



## North East Derbyshire District Council Citizens' Panel

### SUMMARY REPORT

November 2021

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Final Report

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### Methodology

The North East Derbyshire Citizens' Panel was established to obtain residents' views on a variety of topics. The panel is currently made up of 256 residents; 76% retired, 13% full-time employed, 3% part-time employed, 3% self-employed, 3% unemployed and 2% not being able to work.

Residents are typically mailed or emailed a questionnaire twice a year and November's survey contained six sides of questions including a section of demographics questions.

A total of 256 questionnaires were sent out on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November and respondents were given two weeks to complete/return their responses.

A total of **163 responses** were received (88 paper, 75 emails), reflecting a response rate of 64%.

A copy of the questionnaire can be found on the Ask Derbyshire site and a copy of the Viewpoint Newsletter can be found on the Council's website.

## Profile

The information in this section compares the profile of respondents to this survey with the District as a whole at the time of the 2011 Population Census. This helps indicate how representative the findings are and should be taken into consideration alongside the results.

## Respondents to Survey:

### Sex

Male: 49

Female: 51

### Age Group

16 – 24 years: 1

25 – 64 years: 32

65 years and over: 68

### Disability

Yes, limited a lot: 15

Yes, limited a little: 20

No disability: 64

## 2011 Census Population Figures

### Sex

Male: 49

Female: 51

### Age Group

16 – 24 years: 12

25 – 64 years: 63

65 years and over: 25

### Disability

Yes, limited a lot: 11

Yes, limited a little: 11

No disability: 78

Responses to this questionnaire are over-representative of the age group 65 years and over, and is under-representative of the younger age groups compared to the age profile of those aged 16+ in the District at the time of the 2011 population census.

## Electric Cars

The Council is looking into the current and future need for Electric Vehicle Charge Points (EVCPs) on public land across the District. By 'Electric Vehicle' in this instance, we mean 'Electric Car'. We are specifically trying to gauge whether there is current demand for EVCPs on Council-owned car parks and parking areas and whether public charging points would encourage a higher take up of Electric Car. No trend data is available for comparability since this is the first time we are running this exercise.

The clear majority of respondents (97%) are not in ownership of an electric car and 60% stated they are not planning on buying or leasing one in the next three, five or ten years. Almost a tenth (9%) said they would in **three** years while almost one sixth (14%) said they would in **five** years and close to a fifth (18%) said they would in **ten** years.

A fifth of respondents (20%) said there was already a suitable location to park or charge the electric car in their area while 39% said there was not and close to half (41%) said they did not know.

When asked if residents would consider purchasing an Electric Car if charge points were available in parking areas in their local area, half the respondents (50%) said 'no' while almost a quarter (22%) said 'yes' while almost a third (28%) stated it was not applicable to them.

Interestingly, if the Council installed charging points on off-street car parks in their areas, the clear majority – almost half – said they would use them (48%) while almost one sixth (14%) said 'no' and the remaining 38% said it was not relevant to them as illustrated below.

### If charging points were installed in your area would you use them:

Yes 48%  
No 14%  
N/A 38%

### Those in the majority who responded to questions relating to use and ownership of electric cars live in the following **wards**:

Dronfield South (17) 11%  
Dronfield Woodhouse (12) 8%  
Dronfield North (12) 8%  
Wingerworth (11) 7%  
Tupton (10) 6%  
Clay Cross South (10) 6%  
Ashover (8) 5%  
North Wingfield Central (8) 5%  
Eckington North (8) 5%  
Killamarsh East (6) 4%  
Eckington S & Renishaw (6) 4%  
Brampton & Walton (7) 4%

## Planning and Enforcement

Good planning enforcement is a key component in how we look after our District. Unauthorised developments can have serious and adverse impacts on neighbours and the local environment. Enforcement helps maintain confidence in the planning system and ensures anyone who engages properly with the planning process is treated fairly. Residents were asked a range of questions in order to ascertain their levels of awareness. Once again, no trend data is available for comparability since this is the first time we are running this exercise.

When asked if respondents were aware of the Council's Planning Enforcement Plan, the clear majority (72%) – almost three quarters – were not aware and the same amount (72%) did not know how to report a Planning Enforcement issue. When asked if respondents had used the Council's Online Reporting Form to raise a planning enforcement concern, the overwhelming majority (97%) had not. Those who had not used it before (72%) stated that it was not applicable to them while others reported a concern by either **phoning** the Council (12%), **speaking** directly to an Elected Member (7%), **emailing** the Council (6%), **writing** to the Council or **visiting** Council premises and talking to a member of staff (1%).

## Self-Service

The vast majority of respondents (70%) had not used the self-service option on the website.

