

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT BY REPORT BY VIVIEN SMITH, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC POLICY, TRANSFORMATION & PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

ABSTRACT

This report provides information to members with regards to services in the Strategic Policy, Transformation and Public Sector Reform Directorate, albeit that a decision is not required in terms of the current Scheme of Delegation to Officers and the Order of Reference of Committees.

1. SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION - SCHEDULES

There is one schedule which contain key background information related to services delivered in the Strategic Policy, Transformation & Public Sector Reform directorate for the period 25 May to June 2020.

Where there are references to other documents (e.g.: consultation documents/audit reports) that are associated with the relevant schedule a link to that document has also been included.

2. REPORT AUTHOR

This report and associated schedule has been compiled by Alison Smith, Service Leader – Strategic Policy and Economy who can be contacted by emailing ACCESSCHXEcddev@angus.gov.uk.

List of Appendices:

Schedule 1 – Citizen Survey Report 2020

ANGUS COUNCIL

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

23 JUNE 2020

ANGUS COUNCIL CITIZENS' SURVEY REPORT 2020

ABSTRACT

An Angus Citizens' Survey is undertaken on behalf of Angus Council every two years. The specific research objectives of the 2020 Citizens' Survey were to establish public views and experience aligned to the council's priority themes of Economy, Place, People and Angus Council.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In 2017 following the last Citizens' Survey, it was agreed to continue with the Citizens' Survey every two years. This latest survey was delayed from December 2019 due to the general election and took place in February 2020.

The Citizens' Survey remains an integral part of how we gather information about our citizens' experience of living in Angus and satisfaction levels with services.

It should be noted that the Citizens' Survey was carried out before the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, findings from February 2019 may not reflect currently held views. However, it will serve as a useful indication of the pre COVID situation and views which will inform our post COVID recovery.

- 1.2 A total of 1,513 interviews were carried out with a representative sample of Angus residents. The sample structure was designed to replicate the sampling methodology and structure utilised in the 2017, 2015, 2013 and 2011 surveys. This involved a disproportionate sampling methodology where:
- 309 interviews were completed in deprived areas of Angus
 - 1,204 in the rest of Angus (with c.150 interviews completed in each of the eight wards within Angus)

2. KEY FINDINGS

- 2.1 When asked to consider their agreement with statements about Angus Council, the following were most likely to be agreed with:
- 76% agree the Council offers a good range of services (up from 73% in 2017)
 - 71% agree the Council provides good quality services (up from 56% in 2017)
 - 70% agree the Council communicates well with the public (up from 46% in 2017)
- 2.2 Method of contact has changed since 2015, most notably with regards to contact via the council's website. This has risen from 5% in 2015 up to 13% of contact in 2017 and again to 17% in 2020. Aligned with this, 52% of respondents said that they would prefer to receive information from the council via the website, although 65% would still like to get information by paper methods.
- 2.3 The level of agreement has increased for each statement since the 2017 survey, most significantly with regards to listening to complaints (increased by 32% points), communicates well with the public (increased by 24% points) and has friendly and helpful staff (increased by 24% points).
- 2.4 Just under half of respondents were in full time employment (44%) and 13% in part time employment. 29% were retired. Of those respondents in employment, 17% live in Angus but work outside Angus. The main reasons given for working outside Angus were:
- more can be earned outside Angus (50%)

- can't get a job doing the sort of work that they do in Angus (30%)
- 2.5 With regard to the environment and amenities in their local neighbourhood, satisfaction has remained consistently high, maintaining satisfaction levels above 90% for most aspects. Satisfaction with shopping facilities has decreased significantly (falling from 94% to 72%).
- 2.6 The majority of participants (92%) stated their neighbourhood is a very safe place to live, while a further 8% stated their neighbourhood was a fairly safe place to live. The proportion of participants who rated their neighbourhood as very safe has increased since the previous survey, from 89% to 92% and is the highest reported since 2013.
- 2.7 32% agreed that they can have a say on what is happening in their local area and 35% agreed that other people in their community can have a say on what happens in their local area. These have both decreased since 2017, falling from 39% agreeing that they can have a say and 44% agreeing that others can have a say.
- 2.8 One in 5 respondents (20%) said they had undertaken some form of work or activity on a voluntary basis in the last 12 months. This has risen compared to 12% in 2017, 8% in 2015, and 10% in 2013.
- 2.9 Respondents who have not taken part in any community activity of organisations were asked to explain why this was. Just under three quarters of respondents (74%) stated they were not interested, 26% stated they didn't have time, 5% stated they don't know enough about organisations of what's on and 5% stated they do not have anyone to go with or do not feel comfortable participating.
- 2.10 Compared to 2017, there were significant increases in the experience of problems with the cost of domestic energy bills (rising from 3% experiencing problems with this to 8%) and the cost of food (rising from 2% experiencing problems with this to 6%).
- 2.11 Encouragingly, decreases were noted in the incidence of experience of problems with changes to benefits (falling from 6% to 1%) and problems with Council Tax payments (falling from 9% to 1%).
- 2.12 Respondents who were in employment or on a government training programme were asked if they had ever seriously considered starting their own business or if they have ever started their own business. 87% said that they have not thought about this. Almost one in ten (8%) said that they had thought about it but had not yet started their own business.
- 2.13 Respondents were asked if they were aware that Angus Council could provide help with a range of aspects which would support them into work. Just under half (40%) said they were not aware of any of these. The level of awareness was greatest in terms of apprenticeships (47%) and training courses (39%). It is interesting to note that satisfaction with the availability of information on jobs available (54%) and awareness of apprenticeships (49%) and training courses (42%) were greater in the most deprived areas than other areas of Angus.
- 2.14 Just under half of respondents (42%) shop on their local high street at least once a week or more, 29% shop once a month, 20% a few times a year and 9% stated that they never shop on their local high street. When asked to select from a list what would make them shop on their local high street more often, most commonly stated were:
- a better offer of shops (73%)
 - high street events or entertainment (28%)
 - cheaper parking (24%)
- 2.15 Almost one in four (24%) respondents have used the Visit Angus website or social media channels to find out what there is to see and do in Angus. Of those, 93% said that they were able to find the information they needed.

NEW QUESTIONS in 2020

- 2.16 Respondents were asked for the first time since 2011 how satisfied they are with the broadband and mobile coverage in their neighbourhood, with 97% of participants being satisfied in this respect.

- 2.17 The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale was developed to enable the monitoring of mental wellbeing in the general population and the evaluation of projects, programmes and policies which aim to improve mental wellbeing. WEMWBS has 2 scales: the original 14-item scale and the short 7-item scale. In previous Angus Citizens Surveys the 14-item scale was used. However, in this 2017 study the shorter 7-item scale was used.
- 2.18 Overall, both males and females have similar levels of low mental wellbeing, however males have slightly higher levels of high mental wellbeing. There are significant differences by age with older respondents (aged 65+) significantly more likely to have low wellbeing scores.
- 2.19 Overall, 17.1% of respondents to the survey had a low level of mental wellbeing, 63.9% a moderate wellbeing, and 19.0% a high level of wellbeing.
- 2.20 The majority of respondents never feel that they lack companionship (87%), that they are left out (89%) or that they are isolated from others (87%).

3. FUTURE SURVEY

The next Citizens' Survey is scheduled to be carried out in 2021.