

Citizens' Panel newsletter



Issue 37 - October 2011

Informing citizens of our services...

Welcome!

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

This is the last newsletter for 2011 and we cannot believe how quickly another year has passed by!

We want to start as always by saying a huge thank you to the 616 of you who took the time to complete the last survey in July/August this year.

The survey was mailed out to a total of 1116 of

you between 27 June and 5 August this year, and 616 of you completed it giving us a 55% response rate. The response rate is slightly lower than what we normally expect and we are going to be looking into what we can do to try to improve response rates early next year.

The topics we're exploring in the survey this time include:

- Wigan's economic framework

- Waste collection and recycling changes
- Improving communication
- Changes to the panel
- Extra Care Strategy
- The Transport Plan

As always, we hope to get a good response on these subjects. The information and feedback you give will be used to help inform our plans and make decisions about the services and areas of work over the coming months.

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Welcome!

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Special points of interest...

- It appears from the last survey that panel members in general favour funding for libraries, museums and the arts being reduced and funding for sports based services rising.
- One in five of you as panel members (21%) stated that you currently volunteer.

Update from the last survey...

In the last survey we did over summer, we asked about a number of different topics and services. All the services we worked with were very happy to have feedback and have asked me to pass on their gratitude for the insight you, as panel members and residents, provided.

You will see on page 3 of this newsletter that the leisure services have provided some great feedback and an

insight into what your feedback will mean for the work they are planning to do over the next few months and years.

In addition to this we also have the following update from the questions relating to volunteering:

The answers provided by the Citizens' Panel about volunteering will be really useful in helping us with the implementation of the

volunteering strategy that has been developed for the borough.

In particular the answers will help us with our approach in making people aware of opportunities available and the communication methods you find most useful.

We will be contacting all of you who said you were interested in volunteering in the near future to let you know about the opportunities available.

Being a Panel member

During the last survey we asked for your views on being a panel member and the various aspects involved. We did this to try and improve the experience for you and find new ways of getting more residents involved.

We asked you to state how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with nine aspects of the documents that are sent to you in each consultation. For each of these aspects, at least eight in ten of you expressed some level of satisfaction, with the highest satisfaction seen regarding the size of print (95%), the instructions for completion (91%) and the questionnaire layout (88%). Comparatively lower satisfaction is evident for the relevance of issues covered

(80%) and the feedback provided (80%).

When considering your participation, almost four in five (79%) state that you are either very (28%) or fairly (51%) satisfied overall. Fewer than one in twenty (4%) express any level of dissatisfaction.

Looking at how you receive future information, almost two in five (38%) are happy to view the panel newsletter via a weblink, but a majority of 59% would prefer to continue receiving a hard copy.

As well as the Citizens' Panel, we told you about two further panels: the Readers' Panel and the Discussion Panel. These panels are contacted throughout the year when various sections

and departments in the council (and partners) want to get more detailed feedback from residents. Currently 9% of you are members of the Readers' Panel and 3% are part of the Discussion Panel.

Among non-members of the Readers' and Discussion Panels, more than a third (36%) of you are interested in receiving further information about these consultation activities – which we will be following up on.

As always we are really grateful for your continued support as a panel member and we will be following up on all your responses by making as many changes as we can in the next survey.

Get involved - Tyldesley Children's Centre

Tyldesley Children's Centre has undergone massive changes over the past year. We now have a new management structure in place and are keen to promote the work of the centre in the local community. Our aim is to make Tyldesley Children's Centre the hub of the community.

As in all children's centres, our work is aimed at children under five and their families, supporting them with a wide range of issues. In order to ensure we are delivering a service that the community want we would like to consult with existing members of our children's centre, and also

members of the wider community.

We would, therefore, like to ask members of the community, in Tyldesley, what they think about their local Children's Centre, what services they would like to see made available and how we can support them to make the most of their family lives.

We are aiming to recruit a small group of people from the Tyldesley area to help us with further work in this area. We hope that by using this newsletter we can link up with those of you who live in the

Tyldesley Community. So whether or not you have used or know about what is available in Tyldesley Children's Centre, we would love to hear from you and give you the chance to have your say on this service.

So... if you're interested in being part of a group we can gather additional comments or further feedback from - please get in touch with Liz (using the contact details on the back of this newsletter) and she will pass on your details to the team at Tyldesley Children's Centre.

For further information on services please search for 'SureStart' on Wigan Council's website.

