

Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Update on the Voice of Warwickshire Residents' Panel

15 December 2021

Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Notes the progress made on establishing the 'Voice of Warwickshire' residents' panel.
2. Utilises intelligence gathered through the Panel to help ensure that the Council's future policy development is informed by the views of our residents where appropriate.
3. Receives a further report in early 2023 that evaluates the impact and success of the Panel.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Cabinet has previously approved (October 2020) the creation of a Warwickshire residents' panel to help inform the Council's policy making. This would deliver a specific action set out in the Customer Experience Strategy but, more broadly, provide a mechanism for the Council to engage with residents and take their views into account on a range of policy areas.
- 1.2 This commitment was reiterated at Cabinet (July 2021) as part of plans to develop a more integrated approach to strategic planning. As work on the new Council Plan took place, the emerging residents' panel was acknowledged as an important part of our approach to informing the delivery of the plan.
- 1.3 Since then, work has taken place to recruit residents to the panel, now branded as the 'Voice of Warwickshire'. The panel will be available as a mechanism for engagement in January 2022.
- 1.4 The project has been funded on a pilot basis for twelve months. The impact of the project will be monitored throughout this period and, if successful, proposals made around the potential extension of this approach.
- 1.5 This paper provides details on the make-up of the panel, how it will be used and how it fits into our wider Consultation & Engagement Framework.

2. Recruitment to the Voice of Warwickshire

- 2.1 A recruitment campaign was launched in October 2021. The aim was to recruit up to 1,000 residents aged 18 and over from across the county and to ensure that they are as representative of the county's adult population as possible. A wide variety of channels were used to encourage residents to sign up. These included writing directly to a randomly stratified sample of 20,000 households, using social media channels, sharing with local media to push and promoting the panel via our network of partners. Messaging was supported by a consistent and attractive visual identity for the project.
- 2.2 The initial recruitment exercise concluded on November 14th, by which point 829 residents had registered with their details to be part of the Voice of Warwickshire. In addition to registering online, residents could request telephone support. We also provided opportunities for those residents whose first language is not English to receive support in participating in the group.
- 2.3 To ensure the group was representative, we had asked residents to provide some basic information about themselves such as their postcode, age group, gender, disability and ethnic group. We compared the profile of the 829 respondents to the county's adult population and were satisfied that the panel was broadly representative. The analysis did, however, identify some areas where we needed to boost numbers and this informed a shorter second wave of more targeted recruitment activity in the second half of November.
- 2.4 Those registering were also asked for their preference on how we should engage with them. The vast majority were happy to participate online but a small number will require telephone support or paper copies, and/or communication in a different language.
- 2.5 For reference, the current profile of the Voice of Warwickshire panel is provided in Appendix 1.

3. Using the Voice of Warwickshire

- 3.1 The Voice of Warwickshire panel will be used to gather our residents' views on a range of key policy areas throughout 2022. It will be used to help inform the delivery of our next Council Plan and will ensure we understand residents' perspectives on themes such as climate change, Community Powered Warwickshire and tackling inequalities.
- 3.2 A programme of work will be created in January/February 2022 to confirm the priority themes we want to explore and ensure we are utilising the Panel in a balanced way so that they remain engaged while not feeling over-burdened. We anticipate 4-6 engagement activities taking place throughout the year. The Committee is invited to suggest possible topics for consideration as part of the work programme.

- 3.3 Although the majority of the work programme will be survey-based, we have also made provision for the possibility of more detailed deliberative work on specific themes where a number of people from the Voice of Warwickshire group are invited to discuss an issue in more detail and make recommendations that can feed into policy development.
- 3.4 We will also utilise the new 'Dialogue' tool we have built into our Ask Warwickshire engagement platform. 'Dialogue' provides an opportunity for more discussion-based engagement on particular themes, where panel members can be invited to offer ideas as to how particular challenges can be addressed. We can then gauge how much support there is for specific ideas and feed that insight into the delivery of the Council Plan. This new capability is part of our wider Consultation & Engagement Framework, described in more detail in section 4. A demonstration of this new tool can be provided to Committee members if helpful.
- 3.5 It is critical that we keep participants informed as to how the input they provide is being used. We will ensure panel members get regular feedback on the outcome of engagement activities. We will also create a dedicated website for the Voice of Warwickshire to keep panel members informed as the project develops while also helping to promote the work of the panel to the Council and the wider population.
- 3.6 The Voice of Warwickshire project is a one-year pilot exercise. It will be evaluated in late 2022 / early 2023 to determine its impact and success. It is proposed that the evaluation of the project is brought to this Committee in Spring 2023 for consideration.

4. Broader Consultation & Engagement

- 4.1 The Voice of Warwickshire is one element of our approach to engaging with our residents. The Council's Consultation & Engagement Framework sets out the way we will use a blended approach to involve our residents in developing services and decision making, using the right methods with the right people at the right times. The framework describes the standards we need to apply so that we provide opportunities for everyone to participate, including our seldom heard groups, and ensure Warwickshire residents, people who use our services, communities, organisations and partners, are informed, involved and able to have their voice heard.
- 4.2 Appendix 2 provides a visual summary of the blended approach that will underpin the Consultation & Engagement Framework.
- 4.3 We will ensure the Voice of Warwickshire panel complies with the principles and standards set out in the Consultation & Engagement Framework. This will mean engagement activities are meaningful, appropriate, timely and inclusive.

