

CITIZENS PANEL RESULTS

JULY 2002

Introduction

The Council established a Citizens Panel in 1999/2000. This is the sixth panel since inception. It contains a representative sample of people living in the District of Stratford-on-Avon. By surveying this Panel, it is possible to obtain views and opinions representative of local residents.

Methodology

The Panel was refreshed in the summer with 300 residents added and 100 taken off. 1,200 questionnaires were mailed, with 675 returned in the timeframe allowed. This represents a response rate of 56%.

Results

MAKING YOUR VOICE HEARD

Q1	Stratford District Council have a series of meetings which the public can attend, i.e. area community committees, area planning committees, any Council committee. Are you aware that you can attend any meetings involving councillors?	Yes	61.1%	No	38.9%
Q2	Are you aware that members of the public are allowed to ask questions at those Council meetings?	Yes	68.9%	No	31.1%
Q3	Are you aware that these committees of the Council are held at different locations around the District?	Yes	52.2%	No	47.8%
Q4	Do you know when and where these committees take place?	Always	7.0%	Never	20.6%
		Sometimes	72.4%		
Q5	How do you think Stratford District Council should notify you of where these meetings takes place and of the decisions made at Council meetings?	Newsletter	48.4%	SDC website	25.8%
		Distribution of committee agendas & minutes	23.7%	Newspapers	51.7%

Other ways of notifying the public

	Nos. of Responses	%
Village/ Council noticeboards	17	17.4
Via free newspapers	13	13.3
Email	11	11.3
Newsletters/ Parish magazines	9	9.2
Display in libraries	9	9.2
Via Parish Council	3	3.1
Internet	3	3.1
Post	3	3.1
Council offices	3	3.1
Other	27	27.6
TOTAL	98	100.0

Other mentions include *SDC newsletter*, *display at post offices* and *via the parish clerk*.

Q6	If yes to distribution of committee agenda and minutes, how should these be distributed?			
	<i>Paper copies found at Council offices</i>	31.9%	<i>Mailed out on request</i>	59.4%
	<i>Paper copies found at libraries</i>	52.2%	<i>Other , please specify</i>	18.8%

Out of 28 other ways of distribution suggested, *use of the SDC website* and *email* were prevalent.

Q7	How often do you think the Council takes account of the views you make known to it?			
	<i>Always</i>	6.3%	<i>Never</i>	12.9%
	<i>Sometimes</i>	80.9%		

Q8	In the past three years, have you done any of the following?			
	<i>Attended a public meeting organised by SDC</i>	18.8%	<i>Contacted your councillor</i>	34.0%
	<i>Written a letter about a local issue to a newspaper about SDC services</i>	9.1%	<i>Attended an exhibition or viewed plans of a proposed local development</i>	45.6%
	<i>Telephoned the Council over an issue</i>	41.6%	<i>Attended any public session of a local Council committee meeting</i>	13.8%
	<i>Written a reply to a public consultation about a local issue (not the Citizens Panel)</i>	13.6%	<i>No</i>	14.1%
	<i>Signed a petition about a local issue</i>	47.1%		

Q9	Will this encourage you to contact the Council in the future to air your views?			
	<i>Yes</i>	52.4%	<i>Maybe</i>	37.1%
	<i>No</i>	10.5%		

Q10	How effective are the following ways that you think can influence the Council's decision-making processes?				
		<i>Very effective</i>	<i>Quite effective</i>	<i>Not at all effective</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
	Speaking to your local councillor	15.1%	57.6%	17.9%	9.3%
	Contacting the Council's Chief Executive	9.4%	32.8%	23.5%	34.4%
	Contacting the relevant Council department	8.5%	55.5%	24.7%	11.2%
	Mounting a campaign	15.7%	43.0%	18.8%	22.5%
	Being part of an existing pressure group	14.1%	51.3%	12.2%	22.5%
	Attending a public meeting	10.3%	46.8%	28.8%	14.0%
	Signing a petition about a local issue	8.7%	49.3%	28.7%	13.3%
	Writing a letter about an issue to the local newspaper	11.4%	36.8%	34.1%	17.8%
	Writing a reply to a public consultation about a local issue	5.8%	41.3%	25.1%	27.8%
	Attending an exhibition or viewed plans of a proposed local development	6.1%	37.4%	40.1%	16.4%
	Attending any public session of a local Council committee meeting	7.0%	38.8%	28.8%	25.4%

Q11 What other ways of seeking resident's views should we use?

