West Dunbartonshire Citizens Panel

Autumn 2018

Survey Report

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Introduction & Background

West Dunbartonshire Citizens Panel provides a way for residents to give their views on the Council and the Council services. This document presents the key findings from the Autumn 2018 survey which is the third survey since revising our approach and relaunching the Citizens Panel in 2017. The responses of our members inform service development and improvements to ensure we meet the needs of our residents now and in the future. The survey was carried out in the month of November 2018. The survey for Autumn 2018 focused on:

- Living in West Dunbartonshire.
- Getting Involved / Participation

West Dunbartonshire Council states in the Strategic Plan 2017-22 their commitment to meaningful engagement with active, empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged. This reflects the aspiration of the Council that service development and delivery is informed, influenced and led by the feedback and involvement of our citizens.

The Panel membership is broadly reflective of the population of West Dunbartonshire in terms of age, gender and geographical split. Membership of the panel dropped slightly after the introduction of GDPR, when all participants were asked to opt in; therefore we are undertaking a recruitment programme to attract additional members in order to continue building the strength of the Panel. This will increase representation across all post codes, age groups and gender, and will include regular reviews to ensure it remains representative. The information provided is very valuable in helping us understand how people are affected by the services we provide.

Autumn 2018 Survey

The response rate for the Autumn 2018 survey was 77%; the highest since the new on line format was introduced. The previous survey attracted a response rate of 57%. The respondents breakdown shows, 6% from G60, 37% from G81, 34% from G82, 23% from G83 (2% didn't provide a postcode).

The results for the Panel as a whole have sampling errors limited to only ± 6.9%. This means, for example, that if 50% of Panel members say they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, the actual figure will be in a narrow range, from only 43.1% to 56.9%
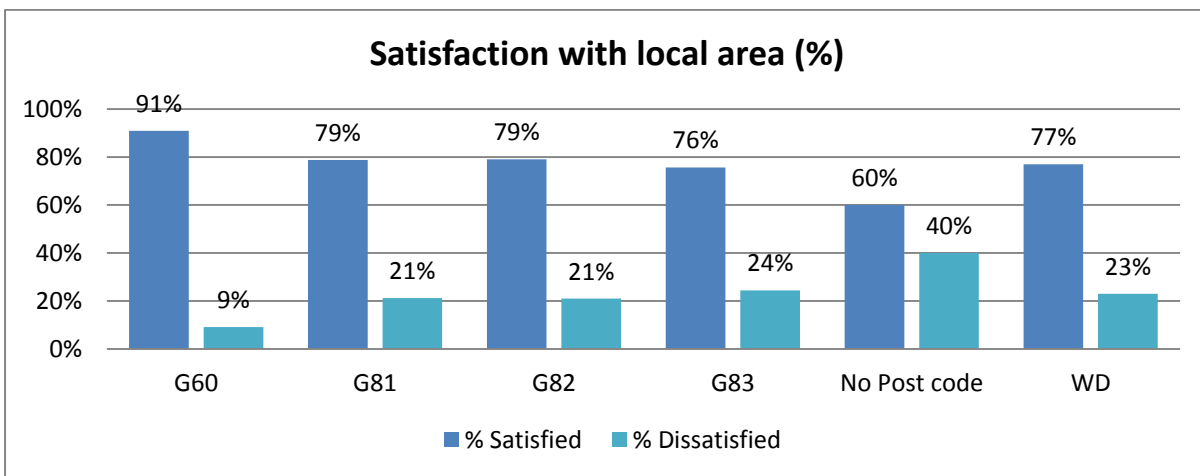
Summary of Key Findings

- Most Panel members told us that overall they continue to be satisfied with West Dunbartonshire.
- A high number have always stayed in the area and have friends and family in the area.
- Good access to outdoors, good transport links and a safe neighbourhood were the most common reasons for living in the area.
- Panel members' views on what should be the key priorities for the Council include healthcare, community safety and roads and transport.
- The majority of panel members agree local residents should have more say in local decision making and see the lack of awareness of opportunities as a barrier to residents getting involved.
- Most of the panel members who contacted the council used the website or telephone and the majority found it easy to do so.