Tyldesley
Sure Start Children's Centre

'Have your say' web pages

There are several ways that residents can get involved in consultation activities that take place, many of these are advertised on the council's 'Have your say' web pages.

In order to make sure we continuously improve the services offered, we are currently in the process of re-designing these web pages. This will mean changes to both the look and content. For example, a new 'consultation database' will show upcoming consultation activities and allow residents to view results from work that has been completed.

Keep an eye on www.wigan.gov.uk/haveyoursay in the coming months as we would appreciate your views on the changes we make.

Transport Plan

One of the sections in the survey this time relates to our current work on Wigan's Transport Plan. We have promoted this consultation across the borough using a number of different mechanisms such as the council's website, Borough Life and local press, to ensure we get as much feedback as possible. We are going to use your feedback to feed into all overall results.

This major public consultation exercise will help shape the future of transport in Greater Manchester's biggest borough.

Everyone has something to say about transport - and we recognise that there's room for improvement.

The plan over the last few months has been to talk about transport and listen to individuals, local communities and businesses from across the borough about:

- current journeys, travel within the borough and public transport provision;
- future travel requirements, in light of higher fuel costs, the borough's health issues, and impacts of climate change; and
- what our visions, aspirations and priorities should be for the next 20 years.

What you say will help feed into an overall picture of what local communities need and want and will enable us to influence decisions and lobby for improvements on your behalf.

Leisure and culture - feedback from the last survey

Like other service areas across the council, the leisure and culture sector is facing the challenge of having to make significant savings over the next three years.

The level of savings needed are in the region of £4 million pounds from a budget of £16 million and consequently the council and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust will need to take some difficult decisions. Savings have already been made by transferring the ownership of leisure venues to private sector operators and restructuring the library services across the borough. The council is currently considering the proposal to cease managing Hindley and Tyldesley swimming pools. Unfortunately further savings will still be needed and the

information collected in the last Citizens' Panel will help the council and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust identify services which are no longer considered priorities by local people.

The survey results show that Trencherfield Mill steam engine, Haigh Golf, Haigh Fest, allotments and the Turnpike Gallery are services people think the council should no longer invest in or be provided by other organisations.

All these services will be looked at very closely to investigate if there are other more cost effective ways of providing them.

Although the need to save money is an important priority at the moment we must not forget that leisure and culture services provide important services that improve aspects of people's lives and help make life healthier and more enjoyable.

The responses to the Citizens' Panel show that you share the view that leisure is an important part of a healthy lifestyle and by providing these services the council helps to reduce healthcare costs for our partner NHS organisations.



Your questions answered...

In each issue of the Citizens' Panel newsletter we print a section of frequently asked questions.

We hope this section is useful for you to read in case you had thought of asking something but never had time to get in touch. If you do have any questions about the Panel please get in touch with us using the contact details at the bottom of this page.

As our response rate has fallen slightly, we are also hoping to refresh and recruit new panel members next year. So if you know anyone who might be interested please ask them to contact me and we can get them on board.

Q I filled in the last survey as soon as I received it and

mailed it back straight away, however I then went on to receive a reminder letter and a further questionnaire telling me to fill this copy in and return it. Does this mean that my original questionnaire was not received and should I fill in the second questionnaire and return this too? This is quite inconvenient and time consuming and I would prefer to only do this once.

A You only ever need to fill in and return one copy of your questionnaire. Unless there has been a general problem with Royal Mail, BMG always receive returned questionnaires. Unfortunately on some occasions the reminder letter crosses your returned survey in the mailing process and so before your returned questionnaire has been registered and your name

'ticked off' the list, you've already been sent a reminder. Therefore in future if this happens you can simply recycle the reminder questionnaire.

Q I have recently become a member of the Citizens' Panel and I am interested in finding out what has been asked on these surveys previously - is there any way I can find this out?

A All previous issues of the Citizens' Panel newsletter are available on the internet - please go to www.wigan.gov.uk.

Alternatively write to us or give us a call on the details below and we would be happy to answer any questions and provide you with further information regarding the Citizens' Panel.

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 we appreciate hearing your opinions on both the questionnaires and the newsletters in general.

We hope you have enjoyed reading the newsletter and completing the survey this time. As this is the last survey for 2011 may I take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and healthy time over the festive season and all the very best for the new year. We will be back again in 2012 and hope to have you all on board for another successful year.

Many thanks

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