(Mentions 4 times or more)	Nos. of Responses	%
Surveys/ mailings/ questionnaires/ write to homes	68	19.2
Door to door canvassing/ individual meetings	24	6.8
Listen and take account of people's views	23	6.5
Ask for views in local newspapers	22	6.3
Via on-line website	21	6.0
Referendum	14	4.0
Local publications/ newsletters	11	3.1
Parish council/ local meetings	11	3.1
Email	10	2.9
Meetings with councillors	10	2.9
Councillor surgeries	10	2.9
Telephone people	10	2.9
Inform people about planning developments/ general issues	9	2.6
Internet discussion page	8	2.3
Notice boards	6	2.6
Open/ public meetings	6	2.6
Send out information with council tax demands	5	1.5
Local radio	5	1.5
In street/ at supermarkets surveys	4	1.2
Other	77	21.8
TOTAL	354	100.0

Out of the 77 other, *focus groups, press releases, pressure groups* and *suggestion boxes* were mentioned.

Q12 In what ways should councillors make themselves more available to the electorate?

(Mentions 4 times or more)	Nos. of Responses	%
Clinics/ surgeries/ regular weekly sessions	113	35.5
Advertise/ publish contact details	33	10.4
Local meetings/ open forums	31	9.8
House visits/ door to door/ walkabouts	25	7.9
Talk to/ attend parish council meetings	17	5.4
Make themselves known/ be seen in community	13	4.1
Email	11	3.5
Internet/ website	11	3.5
Newsletter	11	3.5
Telephone	8	2.5
Local newspaper	7	2.2
Mailshot	6	1.9
Advertise when available	6	1.9
Be seen at public events	5	1.6
Workshops	4	1.3
Other	45	14.1
TOTAL	319	100.0

Out of the 45 other, *radio phone-in, inform what committee attending, attend schools* and *visit community groups* were mentioned.

Q13 The Council works in partnership with other public sector and voluntary organisations to meet the needs of the District. Do you think we should supply you with more information about this work?

<i>Regularly</i>	43.8%	<i>Occasionally</i>	54.3%
<i>Never</i>	1.9%		

DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS (MAY 2002)

Q14 Did you vote in the last District Council elections in May 2002?

<i>Yes</i>	82.4%	<i>Not eligible/not on electoral register</i>	0.5%
<i>No</i>	16.6%	<i>Can't remember</i>	0.6%

Q15 If you VOTED in the last District Council elections in May 2002, which of the following reasons best describe why you did so?

<i>Because I am interested in local issues</i>	77.2%	<i>Because the Polling Station is near where I work or live</i>	8.6%
<i>Because I wanted the party I support to win</i>	43.5%	<i>Because I happened to hear that the election was taking place</i>	2.2%
<i>Because I think it is my duty to vote</i>	83.8%	<i>Because I knew electronic machine voting was taking place</i>	2.1%
<i>Because I happened to be passing the Polling Station</i>	0.6%	<i>None of these</i>	0.4%

Q16 How would you rate electronic voting that was tested at the last District Council elections, in terms of the following?

	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Fairly good</i>	<i>Neither good nor poor</i>	<i>Fairly poor</i>	<i>Very poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Being easy to use	41.8%	32.6%	10.0%	7.1%	4.2%	4.2%
Being safe and secure from fraud or abuse	28.9%	21.5%	10.0%	7.2%	4.6%	27.9%
Providing you with privacy when casting your vote	36.9%	27.4%	12.5%	10.1%	8.5%	4.6%
Providing an accurate, error-free count of voting	38.2%	21.3%	4.8%	4.2%	3.6%	28.0%

Q17 Overall, would you say that the new methods made the process of voting better or worse, or did it make no difference?

<i>Better</i>	39.3%	<i>No difference</i>	32.1%
<i>Worse</i>	22.5%	<i>Don't know</i>	6.1%

Q18 If you DID NOT VOTE in the last District Council elections in May 2002, which of the following reasons best describe why you did not?

