

## **TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 7 JANUARY 2021**

**RESIDENTS' SURVEY 2020**

**REPORT OF: Director of Communities, Customer and Commercial Services**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER: Cabinet Member for Co-operative Communities, Engagement and Partnerships**

### **PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

#### **1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 As a Co-operative Council, we are committed to listening to and involving residents in developing our plans to protect, care and invest to create a better Borough. Over the last year, we have increased our engagement with residents, carrying out a wide range of consultations, including a Residents' Survey that all residents of Telford & Wrekin were invited to take part in.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to report back on the results of the Residents' Survey, which are summarised in Section 4 and presented in full in Appendix A. Section 4 also gives examples of how we're responding to this feedback, and using it to develop Council services and to shape our plans and investment priorities.
- 1.3 The Residents' Survey was carried out between 29 July and 4 September 2020 and was managed in-house (compared to previously using external consultants to deliver this type of survey on our behalf). To ensure as many people as possible got involved, we ran a comprehensive communication campaign over this period, which included writing to every resident in the Borough, posting regularly on social media and asking Councillors, community groups and other partners to promote the survey in their local areas. To further incentivise residents to take part and to shop local, everyone who completed the survey received discount vouchers to spend in local High Street businesses and were also entered into a draw to win 'shop local' vouchers.
- 1.4 In total, **we received 5,473 responses**, exceeding our original target of 5,000, with responses from every ward across the Borough. **Appendix 1** provides a detailed breakdown of responses received from different populations (Appendix A, Section 2).
- 1.5 Residents were encouraged to complete the survey online where possible, however paper copies were available to ensure that people without access to the Internet were still able to take part. Section 1 of Appendix A shows how surveys were completed, with almost half (49%) being completed by smart-phone.

- 1.6 The aim of the survey was to capture views on issues that were topical and relevant to all residents, and that would inform the delivery of the Council's priorities. The main topics were:
- **Covid 19**, including the Council's response to the pandemic (see Section 4.1);
  - **Climate change** (see Section 4.2);
  - **Local area** – including local neighbourhood, local centre, Telford Town Centre and the wider Borough (see Section 4.3);
  - **Volunteering** (see Section 4.4).
- 1.7 Generally, feedback about the Council and its services was extremely positive, as shown in Figure 1 which shows some key headline results:



- 1.8 The survey also provided an opportunity to encourage people to have their say on an ongoing basis through a new Community Panel. Residents were asked if they were interested in finding out more about the Panel, with 30% (1,640) expressing an interest. Future plans for the Community Panel and other engagement priorities for the next 12 months are outlined in Section 5.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Members are asked to approve the following recommendations:

- a) To note the results and response to the Residents' Survey outlined in Section 4;
- b) To approve the proposals for future engagement in Section 5;
- c) To grant delegated authority to the Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Co-operative Communities, Engagement and Partnerships to take the necessary steps to implement these recommendations.

## 3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	These proposals support the delivery of all Council priorities	
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	Borough-wide impact
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>	The Residents' Survey has already been delivered. Proposals in Section 5 will be delivered by the end of March 2022.	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	<p>The Residents survey forms an important part of the consultation and engagement with the community which feeds into the Service &amp; Financial Planning process. The survey is funded from within existing resources.</p> <p>The Council has put in place a robust budget strategy to accommodate the additional pressures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic (which is included in the Financial Monitoring Report also on this agenda). A key priority throughout has been to support the community and residents of the borough, which has been funded through a combination of grant and council resources. In relation to Covid-19, the council has received and administered a number of grants on behalf of Central Government to support businesses, local taxpayers and the community; these have included a range</p>

		<p>of business support grants throughout the different stages of the pandemic, business rates relief, council tax support, emergency food provision and outbreak management funding.</p> <p>A range of other activities and investments are detailed in this report with the key funding identified.</p> <p>Consideration of available resources will be required in relation to any additional recommendations or commitments. PH/MLB 25.11.20</p>
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes	<p>There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, legal advice will be provided, whenever required, in relation to the Council's responses to the residents' feedback. IR - 25.11.20</p>
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Yes	<p>These proposals provide an opportunity to increase resident satisfaction, improve Council services and ensure resources are targeted where they are most needed.</p>
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	No	<p>Borough-wide impact</p>

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **4. OVERVIEW OF RESULTS & RESPONSES**

