



Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee Meeting 02/09/24

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Report Summary	
Report Title	Resident Panel Refresh
Purpose of Report	To provide a progress update on the Resident Panel Refresh.
Recommendations	1) That the Policy and Performance Improvement Committee note the progress of the Resident Panel Refresh. The Community Plan 2023-2027 set out the Councils ambition to reinvigorate the Residents' Panel, in order to ensure the panel is representative of the demographic profile to help drive service improvement across the Council.

1.0 Background

The purpose of the Resident Panel is to enable the Council to consult with residents of Newark and Sherwood who have volunteered to share their views. The panel enables residents to have their say about decisions, services and plans, and in turn, provides the Council with feedback which is used to improve and influence future decisions. The Resident Panel was formed in 2018 and as of December 2023 was made up of 701 residents aged 18 years and over. The details held for members of the panel consisted of their full name and email address.

The Community Plan 2023-27 states that work should be undertaken to reinvigorate the Resident Panel, specifically working to ensure that the panel is representative of the demographic profile within the district to support the delivery of service improvement across the Council.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered

In December 2023, a report was presented to SLT to outline the proposals for refreshing the panel, which was subsequently approved. The proposal was separated into 5 key elements:

1. Data Cleanse
2. Youth Engagement
3. Demographic Profile
4. Tailored Consultation
5. Long Term Engagement

2.1 Data Cleanse:

It was proposed that whilst engaging with all current members of the Resident Panel to capture the additional information set out below, this opportunity should be taken to remind members of the Resident Panel that they are able to opt out at any point and provide the ability to do so.

Due to the number of members signed up to the Resident Panel (701) at the time of beginning the refresh, it was decided that panel members would be communicated with up to a maximum of 3 times over a 12 week period. The purpose of this was to inform members that if we do not receive a response to either opt out of the Resident Panel or to provide the demographic information requested, we will assume that they no longer wish to actively participate in the Resident Panel and their data will be removed from the data base.

This enabled us to build a clearer picture at the end of the 12 week period as to how many active members of the Resident Panel there are, as well as ensuring a consistent data set.

2.2 Youth Engagement:

21.5% of residents ¹(26,445) in Newark and Sherwood are aged 19 years and below, of those residents, those aged under 18 were not represented on the Resident Panel because the requirements when beginning the refresh stated that you must be aged 18 years or over to sign up.

Collecting and handling the data of children and young people under 18 is more strictly controlled than that of adults, however with a number of controls in place, it is possible for those under the age of 18 to be represented within the Resident Panel. These include:

- Consent must be obtained from a parent/guardian for anyone under the age of 18
- We must ensure the person under the age of 18 is aware that their consent can be withdrawn at any time
- The instructions around the consultation must be clear and understandable by the youngest person who could engage

As such, the refresh set out to expand the Resident Panel membership to residents aged 16 years and older with the appropriate controls in place. In addition to this, the refreshed sign up process was designed to enable members of the Resident Panel to indicate whether they are the parent or guardian to children under the age of 16 and that they would like to be consulted with on matters which may impact their children. Members of the panel who wish to share this information are asked whether their child/children are between the ages of 0-5, 6-10 and 11-15.

2.3 Demographic Profile: The Community Plan sets out the main ambition of reinvigorating the Resident Panel is in order to ensure the panel is representative of the demographic profile to help drive service improvement across the Council.

¹ ONS – Census 2021

To begin identifying the representativeness of the panel, it was necessary to capture some demographic information about the members who are already signed up, as well as updating the sign up process to reflect this demographic information. In addition to the information that is currently held and collected, the following information is now being collected:

- Home address
- Age range
- Gender
- Disability Status
- Ethnic Group
- Tenure

All of this demographic information is mandatory, however all fields with the exception of age range, have the option to select “prefer not to say”. This cannot be extended to the age range, due to the youth engagement which requires parental consent for those under the age of 18.

2.4 Tailored Consultation: Based on the information held about members of the Resident Panel at the start of the refresh, all consultation and engagement with the panel would be sent to all members, every time. This meant that members of the panel were receiving requests to share their feedback on subjects that may not be important or relevant to them and they may decide as a result not to participate. If this happens repeatedly, it may cause members of the Resident Panel to become disengaged with sharing their feedback.

As such it was agreed that we should ask residents which subjects they are most interested in sharing their views and feedback on. Residents can select from a pre-defined list, which is mirrored to the Resident Survey 2022. Residents are able to select as few or as many subjects as they wish, which will enable consultations to be of relevance to members of the panel and encouraging participation.

Whilst enabling members of the Panel to tailor their experience, a caveat was included which informed residents that from time to time they may be contacted about topics outside of those selected interests. This may be used in instances whereby we are trying to reach out to underrepresented demographic profiles of residents or where the views of a specific profile are being sought, e.g. playpark or youth centre consultation.

2.5 Long Term Engagement and Promotion:

In order to keep members of the Resident Panel engaged, it is recognised that consistency in the way the Panel are engaged needs to be developed and implemented. This will be achieved by developing a forward plan of consultation exercises that will be shared with the Resident Panel. Membership of the panel is also being incentivised with members of the panel being able to be entered into a 6 monthly prize draw, with the opportunity to win vouchers for local shops and businesses.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

3.1 Financial Implications (FIN23-24/7184)

As stated in the recommendations, there is a £1,000 budget within the Transformation budget set aside for the Resident Panel from 2024-25 onwards (plus inflation each year). This is expected to cover any additional costs arising from the outcome of this report.

3.2 Equality and Diversity

The primary aim of the refresh is to ensure that the profile of the panel is representative of the profile of the district. This includes extending the age or participation to 16 and over because a more representative panel will allow for the outcomes to be more relevant. Particular consideration has been given to how the data will be requested to ensure that no one is prevented from responding and attempts will be made wherever possible to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to join the panel.

3.3 Data Protection

Information Governance have been consulted with throughout the development of the proposals detailed within this report concerning the data collection and cleansing process. This report has been shared with Information Governance who have confirmed they are satisfied that all of the data protection considerations have been built into this report. The method and approach to data collection has been verified as compliant with UK data privacy laws. Once the data is collected the Council will ensure appropriate controls are in place to maintain the security of the information, acknowledging that special category and children's data will be held. The Council Privacy Notice will be updated to reflect this processing prior to the period for data cleansing.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972. *Any documents that contain confidential information or personal information about individuals should not be included in this list.*