

Warrington Citizens Panel

Helping to build a better community

Newsletter

Winter 2006

Issue 2



Welcome to the Second Edition of the Citizens' Panel Newsletter

Hi! My name is Natalie Bradshaw and at the beginning of December I joined the Research team in the Chief Executive's Unit at Warrington Borough Council as a Research and Consultation Assistant. My role includes looking after the Citizens' Panel. I just wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself as your first point of contact and let you know what's going to be happening in the future. We are hoping to raise the profile of the panel over the coming months, making more use of it and getting more people involved, particularly from groups and areas currently under-represented on the panel (i.e. young people).



Later in the year, you will receive a short questionnaire asking about yourself - this will help us ensure that we have up-to-date information about you so we have an accurate picture of who the panel is made up of. We need to know this so we can be sure that the views expressed by the panel are representative of the views held by the whole of Warrington.

We are also going to be asking for your views on various topics at least three times per year as your input is really valuable and we want to ensure we are consulting with you as much as possible.

Last but not least...soon to be up and running is a webpage at www.warrington.gov.uk dedicated to consultation where you can find out about the Citizens' Panel and see our Corporate Consultation Strategy, which explains how and why we plan to consult with our residents.

So, you'll be hearing a lot more from me in the future but in the meantime don't hesitate to contact me if you have any queries/suggestions relating to the Citizens' Panel (01925 443434 or e-mail nbradshaw@warrington.gov.uk).

Thank you for your continued help and support.

Warrington Market Survey August 2006

Many thanks again to those Panel members who took part in the Market Research over the Summer, we had our best response ever to a Citizens' Panel survey (70%). As promised we would like to feed back the results:

The objectives of the research were to:

- Gauge users and non-users current perceptions of Warrington Market.
- Find out what, if anything could be done to encourage non-users to use the Market (and users to use it more often).
- To provide Warrington Borough Council with recommendations for the future development of the Market.

The key findings of the Panel survey included:

- Over two thirds (66.7%) of respondents visit the Market at least once a year. Of these respondents the most popular factors in terms of what they thought was good about the Market included 'town centre location' (59.1%), 'quality of fresh food' (54.4%) and 'range of goods' (53.5%).
- In terms of encouraging those respondents to visit more regularly, the most popular incentives included 'free parking' (58.8%), 'the appearance of the Market' (37.1%) and 'more variety of stalls' (32.1%).
- The most popular reasons stated by those respondents who do not visit the Market were based around its appearance and atmosphere. Therefore the most popular incentives stated by those respondents to visit at all included 'free parking' (52.9%), 'the appearance of the Market' (48.2%) and 'nicer atmosphere' (36.5%).

The Panel focus groups explored these issues in more detail and depth. The key results included:

- Warrington Market is very much a valued part of the Borough's heritage.
- The shopping experience in the Market is very different for different people, for example different age groups.



- Users of the Market are very specific about what they go to the Market to buy. Fruit and vegetables, fresh fish and meat and cheese are the main items bought on a regular basis.
- Participants drew comparisons between the shopping experiences in the Market with that of the supermarkets and high street stores, which have resulted in very high customer expectations.
- Participants reinforced the survey results in terms of concerns about the appearance and environment of the Market. Additionally participants made suggestions about how the Market could better promote itself and improve the overall shopping experience.

The results of the Panel research enabled officers to accurately identify perceptions of the Market and highlighted areas for improvement. This contributed to a report to the Executive Board of the Council called “Warrington Market - Blueprint for the Future” on 4th December 2006.

The Executive Board has agreed to demonstrate its commitment to the future of the Market by investing a further £150,000 to continue a series of improvements, as recommended in the report of 4th December.

This series of investments will be aimed at making the entranceways more attractive and providing a scheme of signage around the Market halls. In addition, the Council hopes to introduce a limited free parking scheme for Market customers on a trial basis to establish future commercial viability of parking related incentives.

Other issues to be addressed by the investment include a scheme to assist traders to adhere to the correct opening and closing times, and developing the “traders charter” to increase customer confidence in the Market and goods sold there.

Up and Coming Surveys

Leisure, Culture and Heritage Survey January 2007

The Council is planning to build user engagement into the future service delivery of its Leisure, Culture and Heritage Service. Please find enclosed with this newsletter our Leisure, Culture and Heritage Local Participation Survey. The aim of this survey is to assess the use and awareness of leisure, culture and heritage facilities as well as to generally assess levels of participation in leisure, culture and heritage activities - for example, sports, arts, libraries, museums and galleries. We look forward to receiving your completed survey.

Overview and Scrutiny March 2007

The Overview and Scrutiny Team of the Council is responsible for reviewing the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and service areas and providing a 'critical friend' challenge to the Council's Executive Board and other decision makers.

Overview and Scrutiny annual work programmes are agreed in June. These are programmes where councillors review the policy and performance of the Council and look for areas of improvement. By seeking the Citizens' Panel views, via a survey, we will be able to ensure that councillors are looking at areas that are important to the residents of Warrington.

