

# Staffordshire People's Panel

## Spring 2009 Survey Report: Executive Summary



## Document Information

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If you have any questions about the data contained in the report or would like to investigate the possibility of further analysis please contact Helen Francis on 01785 277450. For queries about future Staffordshire People's Panel consultation activities please contact Wendy Bailey on 01785 854267.

# Executive Summary

## 1. Introduction

Staffordshire People's Panel (here after referred to as 'the Panel') is a database of approximately 1,000 residents across Staffordshire that broadly reflect the geographic, gender and age profile of Staffordshire. These residents have agreed to be regularly consulted by Staffordshire County Council to help inform policy and improve service delivery. This report presents the findings of the Spring 2009 survey.

## 2. Methodology

In January 2009 all members of the Panel received a self-completion survey containing a range of topics. A total of 554 valid questionnaires were received by the final cut-off date, this represents a response rate of 65%. The data has been weighted to ensure it is representative of Staffordshire's population in terms of age, gender and district area.

## 3. Roads, Transport and Highways

Less than one in five (16%) of respondents were aware of the CLARENCE contact centre prior to the survey. Under a quarter of respondents (21%) had ever reported a highways fault, with almost half of these (48%) telephoning a council officer direct and a quarter (25%) contacting CLARENCE.

Just under a quarter of respondents were aware of the 'clear streets' initiative prior to the survey. Just over a third (34%) of these respondents felt that 'clear streets' has made a difference to illegal parking in Staffordshire.

Almost two thirds (65%) of respondents agreed that drivers parking on footpaths and verges should be fined, with those aged 18-34 not quite so sure (51%). The introduction of extra on-street parking was popular with the majority of respondents (64%), with even stronger feeling in Tamworth (76%) and Staffordshire Moorlands (74%).

Under a third (30%) of respondents had used a cycle route/lane in Staffordshire. Half of respondents would consider using cycle routes/lanes more often if there were more dedicated cycle routes away from roads.

### **Recommendations for service delivery: Roads, Transport and Highways**

- Increase awareness of the CLARENCE contact centre (Staffordshire Highways Hotline) particularly in the districts of Cannock Chase and South Staffordshire.
- Increase awareness of the 'Clear Streets' initiative and promote the positive benefits.
- Continue to promote cycling as a mode of transport, particularly in South Staffordshire and Newcastle.
- Consider introducing more dedicated cycle routes away from roads to encourage greater use of the cycle network.

## 4. Climate Change

Just over a quarter (27%) of respondents were aware, prior to the survey, of the council's commitment to reduce greenhouse gases. Over three quarters (77%) of respondents felt that the council could encourage residents to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by providing all households with a leaflet containing energy saving tips.

More than three quarters (76%) of respondents agreed that climate change was a major issue, with over half (58%) agreeing they could have an influence on climate change. Over three quarters (77%) of respondents were aware of what they could do to limit their impact on climate change and 80% were prepared to take steps to do so.

Respondents already do many things to tackle climate change with the top three being 'turn off light switches when leaving a room' (94%), 'turn down heating in your home' (79%) and 'install loft insulation' (66%). Just 2% of respondents currently do 'nothing' to tackle climate change.

### Recommendations for service delivery: Climate Change

- Raise awareness of the council's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Provide households with information on energy saving and climate change, through leaflets, 'Your Staffordshire' magazine and demonstration projects.
- Promote actions for individuals to limit their impact on climate change.

## 5. Staffordshire Libraries and Archive Service

Two thirds (66%) of respondents had visited a public library in the previous two years, of these respondents under half (44%) had visited only for their children and two in five (41%) for a library event. The most common reason for not visiting a library was not having the time (49%)

Under a quarter (21%) of respondents had used the online services or resources provided by the library service. The majority of respondents who had used the online services felt they were easy to use (83%) and helpful (92%). Almost half (45%) of those respondents who had not used the online services were not aware that they were available.

Less than one in five respondents (18%) had used the 24 hour renewal and information telephone line. The majority of respondents who had used the telephone line felt that it was easy to use (90%) and helpful (88%). Over half (52%) of respondents who had not used the telephone line were not aware of the service.

Only 5% of respondents had used the Archive Service within the previous 12 months and just 8% had visited one of the three Record Offices. Over half (52%) of those who had not visited the Record Office had not heard of the Archive Service.

### Recommendations for service delivery: Staffordshire Libraries and Archive Service

- Further publicise the availability of the online services and resources provided by Staffordshire Libraries, specifically amongst the younger age groups.
- Raise the profile of the 24 hour telephone renewal and information line to ensure residents are aware the service is available.
- Increase awareness of the Archive Services and locations of the Record Offices.

## 6. Economic Downturn

More than half (59%) of respondents felt that their personal finances had got worse over the previous 12 months with a quarter (25%) feeling they had got a lot worse. Just under half (49%) of respondents felt that their personal finances would get worse over the coming 12 months, with just 13% expecting them to get better.

### Recommendations for service delivery: Economic Downturn

- Service delivery across the county council needs to reflect the changing financial circumstances of its residents.

## 7. Keeping Residents Informed

Just under two thirds (61%) of respondents felt that the county council keeps them well informed about the services it provides. Almost two thirds of respondents (65%) currently find out information through the 'Your Staffordshire' magazine, with this being the preferred method of communication for a third (33%) of respondents.

### Recommendations for service delivery: Keeping Residents Informed

- Continue to work to ensure residents feel informed about the services provided by the county council, particularly in Staffordshire Moorlands and Newcastle-under-Lyme districts.
- Continue to use the county council magazine 'Your Staffordshire', local media and leaflets/posters as ways of communicating with residents.

## 8. How Residents Help to Develop Council Services

Two in five (40%) of respondents were satisfied with the opportunities for residents to take part in local decision making. Under a third of respondents agree that the county council **listens to** the concerns of its residents and less than a quarter (22%) agreed that the county council **acts upon** the concerns of residents.

The most common method of being involved in local decision making was through having signed a petition about public services (38%). The most popular reason for being involved

in local decision making was to make a contribution to the local community (71%).

The most popular panel activity was mystery shopping with 71% of respondents wanting to be involved. More than four in five (83%) of respondents felt that it was useful to receive an annual People's Panel newsletter.

### **Recommendations for service delivery: How Residents Help to Develop Council Services**

- Continue to promote opportunities for residents to get involved with decision making processes and ensure any outcomes are communicated to the public.
- Continue to produce an annual Panel newsletter, consider further consultation to find out why some residents do not find it useful (cost, content etc).