1. Living in West Dunbartonshire

The first part of the survey asked for panel members' views on a range of issues relating to living in West Dunbartonshire. This included views on the area as a place to live, quality of life, key community priorities for members, and perceptions about the area.
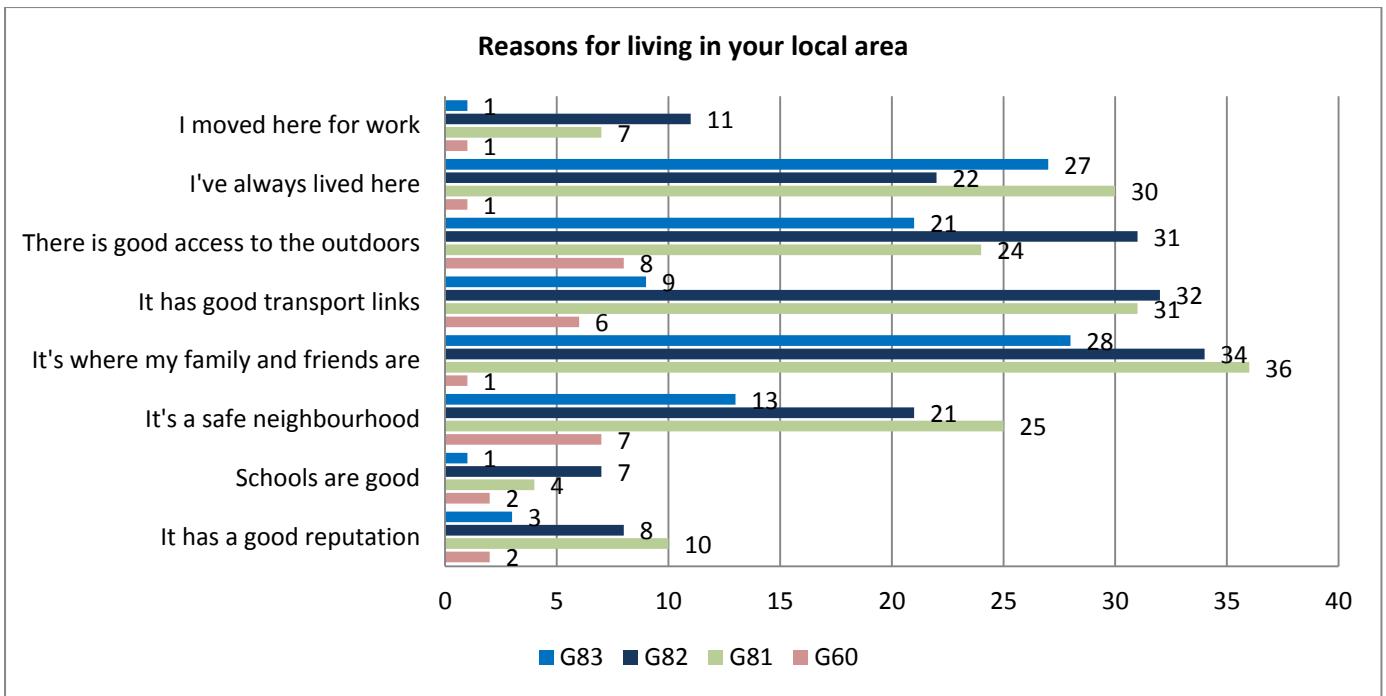
West Dunbartonshire as a Place to Live

Survey findings show a high level of satisfaction (77%) with West Dunbartonshire as a place to live. The rating was consistent across most parts of West Dunbartonshire with G60 area showing an increased satisfaction level of 91%. 12 respondents did not provide a post code and show a lower satisfaction level of 60%.

Panel members were also asked about their main reasons for choosing to live in West Dunbartonshire. As the chart on the following page shows, most members have friends or family in the area, and/or have always lived in the area. In addition respondents stated the good access to outdoors, good transport links and safe neighbourhoods as reasons for staying in the area.