<i>Because I am not interested in local issues</i>	1.9%	<i>Because I did not know the election was taking place</i>	1.9%
<i>Because I do not support the parties</i>	18.9%	<i>Because I knew electronic machine voting was being used</i>	2.8%
<i>Because I think it is not my duty to vote</i>	1.9%	<i>None of these</i>	74.5%
<i>Because the Polling Station is too far away from where I work or live</i>	1.9%		

ELECTRONIC (e) GOVERNMENT

Q19 Do you have access to the internet at home or at work?

<i>Already have</i>	66.6%	<i>Do not have and will not have in next 3 years</i>	27.0%
<i>Will have within 3 years</i>	6.3%		

Q20 Can you send and receive e-mails at home or at work?

<i>Can already</i>	67.4%	<i>Cannot and will not be able to within 3 years</i>	25.9%
<i>Will be able to within 3 years</i>	6.7%		

Q21 What interactive services would you like to be able to gain access to electronically from the Council?

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>
Submit a planning application	35.0%	26.2%	14.6%	24.1%
Check progress of a planning application	54.1%	17.7%	6.4%	21.7%
Book a leisure facility	53.2%	19.9%	8.2%	18.7%
Notify change of circumstance	56.9%	19.3%	8.7%	15.2%
Register a complaint	60.8%	17.1%	8.8%	13.3%
Make a comment about a service	63.1%	17.4%	6.1%	13.3%
Submit a form	51.1%	22.3%	11.1%	15.5%
Submit a license application	39.7%	19.8%	15.2%	25.3%
Apply for a job	35.3%	16.8%	17.7%	30.3%
Make a payment for any Council service	41.9%	20.9%	20.4%	16.8%

Q22 What other services would you like to access electronically from the Council?

(Mentions 3 times or more)	Nos. of Responses	%
Agenda/ committee minutes	27	21.1
View planning applications/ planning matters	15	11.8
Information on Council functions	10	7.9
Information on Council meetings	5	3.9
Being able to vote	4	3.2
Bulk rubbish collection	4	3.2
Calendar of events	3	2.4
Discussion forum	3	2.4
More information generally	3	2.4
Information on the budget	3	2.4
Other	51	39.9
TOTAL	128	100.0

Out of the 51 other, *contact details of councillors, information for new residents and voting registration* were mentioned.

Q23 If you were to receive a payment from the Council, would you like to receive it electronically into your bank/building society account?

Yes 68.7% No 31.3%

Q24 In regard to the following forms of communication, would you like to?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Access information from our website	67.7%	22.7%	9.5%
Receive E-mails from us on specific topics	50.3%	39.0%	10.8%
Receive E-mail responses in place of letters	41.3%	48.7%	10.0%

Q25 What is an acceptable wait for a response to an E-mail if you sent one?

24 hours 19.5% More than 5 days 1.4%
 1-2 days 43.9% Don't know 15.5%
 3-5 days 19.7%

Q26 Would you expect to receive a quicker response to an E-mail than other forms of communication?

Yes 76.3% No 23.7%

Q27 Which ways would you prefer contacting Stratford District Council in the future?

By telephoning 86.8% By visiting our website using an interactive kiosk i.e. a stand-alone machine in a Post Office 5.7%
 By personally visiting the Council in Stratford or at one of its area offices 54.1% By texting the Council by mobile telephone 2.8%
 By writing a letter 62.3% By speaking to your local district councillor 55.3%
 By e-mailing the Council via computer or through a digital television 49.6% Other 1.2%
 By visiting the Council website interactively via your computer 37.8%

Q28 If Council offices were to open at each of the following times in the future, please tick to indicate when you may contact the Council more than once a year?

