



# Feedback

## Result of Citizens Panel Survey 12

### Falkirk Council Budget Plans

**We asked** for your feedback on some options being considered as part of the Council's budget for 2015/18. Our annual budget is around £332 million but over the next three years we need to save c£46m on top of the £70m we have already saved over the past eight years. Some of the options being looked at include providing services at a lower cost by greater use of technology, reducing costs by reducing the number of Council offices and other buildings, and increasing charges for some services or introducing them for others,

**You said:** 80% of you said you would prefer increases to some service charges, for example special uplifts or parking, than cuts in service. 72% never visit a Council building or visit only once a year and 94% strongly agree or agree that we should make savings through better use of our buildings. 63% strongly agree or agree that we should reduce the number of local offices. 63% of people also felt there would be no impact on them if we reduced our opening hours and 62% felt there would be no impact if some buildings were closed and services moved elsewhere.

66% agreed or strongly agreed that services should be available online to reduce costs. 67% felt it would be more convenient, would have no impact on them or would be only slightly inconvenient if the number of phone lines was reduced and more complaints and enquiries were dealt with through e-mail and our website. Against this, 30% would find this very inconvenient.

**We did:** The findings of the Citizens Panel consultation and the other consultations we did on the budget were included in a report to Falkirk Council's budget meeting on 11th February. The other consultation included a survey on the website and specific focus groups. You can access the full budget papers here: <http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/budgetreport>. The budget consultation results are in Appendix 5.

### Our Parks and Local Spaces

**We asked** how often you use larger parks, local parks and open spaces in the Council area, and what you use them for. We asked you how satisfied you are with the facilities, upkeep and information there. Last, we asked you what you felt should be the Council's top priority for spending on parks and open spaces.

**You said:** Around a fifth of survey respondents (18%) visit local parks more than once a week. Around 40% of respondents visit larger parks between once a week and once a month. A third of people who answered use other spaces more than once a month. Around half of the people who answered the survey (52%) thought that the five larger parks were better than they were five years ago, whilst a third (31%) felt that they were the same. Around 1 in 10 respondents (9%) felt that larger parks were worse. Two-thirds of people who responded (76%) felt that local parks were either the same or better as five years ago. However, 17% of people felt that local parks had gotten worse in that period. Most people (83%) thought other outdoor spaces have stayed the same or improved in the last five years, whilst 8% thought they had gotten worse.

Of our larger parks, respondents visited the Helix and Callendar Park most often. The most common reason for visiting local or larger parks, or open spaces, was to go for a walk. People are most likely to have a picnic, use the café and take visitors from outside the Falkirk area to one of the large parks. People said they are most likely to take their children out, use a play park or take their dog for a walk in a local park. Many respondents identified dog fouling and cyclists as impacting upon their use of parks. Some respondents noted they did not go to parks or open spaces due to health problems, disability or old age.

Spending on the five big parks used by tourists and people from the whole of Falkirk was identified as the key spending priority by respondents.

**We did:** The Citizens' Panel questions formed part of a programme of community and stakeholder engagement set out by the Council's Policy Development Panel for the review of the Council's Open Space Strategy and Parks Development Plan. The Open Space Strategy and Parks Development Plan will set out a long term strategy for the improvement of over 600 parks, and open spaces across the Council area. The results of the questionnaire will be used to inform the production of a consultative draft Open Space Strategy and Parks Development Plan, which is intended to be put out for consultation over the summer of 2015.

## **Local Fire and Rescue Plan**

**We asked** some questions on behalf of Scottish Fire and Rescue Services.

**You said:** All the responses provided by the Citizens Panel were passed on to Scottish Fire and Rescue for consideration. The feedback will help them prioritise local fire and rescue services in your local area so they can put in place plans to reduce fire accidents.

**We did:** The information you provided will help Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in the Council area meet your needs.