There was limited variation at a local community (post code) level in reasons for living in West Dunbartonshire;

- Those in G83 are less likely to mention that the area has a good reputation and good transport links, but most likely to have lived in the area and have friends and family in the area.
- Those in G60 are less likely to have always lived in the area or have friends and family in the area, and most likely to mention good access to outdoors and the safety of the neighbourhood.

Reasons for living in your local area

Reason	G83	G82	G81	G60
I moved here for work	1	11	7	1
I've always lived here	27	22	30	1
There is good access to the outdoors	21	31	24	8
It has good transport links	9	32	31	6
It's where my family and friends are	28	34	36	1
It's a safe neighbourhood	13	21	25	7
Schools are good	1	7	4	2
It has a good reputation	3	8	10	2

Personal Quality of Life

When members were asked to rate their personal quality of life on a ten-point scale, from 1 being "very poor" to 10 being "very good", most were very positive. More than three quarters (78%) score this at 7 or more out of 10. Very few score their quality of life as less that 5 out of 10 (2%). This is reflective in the overall average rating of 7. All areas scored an average of 7 with the exception of G60 which reported a higher average rating of 8.
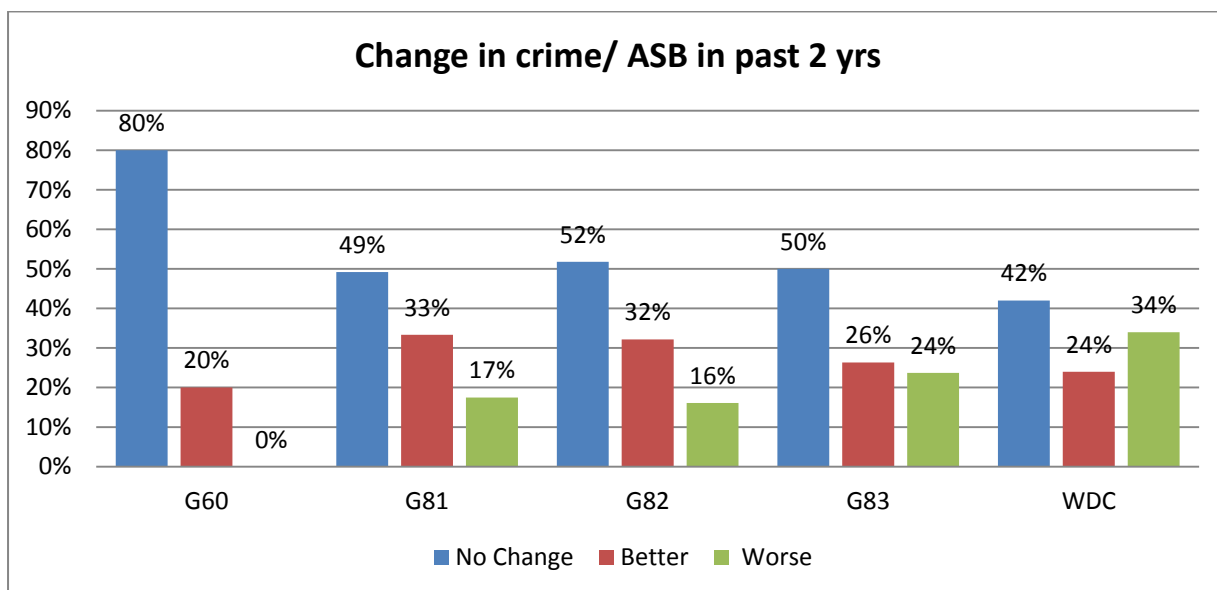
Community Priorities

The survey asked panel members to identify their three main priorities for their local area. Responses highlighted that healthcare is the most common community priority ranking highest in all but one of the areas, G60, where it is ranked 2nd after local environment. Other common community priorities include community safety, local environment & roads and transport; all of which feature in the top 5 of all areas. In contrast cost of living is among the lowest ranking within the choices selected.

