

Feedback from Citizens Panel  
August 2013

# Feedback from Citizens Panel: August 2013

**The last Citizen's Panel in August 2013 asked about five different topics. Here are the key results and the actions we have taken.**

## Parking bays for people with disabilities in Council car parks

### **We asked:**

We asked you about the number of parking bays for blue badge holders, and whether you thought that badge holders should continue to have free parking.

### **You said:**

Panel members had mixed views about whether or not there are the right number of such spaces.

66% thought that badge holders should continue to have free parking.

### **We will:**

The Council will continue to provide free parking for blue badge holders, and will keep the number of spaces under review.

## Food hygiene inspections

### **We asked:**

We asked whether you knew which types of premises the Council inspects for food hygiene, and how important this is to you. We asked if you would find it helpful to have information about the hygiene standards of a business before you buy food there, and what you would be most likely to do if you were concerned about food hygiene.

### **You said:**

Panel members generally have a good awareness that the Council inspects cafés and restaurants. Fewer people know we also inspect shops selling foodstuffs, including supermarkets, fruit and veg shops and other shops like newsagents or corner shops that sell a little food.

About 80% think the food hygiene safety certificate the Council issues to premises selling food should be available for inspection.

Half of you would report concerns about food hygiene to the Council, one third would complain to the business and most of the rest would tell family or friends.

### **We will:**

It would require legislation to force shops to display their food hygiene safety certificates. However, they are available on the website of the Food Standards Agency at <http://ratings.food.gov.uk/>.

## Street lighting

### **We asked:**

We asked if you are satisfied with the street lighting where you live, and the speed of any necessary repairs. We also asked if you knew you can report a street lighting fault through the Council's website, and through the Clarence freephone number.

### **You said:**

89% of you said you are satisfied with the street lighting in your area, and a majority are also satisfied with the time taken to repair street lighting faults.

Only about half of you knew about the methods of reporting street lighting faults. The majority of those who had used them found them easy to use.

### **We will:**

The Council has analysed the locations of the respondents who were unhappy with their street lighting to see if there are particular areas that are affected, and if it would be appropriate to review the maintenance and renewals programme. This analysis identified three areas within Camelon, Falkirk and Grangemouth which coincide with the Council's existing 5 year spending plans.

We will further publicise the fault reporting methods to ensure that more people become aware of them.

## Methods of Payment for Council Rent and Council Tax

### **We asked:**

We asked about how you pay your Council rent or Council Tax and if there are any alternative methods you would prefer.

### **You said:**

61% of panel members said they use direct debit for all of these payments, and 79% for some of them. Almost everyone else said they pay these bills in person, mostly at a 1-stop-shop and a smaller number at the local post office. The main reasons people used these methods were "Because I get a receipt," and "I prefer to have more control over how much money goes out of my bank account and when the payments are made."

93% of you are happy with the way you pay your bills at present. Almost everyone who is unhappy with their current payment method would prefer to be able to pay through Paypal or at their local shops.

### **We will:**

The panel responses were considered alongside other surveys that the Council had carried out. As a result we will introduce more ways to pay Council Tax and Rent. We hope to have these in place during the financial year 2014/15

## Recycling

### **We asked:**

We asked about your experience of recycling food and other waste. We asked what reasons you consider important for recycling, how much you recycle general or food waste, and what stops you recycling more.

### **You said:**

85% of panel members said they already recycle as much general waste as they can. The main reasons people gave for not recycling in general were the need for more and easy to access information, and issues about bins and collection. For example, frequent, regular and reliable recycling collections were important to householders.

56% of you recycle all or most of your food waste. The main reasons people gave for not recycling food waste was that they think food waste recycling is unhygienic, or that they don't have any food waste or have too little to recycle.

There was a generally high level of awareness of the types of food waste that can be recycled, although less than 1 respondent in 5 knew that it is possible to put compostable food containers etc (such as used cardboard pizza boxes or paper towels) into the containers. Only 1 in 3 knew that it is possible to recycle liquid as well as solid food.

