

Dear Colleague,

As we approach the end of another busy week, I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on a few positive developments that will hopefully help give you that 'Friday Feeling'!

We recently undertook a resident survey as part of our new 'Caerphilly Conversation' engagement plan. I wanted the survey to provide an overarching picture from our residents, in terms of what they think of our current performance and I wanted them to also offer their views, about our improvement plans for the future. So, the survey covered a number of important topics – including the Council and its services, our collective response to the coronavirus pandemic to date, views on the proposed council tax increase and suggestions for where things could be improved in future.

I'm sure you will be pleased with the results, as it acknowledges all your hard work over the last year or so. So here are the headlines !

**77% of respondents felt either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall service provided by the council.**

Some further headline findings from the survey included:

- Overall satisfaction with recycling has increased to **89%** from 85% in 2017
- **82%** felt that CCBC responded well or very well to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Almost three quarters (**74%**) felt satisfied with our country parks, and **77%** felt satisfied with local transport services overall
- **60%** indicated they were satisfied with highways maintenance, which is an increase from the 51% who indicated they were satisfied with road surfaces in 2017.
- Satisfaction with street and environmental cleansing has remained at **59%**.

When it came to levels of satisfaction with the response to COVID-19:

- **89%** of respondents were satisfied with communications
- **88%** were satisfied with Free School Meals,
- **86%** satisfaction for food parcels
- **83%** for both the Buddy Scheme and Childcare Hubs.
- **73%** said that they found contacting the council very easy or quite easy during the lockdown period.
- And **83%** agreed that their neighbourhood is a place where people get on well together and help each other.

It's a pretty positive picture all-in-all. This information is so important as we use it to refine our service offer. There are of course, some areas where improvements are needed and we will use this feedback to help address these issues going forward.

The results will be reported to Cabinet next week and the full report containing all the findings can be found on the website as usual. You will see some media coverage of

this over the next week or so as it is a good news story and of course we will want to share it widely.

The second positive update I wanted to share with you relates to the Annual Audit Summary 2020 which has been published by Audit Wales.

The Audit Wales report was presented to Cabinet earlier this week and provides a summary of the audit work completed for the council since July 2019.

The Annual Audit Summary covers the following areas – the audit of our accounts, demonstration of value for money, evidence of continuous improvement and an assessment of whether the council is complying with the sustainable development principle.

The Auditor General certified that the council has met its legal duties for improvement planning and reporting and believes that it is likely to meet the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2019 during 2020-21.

It's obviously very pleasing that we have received a 'clean bill of health' from our auditors and this is a reflection on the excellent work that is being done at all levels across the organisation.

Finally, just a quick update on the current Covid situation within the county borough. Our current rate of infection stands at 92 cases per 100,000 population, which is the first time for a long time our case numbers have fallen under 100 and secures us just below the Welsh national average (104).

The vaccination programme is operating very well from the new site at Newbridge leisure centre and earlier this week we saw 1,000 local people receive their vaccination in a single day. The feedback I'm receiving is so positive and our Leisure staff are playing a fantastic role in this partnership with Aneurin Bevan.

The next WG review period is scheduled for next Friday, where the First Minister will address the nation via his lunchtime address. Following discussion with Public Health Wales and the Chief Medical officer, I'm personally not expecting any major relaxations to the regulations. Whilst our numbers are reducing, the overall situation remains quite precarious with the various variants in circulation. I know this lockdown is tough for us all and it is so important that we continue to focus on being kind to ourselves and others.

The little headroom we do have, WG have used this to bring a return to school for our youngest pupils to the classroom from 22<sup>nd</sup> February. Our schools are working hard to ensure a seamless return to school for foundation phases over that week and I would again like to commend all involved for their ongoing efforts in this area.

It is clear that we still need to maintain a slow, cautious approach over the forthcoming months, and I know we will dig deep to ensure collectively, we continue to remain vigilant in order to protect our people and place.

I'm taking some leave next week, so no update from me next Friday. I'm hoping the weather will be kind, so I can get out in my garden as I've lots to do!

Take care  
Christina