#### **4.1 Covid 19**

4.1.1 Residents were asked about how worried they were about Covid 19. Overall, 82% of residents were very or fairly worried, with 16% not worried at all. Residents were also asked what impact the pandemic was having on them and their families, both positive and negative. Overall, the results showed that for every category, more people felt that Covid was having a negative than a positive impact. The highest proportion of responses that highlighted a positive impact across all the categories was people feeling connected to their local communities (30% said Covid was having a positive impact). The areas that appeared to be most negatively impacted by Covid were:

- Access to health services (68% negative impact);
- Lifestyle (68% negative impact);
- Mental health (54% negative impact);

- Education & Schooling (44% negative impact), although this was before children returned to school in September 2020;
  - Physical health (41.8% negative impact).
- 4.1.2 The survey also sought views on the Council's response to the pandemic, including the information, support and services provided. Looking at how well informed people felt, for example about how to stay safe and the support available, the percentage of residents who felt well informed was consistently extremely high, ranging from 87-92%.
- 4.1.3 Around 17% of residents (893 people) had accessed one or more of the Council's community support services. People also reported having a wide range of other help, most commonly from family (40%) and friends or neighbours (29%), whilst 44% of residents said that they didn't need any help.
- 4.1.4 The Council services that the highest proportion of residents found helpful were the community support helpline and financial assistance (71% and 61% respectively). Other help such as community volunteers and business support had higher percentages of people saying the service had had no impact on them, which suggests that fewer respondents used these particular services.
- 4.1.5 At the time of the survey, all shops and Council services had recently re-opened after the first national lockdown, and so residents were asked how safe they felt using a range of local amenities. In some cases, there were a high percentage of 'don't know' responses, suggesting that some residents had not recently used some of the facilities. People appeared to have the least concerns about using community recycling centres and care services, and the most concerns about using shops, play areas and Council buildings, such as leisure centres and libraries (ranging from 20-23% of people saying that they didn't feel safe at all).
- 4.1.6 Overall, there were very high levels of support for the way the Council had dealt with the pandemic, with 75% saying they were satisfied with the Council's response and only 5% dissatisfied, and similarly, 71% agreeing that the Council had done a good job in responding to Covid with just 6% disagreeing.

***'You said, we did' – how we're responding to this feedback:***

- ✓ ***We have launched a new Let's Get Telford Healthy Campaign to help improve people's physical and mental health during the pandemic – 935 people have signed up to date for a range of help and advice, such as free access to online fitness classes;***
- ✓ ***We are working in partnership with education providers to keep as many schools and nurseries open as possible and have completed the roll-out of 326 laptops for children of families in receipt of Free School Meals to help them continue learning during and after Covid-19. The***

***scheme over a 3-year period will enable almost 1,000 children to continue their 'learning journey' at home;***

- ✓ ***We plan to pilot virtual hubs in community buildings to support residents without access to the Internet to have online confidential consultations, including health appointments;***
- ✓ ***We are continuing to communicate regularly with residents, for example introducing a new weekly update from the Council Leader;***
- ✓ ***Following the second national lockdown, we have re-opened our Community Support Helpline, including on Saturday mornings, and written again to everyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable and to every household in the Borough to let them know what support is available;***
- ✓ ***As most residents said they found financial assistance helpful, we have produced two new guides on financial support, one for working age people and one for pensioners. We have also created a new section on our Website so that anyone that is struggling financially can find all the help they need in one place;***
- ✓ ***Linked to this, we have launched a campaign to ensure eligible families take-up free school meals, and over the Christmas holidays we will be sending vouchers to help with food to low income families with pre-school and school age children, along with care leavers;***
- ✓ ***We have given more grants to community organisations to provide a range of support services – including a new winter coat scheme and extending the free breakfast boxes Borough-wide until Easter 2021 for families eligible for free school meals;***
- ✓ ***In January 2021, we will be promoting the extensive Covid secure measures in place at the Council's Leisure Centres in order to increase people's confidence to start or resume keeping fit and active.***

## 4.2 Climate Change

- 4.2.1 Residents were asked to rate how concerned they were about climate change on a scale of 1 (not concerned at all) to 10 (extremely concerned). Around 25% of residents were extremely concerned, whereas only 6% were not concerned at all. On the scale of 1-10, 74% answered 6 or above, reinforcing the Council's decision to declare a climate emergency in July 2019. More than 2,000 individual ideas for tackling climate change were suggested, mainly focused on Transport, Housing, Planning and Waste/Recycling.
- 4.2.2 The survey also asked what residents were already doing, or would consider doing, to reduce their own carbon footprint. Recycling was the activity that the highest percentage of residents do regularly (91%), however the results suggest that there is also potential to increase other activities, for example to triple the number of people using public transport, walking and cycling.
- 4.2.3 Looking at longer-term action, more than half of residents (59%) said that they already had fitted insulation and a further 20% would consider doing this. The two areas with the biggest potential to increase in the next five years were buying an electric vehicle and installing renewable energy (60% and 55% respectively).