Rank	WDC	G60	G81	G82	G83
1st	Healthcare	Local Environment	Healthcare	Healthcare	Healthcare
2nd	Roads & Transport	Healthcare *	Community Safety	Roads & Transport	Community Safety
3rd	Community Safety	Roads & Transport*	Local Environment	Local Environment	Roads & Transport
4th	Local Environment	Community Safety*	Roads & Transport	Community Safety	Care for older people
5th	Care for older people	Housing	Care for older people	Care for older people	Employment
6th	Education	Cost of Living	Education	Employment	Local Environment
7th	Employment	Education	Employment	Education	Housing
8th	Housing	Care for older people	Housing	Cost of Living	Cost of Living
9th	Cost of Living	Employment	Cost of Living	Housing	Education
		*same No of responses			

Perception of the local area

Panel Members were asked to provide their views on the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour over the past two years and whether there has been any change, both at local community level and also for the wider Council area. The majority of members have said that things are the same or better.

When responding on their local area 58% of members stated things are the same, and 28% felt things had improved. At a West Dunbartonshire level, 42% felt things were the same and an additional 24% felt things had improved. This means one third of respondents (34%) feel that things have become worse at a West Dunbartonshire level, although this figure is only 12% when considering their local community.
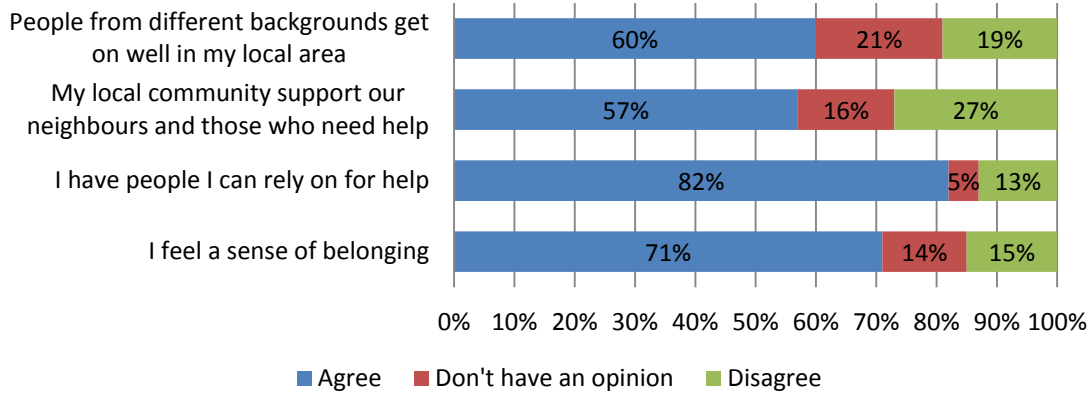

Change in crime/ ASB in past 2 yrs

Community Inclusion

Panel members were asked their views on a range of statements about 'sense of community' in their local area and how people get on with each other. The responses were relatively consistent across all the post code areas. The majority of those who expressed an opinion in each of the areas and for each of the questions agree or strongly agree with each of the statements.

Positively members feel a sense of belonging in their local community (71%), have people who can be relied on for help (82%), feel the local community supports neighbours and those who need help (57%) and feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together (60%).

Whilst more than half of respondents (57%) feel that their community supports neighbours and those who need help, around a quarter (27%) feel their community does not. The highest number of "don't have an opinion" responses (21%) was in relation to the statement that "people from different backgrounds get on well together", followed by 14% in relation to the statement "my local community support our neighbours and those who need help".

Views on my local community

Statement	Agree	Don't have an opinion	Disagree
People from different backgrounds get on well in my local area	60%	21%	19%
My local community support our neighbours and those who need help	57%	16%	27%
I have people I can rely on for help	82%	5%	13%
I feel a sense of belonging	71%	14%	15%

■ Agree   ■ Don't have an opinion   ■ Disagree

2. Getting Involved

We are keen to learn more from local residents about getting involved in local decision making. Panel members were asked about volunteering, the importance of involvement, opportunities and methods of involvement and experience of contacting services.