Between 8am and 9am (weekdays) 20.5% Saturday afternoon 11.2%
 Between 9am and 5pm (weekdays) 68.3% Sunday morning 6.8%
 Between 5pm and 8pm (weekdays) 34.3% Sunday afternoon 5.1%
 Saturday morning 47.2%

Q29	How important is it that when you contact the Council you are able to speak to a single person who can give helpful answers to most of your queries?		
	<i>Very important</i>	82.9%	<i>Fairly unimportant</i> 0.8%
	<i>Fairly important</i>	13.7%	<i>Very unimportant</i> 0.3%
	<i>Neither important nor unimportant</i>	2.0%	<i>Don't know</i> 0.3%

Q30	How important is it that if you ring the Council the call is answered by a person, rather than an automated system that gives you options to choose from?		
	<i>Very important</i>	75.9%	<i>Fairly unimportant</i> 1.7%
	<i>Fairly important</i>	14.4%	<i>Very unimportant</i> 0.5%
	<i>Neither important nor unimportant</i>	7.3%	<i>Don't know</i> 0.3%

PLANNING SERVICE

Q31	Have you used the planning service in the last 3 years?		
	<i>Yes</i>	30.7%	<i>No</i> 69.3%

Q32	Which aspects of the planning service have you used in the last 3 years?		
	<i>I made a planning application</i>	37.1%	<i>I had my building works inspected</i> 14.7%
	<i>I made a general enquiry about planning</i>	32.0%	<i>I wanted to look at a planning application</i> 43.1%
	<i>I commented on another person's planning application</i>	55.8%	<i>Other reason</i> 2.5%
	<i>I commented on the local plan</i>	22.3%	

Q33	If you obtained information on the planning process, where did you get it from?		
	<i>Already knew</i>	23.3%	<i>Professional Agent</i> 20.6%
	<i>From the Council</i>	56.1%	<i>Word of Mouth</i> 12.7%
	<i>Library</i>	4.8%	<i>Other source</i> 7.4%

Q34	How easy or difficult to understand was any information you obtained about the planning service from Stratford District Council?		
	<i>Very easy</i>	26.8%	<i>Difficult</i> 1.0%
	<i>Easy</i>	31.4%	<i>Very difficult</i> 2.6%
	<i>About average</i>	33.0%	<i>Not applicable</i> 5.2%

Q35	How well informed did the Council keep you, about your planning application(s)/enquiry(s)?		
	<i>Very well informed</i>	14.4%	<i>Poorly informed</i> 24.9%
	<i>Well informed</i>	51.4%	<i>Very poorly informed</i> 9.4%

Q36	Overall, how easy or difficult was it to use the Planning Service?		
	<i>Very easy</i>	18.4%	<i>Difficult</i> 5.3%
	<i>Easy</i>	36.8%	<i>Very difficult</i> 2.1%
	<i>About average</i>	37.4%	

Q37	Should Stratford District Council take action against people undertaking development without planning permission?		
	<i>Yes</i>	95.7%	<i>Don't Know</i> 2.8%
	<i>No</i>	1.5%	

Q38	Should Stratford District Council take action against people who break the terms of their planning permission?		
	<i>Yes</i>	95.2%	<i>Don't Know</i> 3.7%
	<i>No</i>	1.1%	

HERITAGE AND DESIGN SERVICE

Q39	Have you contacted the Heritage and Design Service within the last 3 years?						
	Yes	7.7%	No			92.3%	
Q40	What was the nature of your contact with the service?						
	<i>Applicant or agent in respect on works to protected trees or hedgerows</i>					33.3%	
	<i>Applicant or agent for development affecting a listed building or conservation area</i>					25.0%	
	<i>Applicant or agent seeking landscape advice in respect of a planning application</i>					6.3%	
	<i>Seeking general advice about listed buildings or conservation areas</i>					16.7%	
	<i>Seeking general advice about trees or hedgerows</i>					16.7%	
	<i>Seeking general advice about the landscape</i>					2.1%	
Q41	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your contact with the service.						
		<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
	The advice I received was clear and easily understood	19.5%	51.2%	19.5%	7.3%	2.4%	0.0%
	I found that the advice was helpful	11.6%	53.5%	23.3%	9.3%	2.3%	0.0%
	The Council provided me with advice promptly	12.2%	43.9%	34.1%	4.9%	4.9%	0.0%
	The staff providing the advice were knowledgeable	16.3%	48.8%	27.9%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%
	The staff providing the advice were courteous	34.8%	52.2%	13.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q42	Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the advice and help you received from the Heritage and Design Service?						
	<i>Very satisfied</i>	29.2%	<i>Fairly dissatisfied</i>			8.3%	
	<i>Fairly satisfied</i>	37.5%	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>			8.3%	
	<i>Neither satisfied or dissatisfied</i>	16.7%					