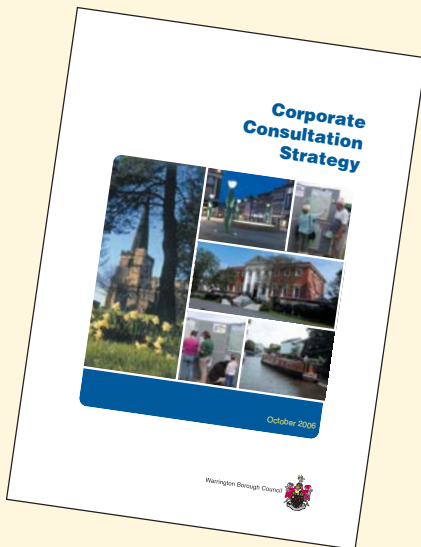
Corporate Consultation Strategy - Panel Feedback

Thank you to those panel members that sent back comments on the Council's first draft of the Corporate Consultation Strategy. We had a 23% response rate. The Strategy outlines the Council's approach to consulting with our communities in decision making so that we can plan our services in order to reflect priorities and local needs.

The comments have now been collated and here is a summary of the main points and suggestions:

POSITIVE COMMENTS

- Well set up
- A lot of thought
- All aspects covered
- Will allow the council to hear what the public has to say
- Comprehensive approach
- Clearly written and easy to understand
- Very informative
- First class product
- Not too much waffle
- Warrington is moving forward and prepared to listen to citizens
- Impressive and shows a commitment by the council to consultation
- Layout very exciting
- 'A council with ears and citizens with a voice'
- Precise and to the point
- Jargon free
- In keeping with future agenda for Warrington



NEGATIVE COMMENTS

- Overpowering
- Not good plain simple English
- Need to use recycled paper
- Too long, make it short and snappy less words
- Fail to understand significance of photographs on front page
- Repetitive and drawn out
- Make the words easier to understand
- Too much jargon

SUGGESTIONS

- Say what we are going to use it for
- Reward on going exchange of views
- Add section who the strategy is aimed at and where is it available
- Add something on role of councillors and decision making
- Use service plans to plan consultation far enough in advance to be effective, allocate time and resources for meaningful consultation
- Streamline references to groups, e.g. stakeholders, participants, communities, groups and you
- E-mail to officers if possible
- Mechanism for feeding back outcomes and council decisions e.g. website
- Need to “plain English it”
- How are you going to measure if the strategy been successful?
- Include pictures of the local area
- Definition of stakeholder
- Definition of corporate

We have tried to include as many comments and updates as possible in the final version of the Strategy. As some of you suggested not to print it out again, but to email out to Council officers instead, we have taken this on board and will now be creating a Consultation webpage which will include the Strategy. The webpage will be available shortly - details to follow in the next newsletter.

Other main action points addressed:

- Photos on the front have been changed to include photos of local area
- A Glossary of terms has been included at the end of the Strategy
- We have added a paragraph on who the Strategy is aimed at
- A section on the role of Councillors and MPs has been included
- Outcomes and decisions will be fed back through a Consultation database that is being implemented shortly.
- References to groups have been streamlined.
- A paragraph on using Service Plans to plan consultation in advance has been included
- A plain english A4 summary sheet of the Strategy will be produced.

The Strategy will now be taken to the Council's Executive Board in January 2007, which is the Council's main meeting with Councillors, for the Strategy to be adopted as Council Policy. If adopted the Strategy will then be launched in early 2007.

Which Way Warrington

WHAT would you spend Council money on?

Many thanks to those of you who attended the consultation meeting at Parr Hall on Tuesday 21st November, which was hosted by Jim Hancock, former BBC North West political correspondent.

The event, **Which Way Warrington**, aimed to engage with local people and anything and everything was up for discussion. Panel members were invited to talk about the issues and challenges facing the council, the sorts of services they would like to see, and what their priorities for investment were.

The evening was also interactive, with the audience answering a range of questions via '*Who Wants to be a Millionaire*' style keypads and the results were displayed instantly on screen.

Hot topics on the agenda included the town centre, public transport, traffic issues, affordable housing, activities for young people, tackling crime, safety in the community and care of the elderly.

The results of the consultation will be fed back to you in a special Citizens' Panel Newsletter, which will be issued in the near future.

Which
Way
Warrington

Waste Management Strategy Focus Groups

During November and December 2006, 22 members of the Citizens' Panel from across Warrington met to discuss and develop thoughts on what should be included in the Council's new Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

The groups were facilitated by 'Quest' and met to discuss issues including:

- Current waste management in Warrington
- Waste reduction
- Criteria to inform a new waste strategy
- Weightings of criteria
- Recycling target setting
- Changes to waste collection
- Final 'end' technologies to treat and dispose of non-recycled/composted waste

Further research will be done with the focus groups in 2007 to consider the draft Municipal Waste Management Strategy once it has been written.




www.the-big-idea.tv

The Big Idea TV channel website received 12,000 hits during our live launch week in October. Now it's time for YOU to get involved.

Just log on to the website or contact the team at Pyramid & Parr Hall on **01925 442884** to find out how you can make your own programmes. The Big Idea is a community channel and needs YOU to make the programmes. Anyone can do it!

We've got new training courses in filming, sound, broadcasting and funding. If you've always fancied making a programme or presenting then don't hesitate to get in touch.



The content of this publication is available in other formats Tel: 01925 443434

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If you have any comments, ideas or queries about the Citizens' Panel please contact: Natalie Bradshaw on 01925 443434, email: nbradshaw@warrington.gov.uk

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