Volunteering / Getting involved

Just over half (51%) of members currently give unpaid time to support their local area, 19% have volunteered in the past and 30% had never volunteered in their local community.
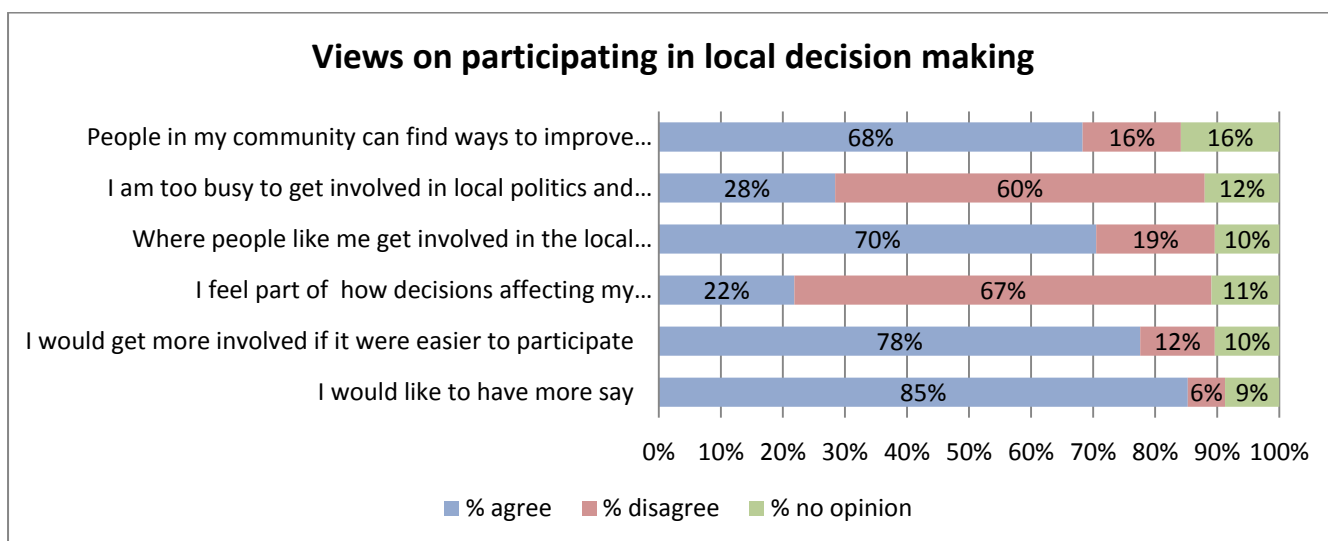
The survey also asked about involvement, of different types, in decision making processes over the last two years. More than half (59%) of the total responses showed involvement, with 20% being involved in surveys or consultations, 24% providing feedback on a specific service and 15% being a member of a formal community organisation or having attended a public event. 42% of respondents said they had not been involved in local decision making in the last two years.

The majority (93%) of respondents agree that local residents should be involved in making decisions about how money is spent on local services.

When considering involvement with decision making for their area, most respondents (85%) felt they would like to have more say, 6% did not want to be more involved and 9% had no opinion. Most respondents (78%) felt they would get more involved if it was easier to participate, 12% would not get involved regardless and 10% had no opinion.

More than two thirds of respondents agree that people like them can change things when they get involved (70%) and that local residents can find ways to improve things locally (68%). Only 19% and 16% respectively felt that this was not the case.

Only 28% of members felt they were too busy to get involved, with 60% saying that this was not the case. However only 22% feel that they are involved in decision making for their local community, with 67% stating that they do not feel part of decision making.