***'You said, we did' – how we're responding to this feedback:***

- ✓ ***We have created a new priority within the Council Plan, 'our natural environment is protected and the Council has a leading role in addressing the climate emergency', to reflect residents' concern about climate change;***
- ✓ ***Through our service and financial planning process we have made £4m capital funding and £100k revenue funding available over the next 2 years to support this agenda***
- ✓ ***We have shared all residents' suggestions about how to tackle climate change with the Telford & Wrekin Climate Change Partnership, who are currently developing an action plan to help the Borough become carbon neutral by 2030, and we will also use this feedback to develop the Council's own Becoming Carbon Neutral Plan which will be updated in February 2021;***
- ✓ ***Reflecting residents' focus on transport, we have been working on a range of sustainable transport initiatives, including installing new cycle stands and cycle routes and purchasing new electric vans;***
- ✓ ***We intend to review travel policy with a view to making greater use of Teams software to cut travel time, costs and particularly emissions***
- ✓ ***Increasing our promotion of opportunities for all households to improve energy efficiency of their properties and address fuel poverty including promoting grant schemes for first time central heating; boiler repairs and replacement white goods, and working locally to improve resident access to the national Green Homes Grant Scheme.***

### 4.3 **Local Area**

4.3.1 The survey sought views on Telford & Wrekin as a place to live, ranging from people's immediate neighbourhood to the whole Borough. More detail is set out below, but key headline results were:

- **Local neighbourhoods:**
  - 78% satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live;
  - 77% agree that their neighbourhood is a safe place to live;
  - 68% agree that their neighbourhood is a place where people get on well together;
  - 39% agree that the Council listens to their views;
  - 19% agree that they feel able to influence decisions in their local area.
- **Local centres** - 63% satisfied with their local centre as a place to visit;
- **Telford Town Centre** - 64% satisfied with Telford Town Centre as a place to visit;
- **Borough of Telford & Wrekin** - 82% satisfied with the Borough as a place to live.

## Local Neighbourhoods:

- 4.3.2 To gain a better understanding of people's views about their immediate local area, residents were asked how satisfied they were with a range of neighbourhood services and also invited to add more detailed comments.

Recycling and waste collection was the service with the highest satisfaction levels (92%, with 70% of residents very satisfied), followed by parks and open spaces (72% satisfied) and environmental maintenance services, such as litter picking and grass cutting (65% satisfied). The lowest satisfaction levels were for maintenance of roads and pavements, and cycling routes and facilities (all 47% satisfied).

- 4.3.3 Residents' satisfaction with their local neighbourhood did vary across wards, with a general trend being that satisfaction was lower and dissatisfaction was higher in more deprived areas (as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation). An analysis by ward is detailed in Appendix A. There was also wide variation in views both across and even within wards about whether local neighbourhoods had got better, worse or stayed the same, although the majority of residents (63%) felt that their neighbourhood had stayed the same over the last 2 years.

- 4.3.4 Overall, a high proportion of residents agreed that their neighbourhood was a safe place to live, and that people from different backgrounds get on well together (see 4.3.1 above). However, this was a mixed picture across the Borough, with the percentage of residents who felt where they lived was safe ranging from 47% in Brookside, to 95% in Bratton & Admaston. It is also worth noting that anti-social behaviour was the most frequent concern in the additional comments, accounting for 32% of all the comments raised (also raised frequently as a comment regarding local centres).

- 4.3.5 Looking at how engaged and involved residents feel, 39% of residents agreed that the Council listens to their views, and more residents disagreed that they felt able to influence decisions in their area (40%) than agreed (19%). However, >40% of residents neither agreed nor disagreed with both of these questions, perhaps suggesting that some people were either unsure or unaware of how the Council is engaging with residents. Given that the responses to these questions are less positive than the overall picture, these results appear to be an outlier, and clearly need more investigation and focus (see Section 5).

- 4.3.6 Residents were also asked about their local Councillor. The majority of residents (56%) knew who their local Councillor was and how to contact them (62%), although this varied by ward and age group, for example only a third of 18-24 year olds knew who their local Councillor was.



