

Residents' Panel News

Issue 3 – November 2005



Dear Member,

Welcome to the third edition of the Waltham Forest Residents' Panel newsletter. The newsletter aims to inform panel members about different activities, provide feedback on surveys and other consultations and, more importantly, let you know what we plan to do with the results. Attached to this newsletter is a questionnaire which I hope you can take the time to complete. This time we are seeking your views on recycling, street lighting, roads and pavements, parks and open spaces and the Council's recent 'clean conscience' campaign.



Residents' Panel Manager – Jo McAreevey

Results from recent panel activities

Thank you to all of you who managed to return the previous survey (sent to you in July), which included questions on Culture and Leisure, Arts and Events, Sports and Leisure, Community Councils, Community Safety and Council Communication.

Below are some of the key headlines from the survey.

Culture and Leisure

You were provided with a list of leisure activities and asked which ones you had taken part in over the last year. The three most popular options were using a park or open space (86%), using a library (53%) and using a sports centre or swimming pool (52%). The least popular of the suggested options were:

- attending a music concert (27%)
- attending a sports or social club (26%)

You were asked how satisfied you were with the range of cultural and leisure facilities currently on offer in the borough. 58% said they were satisfied versus 17% who were dissatisfied.

You were asked about barriers to participation in cultural and leisure activities. The main reasons cited were: lack of time (60%), a lack of publicity about events (48%), cost issues (33%) and poor facilities (33%). The two most popular suggestions to encourage greater participation in cultural and leisure activities were:

- more widespread advertising
- provision of a greater range of events

Arts and Events

In this section of the survey you were provided with a list of arts and cultural events and questions were asked on awareness, attendance and satisfaction. 63% of you were unaware of any current arts or cultural events or festivals sponsored by the Council. In terms of events attended over the last year, the most popular were firework displays (19%), and the Walthamstow

Residents' Panel News

Issue 3 – November 2005



festival (18%). 42% of you did not attend any of the events on the list. Of those who attended events 80%, were satisfied. You were asked for ways in which future events could be improved. The most popular answer was improving publicity and promotion. With regard to museums and galleries 87% of you had heard of William Morris Gallery and 59% had visited at some time. Only 28% of you had heard of Vestry House Museum. Of those who had visited a museum or gallery in the last year 59% were satisfied with the facilities. More information on leisure and cultural services can be found on the Council's website:
www.walthamforest.gov.uk

Sports and Leisure

This section asked questions on how often you take exercise and the type of activity you do. The most popular activity was 'walking over one mile' with 31% doing this five times per week. You were also asked what would encourage you to increase your level of exercise. The most popular suggestions were the provision of concession cards (42%) and free swimming opportunities (40%).

All the information provided through this survey on culture, leisure, arts & events and sport will inform the development of the Cultural Services Strategies which will be presented to the Council's Cabinet in November 2005.

Some specific actions that will be taken to address the issues raised and help increase participation are listed below:

- We are planning major works to transform three libraries between

2006-2008 for more information please contact:
Katherine.pedley@walthamforest.gov.uk

- We have commissioned condition surveys to identify the necessary investment to improve facilities at leisure centres
- A review of the current Communication and Publicity Strategy will be completed by December 2005. This will address publicity issues raised as a barrier to participation in culture and leisure events.
- A review of leisure cards and the current charging system will be completed by April 2006. This review will consider offering concessions and free swimming opportunities to targeted groups of residents

For more information contact:
Clive.morton@walthamforest.gov.uk or visit the Council's website:
www.walthamforest.gov.uk

Community Safety

You were asked questions on how fear of crime in the area influences your quality of life. The results show that on average fear of crime does not impact on the quality of life of local residents, however Asian respondents were more likely to be affected by fear of crime. You were then provided with some scenarios and asked how safe you felt in these situations both during the day and after dark. In all cases you felt: safer during the day than after dark. Approximately half of you considered yourself unsafe while:

- waiting for public transport
- going out in the Town Centre

Residents' Panel News

Issue 3 – November 2005



- travelling on public transport
- going out in your own neighbourhood

The top five crimes that concerned you most were:

- Mugging (80%)
- Having your home burgled (73%)
- Drug related crime (71%)
- Having your car vandalised (67%)
- Drunken, intimidating behaviour (66%)

Black and Asian respondents were particularly concerned about being harassed because of their colour, race or religion.