Views on participating in local decision making

Barriers to and methods of involvement

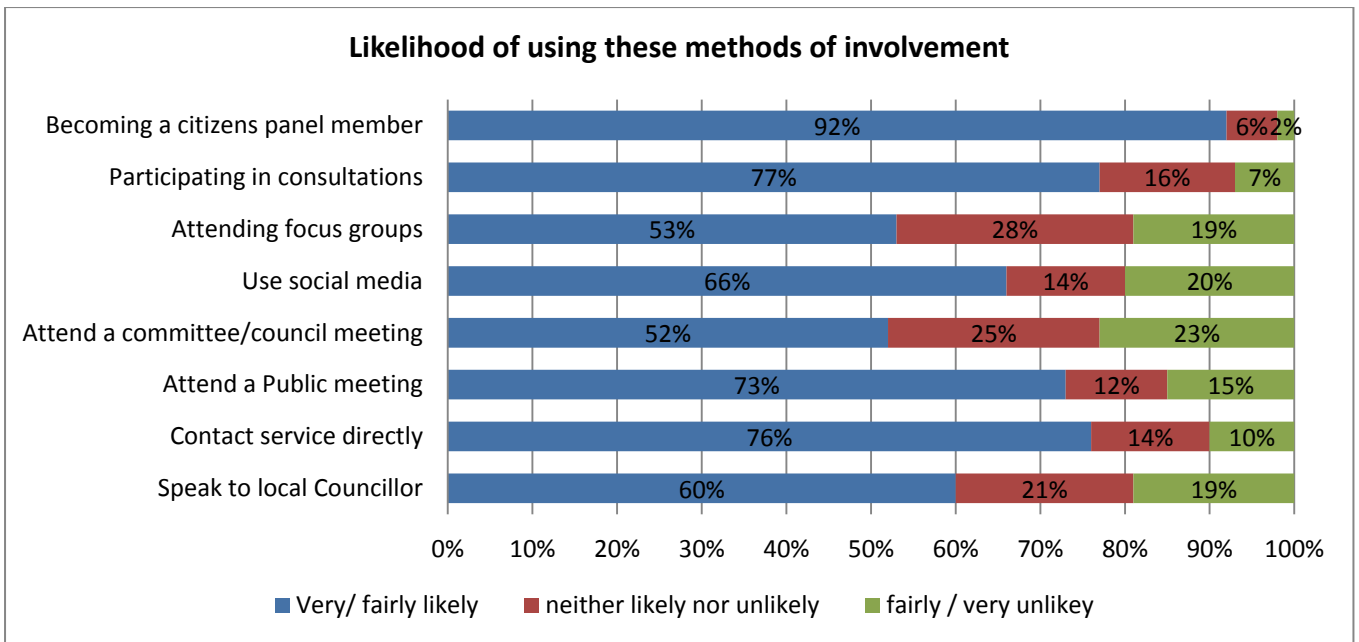We were keen to understand from members, what they felt the barriers to involvement were or may be. While all members recognised the range of barriers to involvement in some way or other, they felt that lack of awareness around opportunities was the biggest issue (91%) followed by feeling their contribution would not be valued (85%) or that they didn't have time (85%).

Barriers to getting involved

Barrier	Major	Minor	Not a barrier	No opinion
Feel they wouldn't be valued	49%	36%	9%	6%
Don't see what difference it makes	45%	33%	16%	6%
Not confident enough	40%	43%	12%	4%
Not aware of opportunities for getting involved	55%	36%	5%	4%
No time to get involved	45%	40%	12%	3%
Lack of interest	53%	32%	12%	3%