## Website

More than a third (40%) were aware that you could look on the website to see if a development needed planning permission before making further enquiries while a further 40% had not needed to and 20% were unaware you could look on the website for this purpose. When asked if residents were aware they could view plans and decision notices on the website before making contact with the Council, half the respondents said yes (50%), nearly a third (31%) had not needed to and almost a fifth said no (18%). Similarly when asked if respondents were aware they could check planning pages on the website to see if any item already had planning permission, half agreed they were aware (50%) while nearly a third (31%) had not needed to and almost a fifth (19%) said 'no'.

## Communications

It is important to the Council that it is reaching residents using the correct channels and with content of interest. Residents were asked a series of questions to gauge their satisfaction with the Council's communications function.

### 'The News' Magazine

When asked if residents received a copy of the Council's quarterly 'The News' magazine, over 9 in 10 (92%) confirmed they did and positively, nearly half (45%) read *all of it* while just over a fifth (21%) only read *some of it* and one-fifth read only the *bits which interest them* (20%).

When asked how they would rate the magazine, residents responded favourably saying they thought it was fairly good or very good (74%) which is a percentage point higher than 73% in 2019 ▲ Looking back, there has been very little change in these findings over time.

## Website

When asked if residents had ever visited the Council's website, almost two-thirds (63%) confirmed they had while the remaining 37% had not which reflects the exact same result in 2019. When asked about the main reason/s for visiting the Council's website, the majority stated it was for leisure activities (39%), information on planning issues (37%) or reporting a problem (31%). These results broadly mirror those found in 2019 when 44% visited the site for planning information, 28% for leisure activities and 27% to report a problem.

Leisure activities (39) 39%  
Information on planning issues (37) 37%  
Report a problem (31) 31%  
Other (22) 22%  
Pay a bill (12) 12%  
News (11) 11%  
Events (9) 9%  
Find Council opening times (3) 3%  
Business information (2) 2%

Themes from those who selected 'other' reasons for visiting the Council's website include:

- Bulky waste collection
- Service updates
- Bad weather
- C-19 details
- To read records of Council meetings
- Library hours
- Strike action
- Info on recycling
- Bin collections
- Reporting an abandoned car
- Local planning application

The majority of respondents found what they were looking for (91%) which is a 4% increase from 87% in 2019 ▲

The 9% who did not find what they were looking for said it was for the following reasons:

- Search did not show relevant information (five people)
- Unclear where to go find the information (four people)
- Other (two people)
- Too slow – timed out/gave up (one person)

Those who have never visited the Council's website said it was because they have never needed to (39%), they contact the Council in other ways (20%), don't have the Internet (15%) or do not want to use the Internet (15%). When asked about how easy respondents found it to navigate the website, more than half (65%) found it fairly or very easy which compares with 66% in 2019. However, this is still significantly lower than in 2017 (79%) and 2015 (86%). A fifth (20%) found it neither easy nor difficult and 13% found it fairly difficult.

Fairly easy (53)	53%
Neither (20)	20%
Fairly difficult (13)	13%
Very easy (12)	12%
Very difficult (2)	2%

### Suggestions from residents for improvement include the following:

Recycling list is limited; should be extended to cover all common household items. Policy for business recycling is counter-productive.

It's put together by someone who knows how the council functions but sometimes things aren't logical to find because the public don't know how the council works.

More logic less elaborate graphics.

The search function is hit or miss.

I would like to see more detail on the council's actions on climate change. The council's information page on climate change is rarely updated.

The recycling and waste section lacks important information when it should be there.

The older website a couple of years ago was better. Since adopting the standardised website I've found it less easy to use.

Could you make it simpler?

Less words - greater use of pictograms and sub menus or simple search engine could reduce 'noise'.

### Social Media

It is important to bear in mind the demographic of the Citizens' Panel when considering the results in this section; 72% are retired and 68% are over the age of 65.

When asked if respondents used social media in general, more than half (56%) said they do not while the remaining 44% do use various social media channels which reflects a 5% decrease from 49% in 2019. Those who use social media on a regular basis use Facebook the most (50%) followed by YouTube (19%) and Twitter (12%). The majority use social media for keeping in touch with family and friends (41%) and for getting general information (34%). Those who have never visited any social media sites before attribute it to the fact they do not want to use social media (28%) and they prefer contacting the Council in other ways (19%).

## Local Media

When asked which local media residents use, the Council's magazine, 'The News' was used the most (62%) followed by the Council's website (32%) and Derbyshire Times (31%). Residents said they usually find out about the Council, the decisions it makes and the activities it promotes via 'The News' (66%) followed by the Derbyshire Times (28%). The majority would prefer to find out about the Council via 'The News' (72%) or via the Council's website (30%).

## Internet Access

There were 15 respondents who said they had no Internet access and have no plans to get access which compares with the 25 people saying the same in 2019. However, those who do access the Internet mostly do so using their Home PC (62%) which has reduced from 65% in 2019, 73% in 2017 and 85% in 2015. Responses show access to the Internet using mobile phones (59%) has increased by 11% from 48% in 2019 ▲