

CITIZENS' PANEL

Newsletter: Autumn 2012

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Welcome to the latest edition of the Citizens' Panel newsletter!

I would like to thank you as members of the Panel for your continued engagement with the Council. Whether by attending focus groups, filling in surveys or attending events, your views are extremely important to us.

In the last year we have undertaken a large number of consultations and we have used the views you have provided to improve and change services. This newsletter will show you some examples, as well as outlining some of the work we do outside of the Panel.

In the future you should see improvements in the way we engage with you, as we work alongside our partner organisations on a joint project with Merthyr Tydfil, which is explained in more detail later in the Newsletter. Please keep in touch and let us know how you think we can improve our engagement with you.

Cllr Maureen Webber
Council Business & Public Relations

Budget Consultation 2012/13



The Council undertook a wide ranging consultation on the budget for 2012/13 where over 500 people and Citizen Panel members took part. The Citizen Panel members were invited to take part online or via a number of focus groups that were held across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

► You told us...

- There had been improvements in 2011/12, in waste management and recycling.
- You supported the Council's employment initiatives
- The Council should protect local jobs and frontline services.
- The Council should prioritise the potential impact of the nationally proposed benefit changes.
- Any Council tax rise should be below 3%.

► What we did next

The views we collected provided the Council with key information to consider when writing the budget strategy and deciding on spending priorities and council tax levels. As a result;

- We continued to protect jobs, and created 33 apprenticeships to give young people fixed-term, paid employment and training.
- We continued to protect frontline services.
- The Council is looking closely at the impact that the benefit changes will have across Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- The Council Tax rise was set at 2.49%.

We are undertaking a session in the Autumn to feedback on some of the service investment and improvements that have been taking place.





Leisure Satisfaction Survey

Leisure Services conduct an annual satisfaction survey to establish the public's perception of the services provided and the resulting information is used to drive service improvement. 2011 was the third year that the survey has taken place. Citizen Panel Members were invited to take part in the survey.

► You told us...

- The most popular activities were the fitness suite, swimming and aqua fit.
- The staff were friendly (92% good or very good) and helpful (90%).
- The knowledge of staff was good or very good (79%)

- The main issues for improvement were related to cleanliness, maintenance, equipment and information.

► What we did next

- Launched plans for the £50m development of the Ynys site in Aberdare
- Launched a brand new awareness-raising campaign
- Began work on a £2.8m regeneration of Llantrisant Leisure Centre
- Launched new and exciting classes including Aqua fit aqua zumba, free-running, diving and much more.

Strategic Equality Plan Consultation

The Council has produced its Strategic Equality Plan to set out how it aims to meet its commitment to equality and how it will meet its legal obligations contained within the Equality Act 2010.

A comprehensive engagement process took place to involve/consult as many people as possible on the Draft Equality Objectives. The Citizens' Panel were asked their views along with a large number of other stakeholders;

► You told us...

Feedback was very positive and some clear messages emerged around the need for the Council to address Disability Hate Crime, work with schools, talk to the 'right' people rather than the 'same people' and to raise awareness of the issues with both staff and public.

► What we did next

The Equality Objectives were written into the Strategic Equality Plan reflecting the feedback received and a comprehensive action plan has been developed in order to deliver them.

Further information is available from the **Equality & Diversity Team**, email:

equality@rctcbc.gov.uk
or telephone: 01443 424170

Thinking about fitness...
Ystyried cadw'n heini...

...think your local leisure centre
...cofiwch am eich canolfan hamdden

www.rctcbc.gov.uk/leisure
www.rctcbc.gov.uk/hamdden

leisureforlife hamddenamoes

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RCT Engagement Strategy - How involved do you feel?

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, Interlink (Voluntary Sector), Cwm Taf Health Board and South Wales Police, wanted to find out how they could improve the ways in which they engage with the public. The results were to be used to inform a borough-wide Engagement Strategy. Surveys were distributed in various locations around RCT and online links were emailed to the Citizens' Panel.

➤ You told us...