Members were given a range of methods for becoming more involved and asked how likely they would be to take up these opportunities. Over three quarters of members felt that participating in consultation was a good way to influence decision making (77%), closely followed by linking directly with services (76%) and attending public meetings (73%).
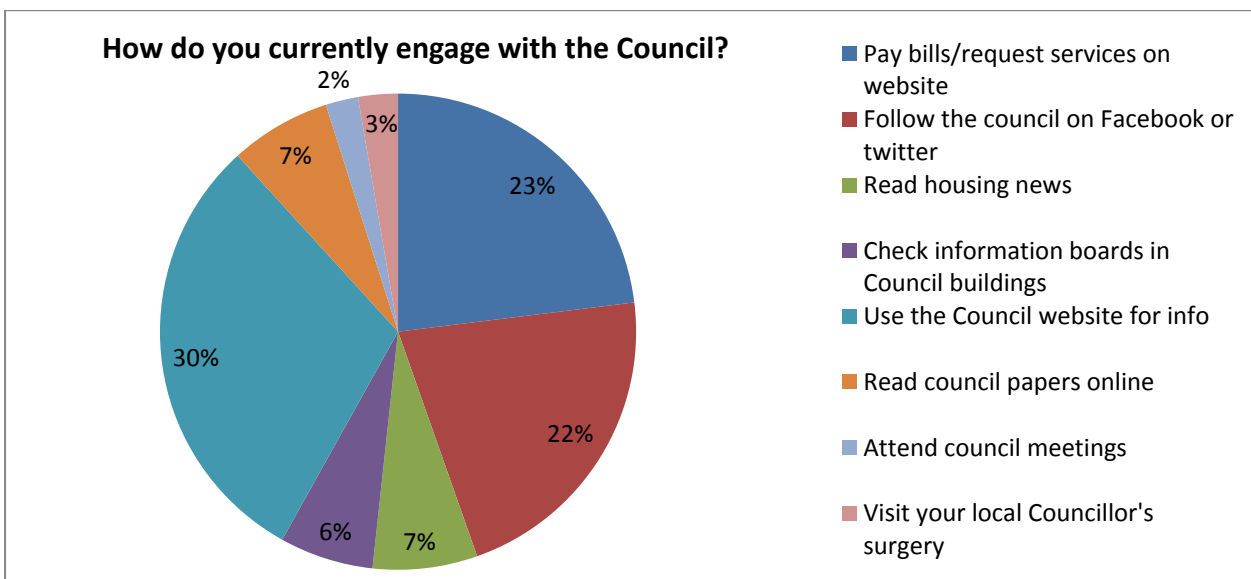
Two thirds of members said they would be likely to engage through social media (66%) with more than half stating they would come along to a public meeting and almost three quarters supportive of attending a council meeting (73%).

Likelihood of using these methods of involvement

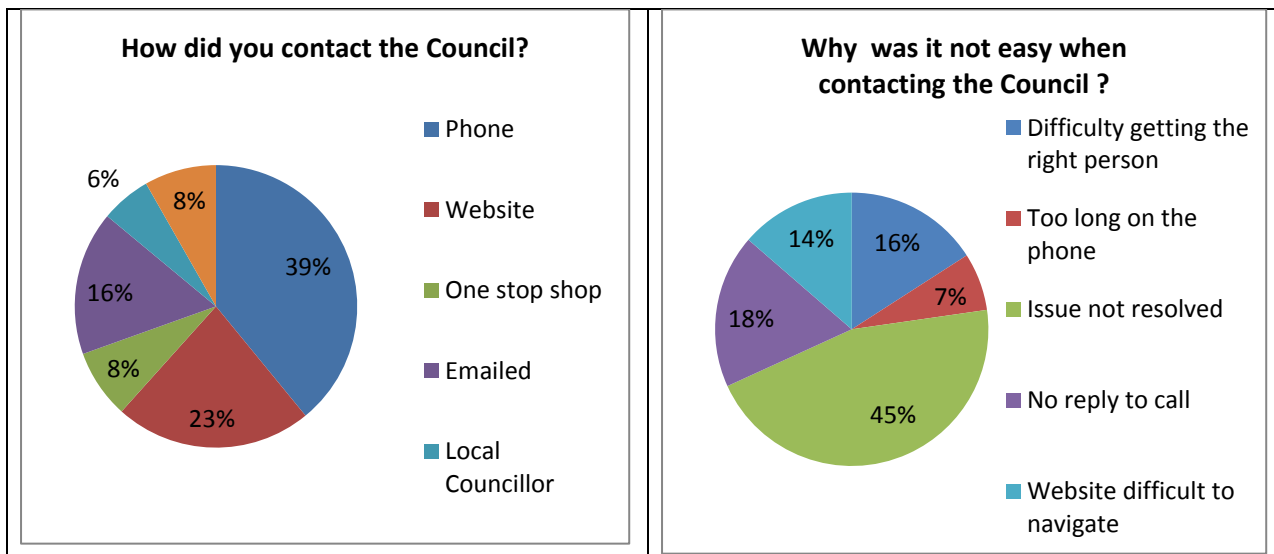| Method	Very/ fairly likely	neither likely nor unlikely	fairly / very unlikey
Becoming a citizens panel member	92%	6%	2%
Participating in consultations	77%	16%	7%
Attending focus groups	53%	28%	19%
Use social media	66%	14%	20%
Attend a committee/council meeting	52%	25%	23%
Attend a Public meeting	73%	12%	15%
Contact service directly	76%	14%	10%
Speak to local Councillor	60%	21%	19%

