
Citizens' Panel survey: summary results and call for questions

1. Summary

This report:

- contains the key findings from the Citizens' Panel survey carried out in September / October 2012
- calls for themes and questions for the next survey, due to be carried out in Spring 2013.

2. Recommendations

Community Planning Partners are asked to note the findings of the survey carried out in September 2012.

Community Planning Partners who wish to have questions included in the next survey of the Citizens' Panel should get in touch with Chris Carr, Argyll and Bute Council to arrange for this.

3. Detail

The Citizens' Panel survey (carried forward from Spring 2012) was sent out to members of the panel in late September 2012. The survey asked questions around four themes:

- Economic recession, repeating questions previously asked in 2009
- Local Housing Strategy
- Transport
- Adult Protection.

By the end of October, 953 responses had been returned, a response rate of 76%.

The summary of the key findings from the survey is attached to this report. If Community Planning Partners would like copies of the full report, they should contact either Eileen Wilson or Chris Carr.

The next survey on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership is due to be carried out in Spring 2013. Community Planning Partners who wish to have questions included in the next survey of the Citizens' Panel should get in touch with Chris Carr, Argyll and Bute Council to arrange for this.

Jane Fowler
Head of Improvement and HR, Argyll and Bute Council

For further information:

Chris Carr
Improvement and Organisational Development Project Officer, Argyll and Bute Council
Tel: 01546 604260
Email: chris.carr@argyll-bute.gov.uk



**Argyll and Bute Citizens' Panel
Autumn 2012 Survey**

Report

by



For further information contact:

Jim Patton

Director

Hexagon Research and Consulting

Suite 401

47 Timber Bush

Edinburgh EH6 6QH

Tel: 0131 669 9574

e-mail: jim@hexagonresearch.co.uk

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Summary of Key Findings

Section 3: The Economic Recession

- Under half of Panel members feel the economy of Argyll and Bute is more adversely affected by the recession in comparison to the rest of Scotland (42%), a rise of 15% since 2009. A similar picture emerges in relation to the economy of Argyll and Bute compared to the UK, with 41% feeling it is more adversely affected, a 17% rise since 2009
- Most respondents (72%) feel the economic downturn will encourage more people to holiday at home, increasing the number of tourists in Argyll and Bute, although this has fallen from 83% measured in 2009
- More than half of Panel members (58%) said they were worse off compared to a year ago, with only 5% saying they were better off. A similar pattern emerged in relation to the effect of the recession on Argyll and Bute and their local community with 61% and 65% respectively saying these were worse off
- Asking respondents to assess the situation in three years time resulted in a more positive picture, with the proportion feeling they will be worse off falling to about one third. Nevertheless, this is still a more negative outlook than the one recorded in 2009
- There are two principal challenges which Panel members say there are facing as a result of the economic downturn: 62% referred to the reduced value of their pension or savings and 53% are concerned about the falling value of their home
- The principal response by Panel members to the recession has been to spend less, particularly by going out less (65%) and having fewer or less expensive holidays (48%), allied to a preference to save more (49%). A small core have also updated their CV (21%)
- With the tendency for Panel members to spend less, it is not surprising to see that a significant proportion have reported local shops having to close (52%), with 27% seeing pubs and restaurants close and 28% other local businesses. In addition,

approximately half of Panel members have also seen these types of business struggling to stay open, a rise on the figures recorded in 2009

- The survey posed a range of ways the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership could help local people and businesses and Panel members agreed with three in particular: support local businesses (80%), support initiatives to help town centres (64%) and help people with skills to re-train (53%)

Section 4: Local Housing Strategy

- Three quarters of all Panel members (75%) agreed the vision of the Local Housing Strategy was still relevant, a view consistently found across the four administrative areas
- Almost three quarters (72%) agreed that Outcome 4 was still a priority i.e. more people in Argyll and Bute live in well repaired and maintained homes that are affordable to heat. Just under two thirds agreed the other three outcomes were also still priorities
- The majority of Panel members (72%) agreed it is very difficult for many households on low incomes to afford housing at normal market prices - 37% agreed it is an issue across all areas and 35% agreed it was an issue in some areas
- Awareness of where to get information on the repair and improvement of their home is fairly high (55%). However, there is a significant proportion of households (63%) who have difficulty in heating their home and almost a quarter (23%) consider themselves to be in fuel poverty
- A high proportion of Panel members (70%) said they were aware of the government's proposals to change the benefits system and introduce welfare reform. Of those aware of the proposed reforms, approximately a quarter (26%) feel they will be adversely affected
- Just under a third of Panel members (31%) said they knew how to access information on different housing tenures and options and there is therefore significant interest in accessing housing information, particularly through the Council website (62%), local newspapers (52%) and newsletters (41%)

Section 5: Transport

- More than two thirds of Panel members (69%) drive on a daily basis, with another 23% driving more than once a week. A similar proportion (66%) also walks on a daily basis. Conversely, the forms of transport used least frequently are by motorcycle (93% use this method less than once a year), bicycle (52%), plane (46%) and taxi (44%).
- Economic factors dominate those affecting daily travel decisions. For example, 56% referred to the cost of fuel (rising to 78% in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay) and 40% quoted the cost of fares (peaking at 52% in Helensburgh and Lomond). Other significant factors include the frequency of public transport (38%) and the availability of parking (30%)
- Just under half of Panel members (44%) said they have been affected by the closure of the A83 due to landslides at the Rest and Be Thankful, although this rises to 80% of respondents from Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay. The most common effect of the closure was having a longer journey time (36%, but rising to 74% of Panel members from Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay). However, around a quarter of Panel members have also had to cancel journeys (22%) and have incurred additional costs (23%)
- Better footpaths (45%) and more cycle paths (42%) emerged as the two main factors which Panel members believe would encourage people to walk or cycle more
- Panel members were asked to identify the highest priorities to improve transport in Argyll and Bute and a single factor emerged above all the others; more than half (55%) identified improving the road network as the single most important improvement needed. The next most important improvement, singled out by 14% of Panel members, was to improve public transport services while more walking/cycling facilities came third, quoted by 10%

Section 6: Adult Protection

- The Police emerged as the agency people would contact (57%) as well as the one most would prefer to contact (37%) if they were aware an adult was at risk of harm. The other agencies which would be contacted by a significant proportion of respondents included Social Work (34%), GP (33%), contact or helpline (23%) and Community Nurse (21%)

- Relatively few Panel members (27%) are aware adults now have the legal right to be protected from harm. However, their awareness of the role of key agencies in adult protection is much higher. In particular, 77% are aware of the role of the police in investigating the abuse of adults, 68% are aware of the role of Social Work in offering support and protection to adults at risk and 64% are aware of the role of the NHS in reporting concerns about adults at risk
- More than a third of Panel members (39%) said they would like to know more about what the Adult Protection Committee does
- Just under a third (30%) have seen Act Against Harm advertisements on STV