- 4.4 The Voice of Warwickshire provides an opportunity for residents aged 18 and over to engage with the Council on key policy areas. Younger residents have similar opportunities via mechanisms such as the Youth Council. The new Children & Young People's Strategy also has engagement with young people at its heart, based on our approach to 'Child Friendly Warwickshire, and the Consultation & Engagement Framework will ensure we provide inclusive opportunities for young people to get involved.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 As described in para 3.6, the Voice of Warwickshire project is a pilot and is being delivered through corporate transformation funding. This concludes at the end of 2022/23. The project will be evaluated during 2022 and recommendations made about future options.

6. Environmental Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications although the Committee is advised that the panel will be largely online-based, reducing the need for printing paper copies of the various surveys issued to the panel. Where participants have expressed a preference for hard copies of the surveys these will be made available so that we ensure opportunities to participate are maximised.
- 6.2 Although not a direct environmental implication of the panel itself, it is also noted that the Voice of Warwickshire group will be engaged with to help inform the Council's approach to broader environmental themes such as our approach to tackling climate change.

7. Supporting Information

N/A

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Voice of Warwickshire profile (as at 24th November 2021)

Total registrations to date: 861

| Areas lived in | Total | Percent | Benchmark |
|---------------------|-------|---------|-----------|
| North Warwickshire | 84 | 9.8% | 11.3% |
| Nuneaton & Bedworth | 140 | 16.3% | 21.9% |
| Rugby | 152 | 17.7% | 18.5% |
| Stratford-on-Avon | 227 | 26.4% | 23.1% |
| Warwick | 254 | 29.5% | 25.1% |
| Other | 4 | 0.5% | N/A |

| Age profile | Total | Percent | Benchmark |
|-------------------|-------|---------|-----------|
| 18 – 24 | 9 | 1.05% | 9.6% |
| 22 – 39 | 108 | 12.56% | 22.5% |
| 40 – 49 | 125 | 14.52% | 15.3% |
| 50 – 59 | 172 | 20.00% | 17.4% |
| 60 – 64 | 112 | 13.02% | 12.3% |
| 65 – 74 | 232 | 26.98% | 7.2% |
| 75 + | 91 | 10.58% | 12.2% |
| Prefer not to say | 12 | 1.40% | N/A |

| Ethnicity | Total | Percent | Benchmark |
|--------------------------------------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Arab | 0 | 0.00% | 0.10% |
| Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi | 0 | 0.00% | 0.05% |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 21 | 2.44% | 2.90% |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 3 | 0.35% | 0.05% |
| Chinese | 4 | 0.47% | 0.50% |
| Other Asian Background | 4 | 0.47% | 0.80% |
| Black or Black British - African | 3 | 0.35% | 0.40% |
| Black or Black British - Caribbean | 5 | 0.58% | 0.40% |
| Other Black Background | 0 | 0.00% | 0.10% |
| Mixed - Asian and White | 5 | 0.58% | 0.30% |
| Mixed - Black African and White | 0 | 0.00% | 0.10% |
| Mixed - Black Caribbean and White | 1 | 0.12% | 0.30% |
| Other Mixed Background | 6 | 0.70% | 0.20% |
| White British | 736 | 85.58% | 89.0% |
| White Irish | 13 | 1.51% | 1.10% |
| Gypsy or Traveler | 2 | 0.23% | 0.10% |
| Other White background | 37 | 4.30% | 3.30% |
| Prefer to self-describe | 9 | 1.05% | 0.30% |
| Prefer not to say | 12 | 1.40% | |

| Experian Mosaic Group | % of sample | Benchmark |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|
| City Prosperity | 1.97% | 0.9% |
| Prestige Positions | 12.89% | 9.9% |
| Country Living | 16.84% | 11.0% |
| Rural Reality | 6.85% | 6.5% |
| Senior Security | 8.94% | 10.0% |
| Suburban Stability | 5.92% | 8.1% |
| Domestic Success | 15.33% | 9.6% |
| Aspiring Homemakers | 10.10% | 12.5% |
| Family Basics | 5.92% | 7.1% |
| Transient Renters | 2.21% | 4.3% |
| Municipal Tenants | 0.23% | 2.2% |
| Vintage Value | 2.67% | 5.9% |
| Modest Traditions | 2.21% | 4.6% |
| Urban Cohesion | 1.74% | 2.0% |
| Rental Hubs | 5.81% | 5.6% |

- c15% (133) have said they have a disability / long term condition
- c19% (166) have said they have caring responsibilities
- c4% (37) are WCC employees
- c3% (29) are an elected member (County / D&B / Parish / MP)
- c3% (26) have said they have been a serving member of armed forces
- 8 have requested alternative formats and 7 have indicated they may need this (mainly large print / easy read)

Areas of interest



2. [Appendix 2 – Engagement Tools & Techniques](#)

Background Papers

N/A

| | Name | Contact Information |
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Local Member(s): n/a

Other members: Councillors Warwick, Birdi, Boad, Philipps and W. Roberts