Engaging with the Council

Panel members were asked about the methods they use for engaging with the Council. 30% of members said they use the website to access information, with a further 23% using the website for paying bills / accessing services and 22% following the Council on social media. Very few members have attended a Council meeting (2%) or attended an Elected Member surgery (3%).

Members didn't feel that there were other methods of engagement which the Council could or should offer. However almost a quarter of respondents (24%) said they would be more likely to engage if they knew more about the issues being discussed/ considered; they suggested a regular newsletter or update be distributed widely using existing publications such as housing news, made available in Council buildings and published on social media.

How do you currently engage with the Council?

- Pay bills/request services on website — 23%
- Follow the council on Facebook or twitter — 22%
- Read housing news — 7%
- Check information boards in Council buildings — 6%
- Use the Council website for info — 30%
- Read council papers online — 7%
- Attend council meetings — 2%
- Visit your local Councillor's surgery — 3%

Accessibility

We asked members if they had contacted the council in the last six months and if so how easy they found it. The majority of respondents had made contact with the council (76%), the most common method was by phone (39%) followed by the Council website (23%). Of those who had contacted the Council in the last six months, 83% found it easy to do so with the remaining 17% stating they found it difficult. However the most common reason for this difficulty was that their issue was not resolved (45%) rather than a specific challenge with accessing the Council.

How did you contact the Council?

6%
8%
16%
8%
39%
23%

■ Phone
■ Website
■ One stop shop
■ Emailed
■ Local Councillor

Why was it not easy when contacting the Council ?

14%
16%
7%
18%
45%

■ Difficulty getting the right person
■ Too long on the phone
■ Issue not resolved
■ No reply to call
■ Website difficult to navigate

3. Citizen's Panel and Members

To ensure that the panel itself continues to be relevant and valuable to its members we ask members to give us their view on the surveys and topics covered.

94% of members feel that the questions are relevant whilst only 6% disagree. Those who disagree felt that more opportunity should be given for open views to be recorded, that questions are sometimes vague and that sometimes the questions feel leading. Almost all members (97%) feel that the Citizens Panel is a good way for the Council to gather views on how residents feel about services and priorities. Those who disagreed would like to see more communication on what action is taken following surveys.

Panel members were asked to suggest specific topics they would like to see in future surveys, the charts below summarise the main topics suggested. Of the responses received the most common suggestion for questions included roads (12%), housing (8%) and environmental matters (7%).

Topic	Rank
Roads- parking/roadworks/traffic management	1st
Services - housing	2nd
Environmental- recycling etc.	3rd
Dog fouling	4th
Change - view after & before	5th
Local environment	6th
Services - street cleaning/bins	7th
Transportation- inc. cycling	8th

Joining the Panel

We always look forward to welcoming new members to West Dunbartonshire's Citizen Panel. If you would like to become a member, you can do so by filling out our electronic form;

Join WDC Citizens Panel

Alternatively contact us at;

CitizensPanel@west-dunbarton.gov.uk