- 75% of respondents did not feel listened to by public organisations.
- 46% of respondents said they were unsure whether their views would make any difference.
- 39% said they had a lack of time.

- 67% of respondents felt their views had not made a difference.
- Over 80% said it was important or very important to have feedback.

➤ What we did next

A draft Engagement Strategy is now out for consultation. Taking into account the full range of views the following key areas for development were agreed;

- Develop a consistent partnership approach to public engagement.
- Ensure public engagement becomes core business
- Promote and publicise public engagement in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- Develop better ways of communicating.

Rhondda Cynon Taf & Merthyr Tydfil Joint LSB Consultation & Engagement Project

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council working in partnership with Merthyr Tydfil Council, South Wales Police, Cwm Taf Health Board, Interlink and Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil have secured funding for a joint consultation and engagement project under European Social Funding.

The Project will:

- Develop improved consultation & engagement capacity across partners.
- Share best practice and encourage shared learning and expertise including the improvement of effective consultation with marginalised and under represented groups.
- Develop joined up consultation projects to prevent survey overload and duplication.

For further information please contact the Project Manager on **(01443) 424069**



Latest Surveys

Look out for the Resident Survey and you could be a Big Winner!

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council would like to find out your views on a wide range of issues, through this Resident Survey, 2012.

The latest Survey covers issues relating to contacting the Council, Children and adults services, Budget priorities, Community Safety and much more. The survey should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete and will be available online, in libraries, One4All centres and Leisure centres from September to November 2012.

By completing the survey, you will have the opportunity to enter a free prize draw where you could win one of the following prizes:

- **1 x Meal and overnight stay at the Ty Newydd Country Hotel, Aberdare**
- **1x Family climbing session at V9 Bouldering, Treforest Industrial Estate**
- **1x Tour of Welsh Whisky, Penderyn Distillery**
- **Family tickets to a pantomime at a Rhondda Cynon Taf venue**

The online survey can be accessed at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/currentconsultation



Single Integrated Plan - "Delivering Change"

Get in touch and join the Citizens' Panel

We would like to reassure you that all information you provide us with through consultations will be kept anonymous and treated in confidence. We will be seeking your views on forthcoming consultations. Look out for questionnaires or invites shortly and have your say!

If you would like to:

- join the Citizens' Panel
- change your details on the Panel
- would like to retire from the Panel or
- you have any queries

Please contact: Consultation Team (01443) 424136 or email consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk

"Delivering Change" is a new plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf, which will be published in April 2013. It's called a "Single Integrated Plan" because, for the first time, organisations working in the County Borough have come together to produce one plan representing their joint vision, priorities and actions.

How can I get involved?

This is a draft plan that has been published for consultation. We want to know what you think before putting together a final plan. The consultation is open for 12 weeks, between Friday 21st September and Friday 14th December.

You can get involved via the Consultation Web page on the Council's Website: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/currentconsultation or call **01443 680527**

What will happen as a result of me giving my views?

Your views will be listened to and compared with the opinions of others, and ideas or concerns that come up will be used in writing the final plan. A report will be published at the end of the consultation where you will be able to see what people have said.



Coming up

- The Phase 3 Budget Feedback Seminar
- The Annual Leisure Centre Satisfaction Survey
- The Annual Budget Consultation 2012/13
- A new online Consultation Hub

Check the consultation section of the Council website to keep up to date with the latest consultations at: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/currentconsultation

The Annual Leisure Centre Satisfaction Survey

Help shape-up Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's leisure service by taking part in its annual customer satisfaction survey.

The questions include, how often do you visit a leisure centre, what times during the day would you like to visit, are you familiar with morecard and what type of activities do you take part in?

There is also a section on the performance of the staff, facility presentation and value for money at each of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's leisure centres. Rhondda Cynon Taf provides 11 leisure centres, including eight swimming pools across the County Borough.

The 2012 Leisure Satisfaction Survey is open to all Rhondda Cynon Taf residents and the consultation process is set to last for eight weeks and is now available at all leisure facilities in Rhondda Cynon Taf and online at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/currentconsultation