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Q43	How effective do you think Stratford District Council is in.....				
		<i>Very effective</i>	<i>Quite effective</i>	<i>Not at all effective</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
	Improving the built environment	3.9%	52.3%	29.1%	14.7%
	Protecting the historic environment i.e. Listed Buildings, Conservation areas	16.4%	58.1%	14.3%	11.2%
	Protecting the natural environment i.e. appearance of the landscape, protecting trees and woodlands	10.4%	54.6%	22.8%	12.2%
Q44	If you have or had to report a flood, who would you contact?				
	<i>Fire Brigade</i>	57.3%	<i>Stratford District Council</i>		27.8%
	<i>Environment Agency/Floodline</i>	66.1%	<i>Your local parish or town council</i>		12.1%
	<i>Warwickshire County Council</i>	13.7%	<i>Other</i>		4.9%
Q45	If you did report a flood, how satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the way it was handled initially?				
	<i>Very satisfied</i>	23.7%	<i>Fairly dissatisfied</i>		11.8%
	<i>Fairly satisfied</i>	28.9%	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>		10.5%
	<i>Neither satisfied or dissatisfied</i>	25.0%			
Q46	Are you concerned about flooding where you live?				
	Yes	20.6%	No		79.4%
Q47	Stratford-on-Avon District needs a balance between different types of housing to ensure the local economy can function. How successful do you think Stratford District Council is in encouraging the development of affordable housing?				
	<i>Very successful</i>	2.9%	<i>Fairly unsuccessful</i>		42.3%
	<i>Fairly successful</i>	35.5%	<i>Very unsuccessful</i>		19.3%

LEISURE CENTRES

Q48	Would you like to use the leisure centres in the district more often than you currently do?				
	Yes	54.8%	No		45.2%
Q49	Why don't you use them as often as you would like to?				
	<i>There is nothing available locally</i>	16.0%	<i>The facilities are too crowded</i>		33.2%
	<i>Need better crèche facilities</i>	5.0%	<i>Parking problems/parking too expensive</i>		36.2%
	<i>Opening times not convenient</i>	17.8%	<i>The facilities cater mainly for the young</i>		19.8%
	<i>The facilities are usually dirty</i>	16.3%	<i>I do not have the time</i>		26.5%
	<i>Transport problems</i>	11.7%	<i>There is a lack of information available</i>		28.0%
	<i>They are too expensive</i>	35.6%			
	<i>Other, please state</i> 83 varied comments were made				

ABOUT US

Q50	How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Stratford-on-Avon District Council?					
		<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree or disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
	The Council treats all types of people fairly	3.5%	31.4%	50.3%	12.3%	2.5%
	The Council treats all areas of the District fairly	1.9%	17.3%	40.4%	30.1%	10.3%
	The Council needs to make more effort to find out what local people want	36.5%	45.3%	13.6%	3.9%	0.6%
Q51	How well do you think Stratford-on-Avon District Council keeps you informed about the services and benefits it provides?					
	<i>Very well informed</i>	4.1%	<i>Poorly informed</i>			11.1%
	<i>Well informed</i>	25.0%	<i>Very poorly informed</i>			2.6%
	<i>About average</i>	57.3%				

ABOUT YOU

White					
	<i>British</i>	97.1%	<i>Irish</i>		0.45%
	<i>Other White Background</i>	1.2%			
Mixed					
	<i>White & Black Caribbean</i>	0.45%	<i>White & Asian</i>		0.0%
	<i>White & Black African</i>	0.15%	<i>Other mixed background</i>		0.15%
Black or Black British					
	<i>Caribbean</i>	0.0%	<i>Other Black background</i>		0.15%
	<i>African</i>	0.0%			
Asian or Asian British					
	<i>Indian</i>	0.15%	<i>Bangladeshi</i>		0.0%
	<i>Pakistani</i>	0.0%	<i>Other Asian background</i>		0.15%
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group					
	<i>Chinese</i>	0.0%	<i>Other Ethnic Group</i>		0.0%