The Crime, Disorder and Drugs strategy sets out the key things the Council is doing through our partnership with the police to address your concerns.

Some of these include:

- Providing safety alarms to vulnerable groups, such as, the elderly or residents who have been mugged or burgled
- Holding up to eight personal safety awareness workshops each year to vulnerable groups

The Council's website provides details of the full Crime, Disorder and Drugs strategy along with an executive summary.

www.walthamforest.gov.uk/safety

The feedback from this survey will be used to monitor progress against meeting our target to increase by 10% the number of people who feel safe

during the day and night by March 2008.

Council Communications

Questions were asked on whether you receive the Council's magazine (wfm), and if you found it interesting and informative. 78% of you receive it regularly. Of those who receive the magazine 80% say it is interesting and keeps you informed about what the Council is doing to improve services in the area.

You were also asked questions on usage of the Council's website in the last year. 56% have never visited the site, 29% visit the site less than once a month and 3% once a week.

The following actions will be taken in response to the feedback from the survey:

- Ensure delivery issues of wfm are addressed through negotiations in the re-tendering of the delivery contract to ensure that 100% of residents receive the magazine
- Explore options to improve the website making it easier for residents to find information
- Promote the website in wfm

For more information contact:

Melissa.Hoskins@walthamforest.gov.uk

Other Consultation

Services for Children and Young People

Residents' Panel News

Issue 3 – November 2005



Parents and carers in Waltham Forest have been asked by the council to voice their views to help shape the services provided to children and young people in the future.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is the name for a big government project across England which involves everyone who works with children and young people.

The five key aims at the heart of the Children Act 2004 are for *all* children and young people to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to matters that affect them and achieve economic well-being.

Teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers, youth workers and many others will need to work better together to make these aims their top priorities.

Consultations have been taking place since July with community organisations, schools and other early year's settings throughout Waltham Forest. These have involved 17 discussion groups with primary and secondary pupils in 13 schools across the Borough and 6 discussion groups with parents across the Borough. The results will help to inform the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) which is due to be published by April 2006.

For more information please contact:
Suzanne.elwick@walthamforest.gov.uk

Youth E-Panel

Children and young people are affected by a large number of services provided by the Council and we are committed to

improving the way we consult with this important group of the population. An exciting concept is currently being developed with a number of local schools called a "Youth E-Panel". It is essentially a residents' panel for young people delivered on-line. Young People tend to be very active on-line and it is a natural medium to communicate with a large number of young people. Depending on the success of an initial pilot of the panel, the youth e-panel will be launched by March 2006.

For further information please contact:
Mark.yeadon@walthamforest.gov.uk

Library Services Research

A detailed face-to-face survey of 1,200 Library users and non-users, plus a series of discussion groups were held over June and July. The issues researched included establishing the reasons for visiting or not visiting a library and identifying the priorities for improvement to the Library Service. Some of the key findings are that:

- Users of libraries go to a specific library for convenience, with 76% of library visitors stating that they visited a particular library because it was close to home
- Not surprisingly the main reason why residents visited a library was to borrow fiction and non-fiction books (cited by 46% and 47% of library users respectively)
- The main reasons for not using a library are a lack of time and not being bothered (cited by 56% and 36% of non-users respectively)

Residents' Panel News

Issue 3 – November 2005



- Satisfaction with library staff is high, with 92% of library users satisfied with the helpfulness of library staff
- Improved stock, especially books, was the most cited priority for improvement, 52% viewed this as one of their top three priorities for improvement

in future newsletters of the progress made.

The research was designed to inform both the Council's Library renewal programme, and the Library Service Strategy which will be presented to the Council's Cabinet in November 2005.

Further Information

This newsletter provides a summary of the feedback that you have provided and the action the Council has taken/ will be taking to ensure that the information is used to improve the services we provide.

For more detail on the results of the July survey and other consultations go to the Council's website

www.walthamforest.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can request details from Joanne McAreavey on tel 020 8496 4599 or e mail:

Joanne.mcareavey@walthamforest.gov.uk

Thanks...

Once again I would like to thank you for participating in the surveys and focus groups. All the information has been passed to managers within the Council for action. This information will also be used to inform future Council policy development. I will keep you informed