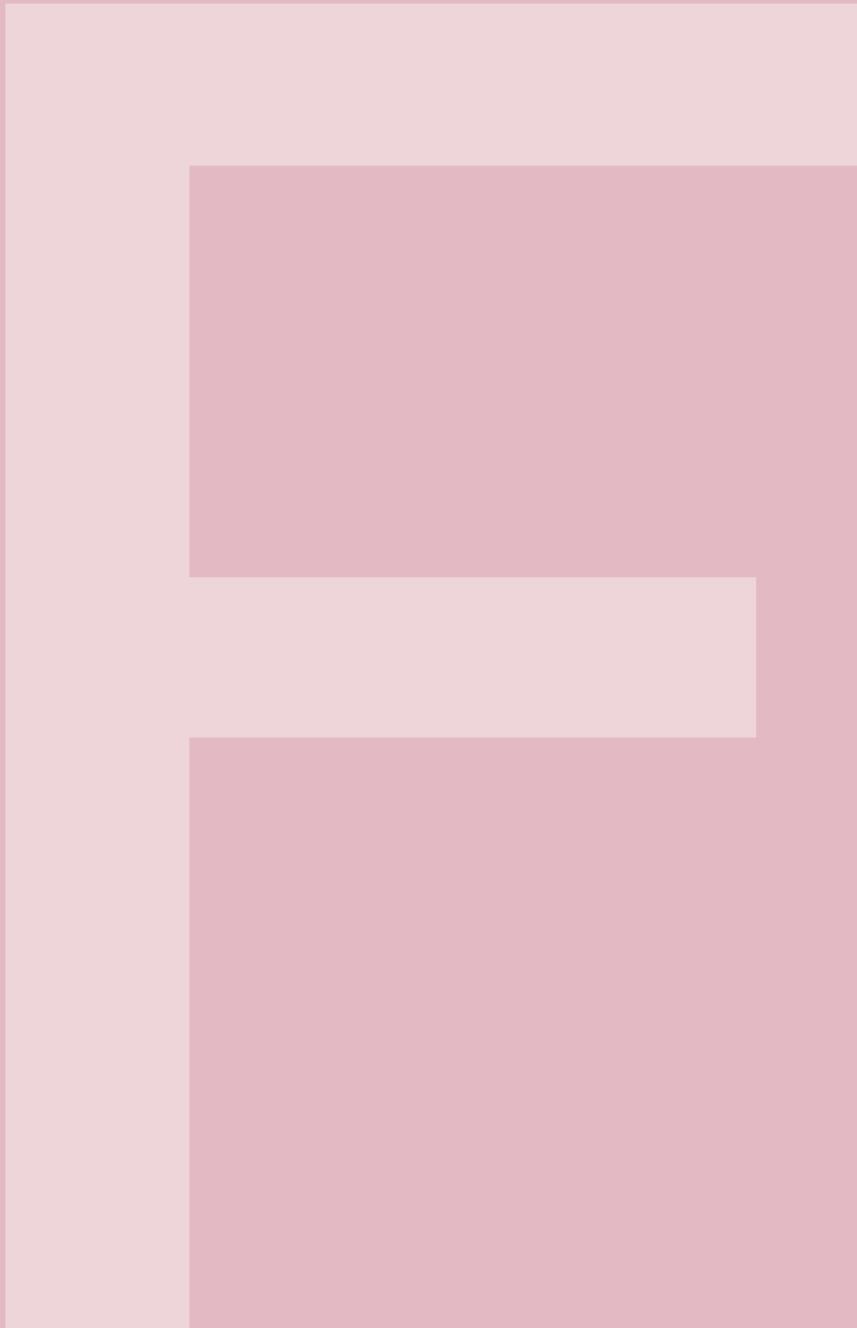
### **We will:**

The Council will use the answers to help design an information campaign promoting recycling. We have already published an in-depth, full page feature on recycling in the October issue of the Falkirk Council News. We will include detailed multi-media recycling information for householders as an integral element of the new recycling campaign, and we will undertake some direct community engagement such as visiting householders, running local events or talking to schools about using the recycling services.

We will address the question of food waste hygiene by working with collection crews to reduce the number of missed collections and ensure the containers are returned properly. We will also post a 'how to' video on the Council website with easy instructions for keeping the caddies clean; issue food waste container stickers to encourage householders to line caddies with bags or newspaper, to avoid food sticking to containers and reduce damage to the containers; and provide more detailed food recycling hints and myth busters on the Council's website.

In response to panellists reporting they don't have food waste to recycle, the campaign will highlight the fact that all types of food and food-related waste are accepted for recycling, to encourage people to re-consider using the service.

We will also make some improvements to the bins and collections. We will make sure people know how to get larger or replacement recycling containers, and the campaign will also explain how to get special uplifts for items that are not normally recycled. Recycling containers are being delivered to the 56 panel members who told us they wanted them. In addition, we are developing a quick way of looking up what can be recycled and where, for the Council website.



## Other Formats

If you have any queries about the Citizens Panel Results, or if you want to receive questionnaires and feedback reports in other formats (e.g. Braille, large print, a different language etc.), please contact us at [citizenspanel@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:citizenspanel@falkirk.gov.uk), or call 01324-506011.



Falkirk Council