## **Local Centres:**

- 4.3.7 The three local centres that residents said that they used most frequently for shopping and other services were Wellington (20%), Newport (11%) and Madeley (8%). Wellington was also the centre that more residents appeared to be travelling to, with people from 22 out of 30 wards identifying it as the centre they use most often. In contrast, some local centres were almost exclusively used by people living in the vicinity, such as Brookside, Randlay, Woodside and Sutton Hill.  
For those people who didn't use any local centre, the most common reasons were using online shopping or only shopping at Telford Town Centre.
- 4.3.8 The majority of residents (63%) were satisfied with the local centre they use most often, although this ranged widely from 44% (Sutton Hill) to 87% (Ironbridge). However, satisfaction did not necessarily correlate with people's choice of local centre, for example Wellington had the third highest dissatisfaction rating, which is surprising given that people appear to be travelling to Wellington from other areas.
- 4.3.9 Residents were also asked to select up to 5 things that what would encourage them to visit their local centre more often. Whilst the responses varied by local centre (see Appendix A, Section 6.2), having a better range of shops and cleaner or better maintained green spaces and public areas most frequently and consistently appeared in people's 'Top 5' (55% and 31% respectively).

## **Telford Town Centre:**

- 4.3.10 Residents were first asked about how often they visited Telford Town Centre (TTC). The highest percentage of people (37%) visited monthly, although young people were more likely to visit more often.
- 4.3.11 The survey explored why people visited TTC and what they liked best about it. The clear top reason why people visited TTC was for shopping (80%), followed by banking/postal services (33%), Telford Town Park (29%) and pubs/restaurants (28%). Shopping and the Town Park were also the two things that people liked best about TTC. Overall, satisfaction with TTC (64%) was similar to local centres, although levels of dissatisfaction were slightly lower.
- 4.3.12 Residents were also asked for their views about what facilities and uses should be included in a proposed new development in TTC known as Station Quarter, which will be sited on land between the railway station and the shopping centre. The three most popular options were green spaces (60%), entertainment venues (38%) and education/training facilities (29%). There were a wide range of other suggestions across 10 themes, with particular support for independent businesses and green infrastructure, such as electric vehicle charging points and cycle facilities, the latter reinforcing responses to the climate change questions (see Section 4.2).

## **Borough of Telford & Wrekin:**

4.3.13 Overall satisfaction with the Borough as a place to live was extremely high (82%), with only 7% of residents saying they were dissatisfied. It is also positive that this high level of satisfaction was consistent across all demographic groups and there was less variation between wards than for other questions.

4.3.14 Residents were asked what they would like the borough to be like as a place to live in 10 years' time. The top 3 responses were safer place with less crime (30%), greener (26%) and development in the right places (13%).

### **'You said, we did' – how we're responding to this feedback:**

- ✓ ***With West Mercia Police and other partners, we have secured £500k funding for a Safer Streets Project to improve community safety in Brookside, the ward where the lowest percentage of residents said they felt safe;***
- ✓ ***We are also developing plans for a Borough-wide Safer and Cleaner Neighbourhoods initiative from April 2021, which will see investment to tackle anti-social behaviour, a key concern raised by residents;***
- ✓ ***We will use ward-level data on satisfaction with neighbourhood services to monitor and target improvements;***
- ✓ ***We will continue to invest in maintenance of roads and pavements across Telford & Wrekin, as set out in our Highways Capital Programme and as part of our £55m investment programme (2020 – 2024);***
- ✓ ***We are currently preparing a £25m Towns Fund bid to Government which will include proposals for improving Wellington and Oakengates Town Centres and the Station Quarter development in TTC. The feedback and suggestions from residents will be used to inform detailed development plans;***
- ✓ ***We will use the Residents' Survey data to prioritise other funding, such as Stronger Communities (£1m) and New Communities (£500k for Lawley & Lightmoor). Residents' views will be combined with other data to build up a detailed ward profile in order to targeted funding to have the most impact;***
- ✓ ***We will invest a further £4.8m into the Pride in Your High Street initiative, again using residents' feedback about improvements they would like in our Borough Towns to shape how this is spent. We have launched a Virtual High Street Campaign to keep people shopping locally, on line, and will be launching a range of measures to support and reinvigorate footfall into our local centres post Covid in the New Year, including a new MyTLC shopping app and a programme of events***
- ✓ ***We are also planning various ways we can increase awareness of the work of Councillors and local democracy – by becoming more interactive and having promotional videos on the Council's website. Also targeting younger people specifically by visiting schools and colleges to talk to them about what the Council does and how they can get involved.***

- ✓ ***We are currently consulting on the first phase of the Local Plan Review (which closes on 8 January) and of the key priorities this includes protecting and enhancing our green spaces and delivering stronger communities through regeneration and renewal.***

