to you:

### Environmental Services

- Almost 8 in 10 (79%) of you indicated that you live in a safe neighbourhood, this is a 6% increase from last year.

### Council Budget

When imagining running Wigan Council for a day, the

majority of you chose the same top 3 priorities this year as were chosen in 2009, they were as follows:

1. A strong modern economy and a good standard of living for everyone (37%)
2. Living in a place where you feel safe (36%)
3. A good start in life for every child and young person (29%)

We are also currently rolling out a wider consultation across the Borough on Council Budgets, which some of you may have already seen in Borough Life. To find out more please visit :

[www.wigan.gov.uk/haveyoursay](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/haveyoursay) or contact me for further details using the contact details below.

### Children & Young Peoples' Plan

- From the list you were given,

over half of you (54%) chose "more places where young people can go to spend time with their friends" as the main area to focus on.

### Future Health & Social Care Services

- The most commonly used services, as a panel, you said you had used were:
  1. Monitoring blood pressure (40%)
  2. Cholesterol (36%)
  3. Diabetes (26%)
- The statement that the highest proportion of you disagreed with was that we should all work longer to pay for our health and social care (59%).
- 45% of you would also prefer to make decisions about community health and social care services yourselves.

**Thanks to you all once again for taking the time to read this newsletter and also for completing another successful Citizens' Panel survey. The sections being covered in the survey this time are once again very interesting and your responses will make a difference to the way Wigan Council moves on with the services we provide.**

**As always I appreciate hearing your opinions on both the questionnaires and the newsletters in general. If you have any feedback, questions or comments, please get in touch with me using the contact details below.**

**I hope you have enjoyed reading the newsletter and completing the survey this time. We will be back again in 2011, which seems a long way off but is sure to come round really quickly! I look forward to hearing from you again then.**

**Many thanks  
Liz Roberts**

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