



Talkback

The People's Panel newsletter

Autumn 2008

Welcome to the new survey

It's now time for the Autumn Survey of the People's Panel.

The survey includes questions on community safety and the Council's budget.

We are also asking about contacting the council, whether you play golf, and what you think of our council newspaper.

We realise that it has been 12 months since the last survey so we are sending you this newsletter to keep you updated.

If you've changed your address since then, or if you've decided you no longer wish to be part of the panel, please let us know.

Also, if you prefer to complete surveys online rather than on paper, please let us know. Everyone who completes an online survey has the chance to enter a prize draw for £100 of vouchers. Details of how to get in touch are given below.

The next survey will take place early in 2009.

What you told us

A big 'thank you' goes out through this newsletter to all the members of the People's Panel who took part in the last survey in Autumn 2007.

1,150 members of the Panel took the time and trouble to complete the survey—that's almost 86% of all the 1,342 members.

Most people chose to fill in the paper version of the survey, while around 250 people opted for the online questionnaire.

The results from the survey have been analysed and a report on the results on the budget consultation is given overleaf.

If you would like to see all the results, then visit the website:

www.westlancsdc.gov.uk/panel

Please complete the new survey. The more people take part, the more accurate the results will be. Your input helps the Council make important decisions about services so please take the opportunity to give your views.

How to get in touch

If you need to get in touch about the People's Panel, please contact Edwina Leigh at the Council Offices at 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk. Tel 01695 577177. Or email: edwina.leigh@westlancsdc.gov.uk

If you want to leave the People's Panel at any time, for any reason, just let us know.



The Council's budget

You may remember that the Autumn Survey included questions about the Council's budget.

The information you gave was studied by councillors and managers before the important budget meeting in February when the Council decided how much it would spend on various services, and what the new level of council tax would be. Here are a few of the main points:

Council Tax

- Half of panel members said Council Tax should be increased by inflation to keep services at their present level. That's almost exactly the same as the year before.
- Slightly less than a quarter of panel members thought Council Tax should be increased by a small amount above inflation to extend and improve services.
- Around 15% of the Panel thought Council Tax should be kept at the current level by reducing services.

Councillors listened to your views and announced a Council Tax rise of just 3.35% despite a really low government funding settlement. This meant an increase of just £5.83 a year for the average Band D property - a rise of just over 11 pence per week.

Community Safety was chosen by the highest proportion of Panel members as the area where the Council should spend more money. This area of work was also given top ranking the previous year. Community Safety remains one of the top priorities for the Council.

Questions on the budget are included in the new survey and the information you give will help councillors make important decisions early in 2009.

Click, call or come in...

If any Panel member—or any local resident—has a local problem or wants some information about our services, just let us know...

Click onto the Council website www.westlancsdc.gov.uk. You can find information, pay bills, tell us what you think and request services

Call us on 01695 577177. Trained customer advisers will deal with your call.

Come in to the Customer Service Points at 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, or the Concourse, Skelmersdale.

Large print

Please get in touch if you would like a large print version of the People's Panel questionnaire.

Also, if you are receiving a large print version but don't need one, please let us know.

Details of how to get in touch are given on the front page of this newsletter.