#### 4.4 **Volunteering**

- 4.4.1 The final section of the survey focused on volunteering, which has been such an important part of the community's response to the challenges of 2020, such as flooding and the Covid pandemic.
- 4.4.2 It was encouraging that 31% of residents said that they had volunteered over the last two years. People aged 64-75 were more likely to volunteer than other age groups, with the lowest participation amongst 25-34 year olds. Family or work commitments appear to be a particular barrier for this age group, with 50% giving this as a reason why they hadn't volunteered (compared to 44% overall). Similarly, 'not enough time' was more of an issue for younger than older people, whereas a proportion of older people were unable to volunteer because of their age, health condition or a disability.

#### ***'You said, we did' – how we're responding to this feedback:***

- ✓ ***We contacted just over 1,100 local residents over the summer, who volunteered during the first national lockdown, to signpost them to longer-term volunteering opportunities with the Council and its partners;***
- ✓ ***We have introduced more volunteering opportunities for younger people to enable them to play a more active part in community life, build their confidence and support them in their personal development – recent examples includes Youth Health Champions and Climate Change Champion roles;***
- ✓ ***We are also planning to introduce a 'flexible volunteering' model, helping us overcome some of the barriers residents have reported, such as lack of time. This model will be ideal for people who want to help out but can't commit to anything long term or only have a limited amount of time available. We will look to recruit a bank of volunteers who are happy for us to notify them as and when opportunities come up and decide whether or not they can help (this could include a range of short notice or one off requests for help).***

#### 5. **Future Engagement**

- 5.1 The Residents' Survey is just one of a wide range of engagement exercises we have carried out this year. Despite the pressures of Covid, we have continued to develop ambitious plans for Telford & Wrekin, and have sought views on a number of new strategies and plans, including:

- Service and Financial Planning (Budget) Strategy;
  - Housing Strategy;
  - Local Plan Review;
  - Customer Strategy;
  - Home to School Transport Policy.
  - Learning Disability Strategy
- 5.2 In addition to these one-off consultations, we facilitate a number of forums that we regularly engage with about our services on an ongoing basis, such as the Young People’s Forum, the Interfaith Council, Care Leavers and the Making it Real Board for Adult Social Care service users.
- 5.3 However, it is clear from the Residents’ Survey that we need to broaden our approach to engage with a wider cross section of residents, and to focus on areas or groups where the percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions is particularly low. An example of where we have already started to do this is in Brookside, where we are currently consulting residents on the Safer Streets project. We have also started to send out a regular newsletter to Brookside residents to feedback the improvements that are being made, and how residents have influenced these.
- 5.4 To support this, we want to set up a new Community Panel. This should not be ‘one size fits all’ where all members are consulted on everything, instead we are proposing a more flexible and targeted approach. Residents will be able to opt in or out depending on their interests and availability. As well as traditional surveys, panel members will be able to get involved in a range of other ways, including focus groups (virtual/physical), mystery customer assignments or citizen’s juries, where a small group of residents come together to make recommendations either on a specific topic, such as climate change, or at a locality level. We would also like to work alongside panel members to develop new services e.g. as testers for the new My Telford app that is currently being developed.
- 5.5 The next step is to follow up with the 1610 residents who expressed an interest in joining the panel, and also to do some additional targeted recruitment to ensure that the panel is as representative of the Borough’s population as possible.
- 5.6 As with volunteering, we are also proposing to do more quick, bite-size engagement, that anyone can take part in without committing to be a member of the Community Panel, such as polls on social media, via the app or by SMS. The new Customer Strategy includes plans to capture more instant feedback from customers, such as through QR codes in Council buildings, automated satisfaction rating at the end of phone calls, and further roll-out of tools such as Net Promoter Score (where customers use a Scale of 1 to 10 to indicate how likely they are to recommend a service to others), which is already being used successfully to improve Leisure Services.
- 5.7 Another key group we want to engage with more is visitors, in order to shape our event programme and destination marketing. It is proposed to explore the

costs and practicality of supplementing the methods above with some more creative options, such as live polling, feedback walls at events or key destinations (virtual/physical) or even giving a sample of audience members or visitors wearable technology to track mood via heart rate, location and social media use.

- 5.8 Finally, it is critical that we routinely report back to people the difference that they have made by engaging with us and how their feedback has been used. This is a key priority within the new Customer Strategy, and to reinforce the 'You said, we did' message we will design a graphic that will be used consistently on social media and other communication channels with customers and residents.

**6. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- 6.1 None.

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None.

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