

REPORT TO: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP ON 3 JULY 2008

SUBJECT: CITIZENS' PANEL SURVEY FEEDBACK

BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE THE MORAY COUNCIL

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The reason for this report is to provide the Community Engagement Strategic Group with feedback on the latest Citizens' Panel survey on 'Contacting Local Agencies'.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Community Engagement Group notes the feedback received in respect of the Citizens' Panel survey on 'Contacting Local Agencies' and considers how consultation with the public should be taken forward in the future.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Moray Community Planning Partnership has used a Citizens' Panel for the past three years to obtain feedback on matters relating to Community Planning themes. Craigforth Consultancy & Research have run the Panel on behalf of the Partnership.
- 3.2 At the Community Planning Board held on 29 May 2008 (para10 of the minute refers) the Board agreed that Craigforth should be retained on an ad hoc basis and should continue to maintain the membership database. The Community Planning Board is currently carrying out an evaluation of the previous arrangements prior to making a decision on the future of the Panel.
- 3.3 The Citizens' Panel survey on 'Contacting Local Agencies' has recently been completed. The survey questions repeated those in the first survey on 'Getting in Touch with Local Agencies' which was carried out in October 2005 (**an executive summary is attached as Appendix 1**). This has facilitated the tracking of developments in Panel members' experiences over the intervening period. Copies of the 'Contacting Local Agencies' full report have been circulated to the agencies referred to in the questionnaire.
- 3.4 The survey report raises a series of questions about the Partnership's general approach to communicating with the public. The Strategic Group's comments are therefore invited on the following:
- (i) how the issues highlighted in the survey report will be addressed

- (ii) how the Partnership agencies can manage public expectations of service delivery
- (iii) what the outcome of the survey suggests about how future consultations should be carried out
- (iv) how feedback should be communicated to the public

3.5 The results of surveys undertaken during the first survey programme and the actions being taken in response to issues raised have been communicated to panel members via newsletter. The final newsletter in the series will provide feedback on the 'Building Stronger Communities' survey as well as 'Contacting Local Agencies'.

3.6 Partner agencies are therefore requested to comment on the specific issues in relation to their services as identified in the 'Contacting Local Agencies' survey. The main issues are set out below however if agencies wish to highlight additional ones, they are invited to do so:

3.6.1 *Internet contact*

The level of access to agency websites was generally low, however there has been an increase in access and frequency of visits over the figures recorded in 2005.

3.6.2 *Contact with Council Services*

The profile of satisfaction with key aspects of the service received was broadly similar to that reported in 2005. However satisfaction was lowest in relation to how well respondents were kept informed of what was happening after their initial contact with the overall rating dropping from 45% to 37%.

Satisfaction with the overall service provided from the Council was high across all key demographic groups however those contacting local Council offices tended to report higher satisfaction levels than those making contact through the Council headquarters.

3.6.3 *Contact with Health Services*

In relation to typical appointment waiting times, the number of respondents having to wait who indicated that this was not a problem (65%) was 6% down on 2005.

3.6.4 *Contact with Emergency Services*

Most respondents indicated that the length of time they waited for a visit was not a problem (60%) however 17% indicated that the waiting time was “far too long”, representing an 8% increase on 2005.

Overall satisfaction with the service received was relatively high but had fallen from 2005 across all aspects of the service. The net satisfaction level of 46% fell 17% from 2005.

As was found in 2005 satisfaction was lowest in relation to how well the service kept the respondents informed of progress on their request. The net satisfaction rating of 29% represents a 22% drop since 2005.

Around 6 in 10 were satisfied with the overall service received from the Police, 9 in 10 were satisfied with the service received from the Ambulance Service.

3.6.5 *Contact with Voluntary Organisations*

Awareness of local voluntary organisations was generally high however Panel members reported relatively little direct contact with voluntary organisations in Moray, respondents being generally more likely to have visited national or regional organisations.

Females were consistently more aware than males of local voluntary organisations. Those in paid employment tended to be less aware of local voluntary organisations than those who were unemployed, students or looking after home and family.

Overall satisfaction with the service received was high (80%) although there has been a drop of 5% since 2005.

The aspect of the service that received the least positive rating was how well respondents were kept informed of what was happening. The rating of 66% was 8% down on 2005.

3.7 Panel members were also asked to comment on their experience of being involved in the Panel. Overall satisfaction was high (80%). Fewer than 1 in 20 were dissatisfied with their experience. Ratings were also positive in respect of satisfaction with other key aspects: clarity of survey forms and correspondence (91%), newsletters (81%), range of survey topics (80%), relevance of survey topics (80%) and frequency of surveys (79%).

3.8 Panel members were also asked if they would like to see improvements made to the Panel. The most common suggestion was for survey topics that were more relevant or interesting. More frequent feedback on survey results was also mentioned.

4 SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Community Plan / Theme Plans / Partner Plans

The Citizens' Panel is an invaluable source of information, which has the potential to facilitate service planning if used to its full extent. A local Outcome contained in the draft Single Outcome Agreement is that "the influence, which the people in Moray will have over, decisions which affect their communities and lives and their active participation within communities will increase". The panel can provide a means to assist contribute to that outcome.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Local Government Scotland Act 2003 requires that the Partnership engage with the community as part of the Community Planning Process. The Scottish Government is seeking through their National Outcome 11 to "have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others".

(c) Resources (Financial, Staffing and Risks)

There are no direct financial and staffing implications arising from this paper.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 The Community Planning Partnership has recently completed a Citizens' Panel survey on 'Contacting Local Agencies'. The Community Engagement Strategic Group is invited to note this and consider how consultation with the public with regard to Partnership services should be taken forward in the future.

Author of Report: Kate Freeman Project Development Officer

Background papers Moray Citizens Panel Survey 8 "Contacting local agencies" April 2008

Ref.: