

The Voice of Warwickshire Panel

Report 1: Onboarding Survey

produced by Business Intelligence Service

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1. Background

The Voice of Warwickshire panel was launched in October 2021 when residents in Warwickshire were invited to register to join the panel. The panel will give residents in Warwickshire an opportunity to share their views on big issues in Warwickshire, like health and wellbeing, climate change and sustainability, community safety, education, transport, economic growth, inequalities and inclusion, and more.

This report summarises the results of the first survey sent to all panel members. This initial survey was intended to gather views on engagement with local government and Warwickshire County Council to date and understand panel members expectations for the panel.

The information gathered in this first survey will allow Warwickshire County Council to evaluate current views on engagement and how these may change over the 12-month trial period of the panel. This will enable us to assess what impact the panel is having and inform decisions as to whether the panel should be extended beyond the pilot period.

2. Method

An online survey was hosted on the Citizen Space 'Ask Warwickshire' site via a private link only available to panel members. All members of the panel were asked how they would prefer to complete surveys when they initially signed up to join the panel. The majority (>99%) of panel members opted to complete online surveys with five members advising they would prefer to complete paper-based surveys. Those opting for paper-based surveys were sent the survey along with a freepost return envelope. The other panel members were sent an email to participate in the online survey with two reminder emails being sent to those who had not yet completed the survey. In total, the survey was distributed to 982 members of the Voice of Warwickshire panel (note: the membership has since expanded slightly to 1,013).

The survey ran from 15 December 2021 to 17 January 2022. It was initially due to close on 31 December 2022 but was extended to give members recruited to the panel in late December 2021/early January 2022 an opportunity to respond. (Recruitment to the panel was reopened in mid-December to ensure the panel was as representative of the population of Warwickshire as possible.)

[Appendix 1](#) provides the survey questions.

3. Key Messages

The survey received a total of 768 responses, representing a 78% response rate.

- In total, 72.3% (n=555) of respondents joined the Voice of Warwickshire panel to influence local decisions.
- Overall, 59.6% (n=458) of respondents have never taken part in any engagement activities with Warwickshire County Council.
- Almost 40% (n=307) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there are opportunities for them to share their views on issues that matter to them, whilst 36% (n=276) disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Overall, 45% (n=344) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they are listened to in decisions that affect them.
- A total of 56.6% (n=435) of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they are informed of how their views and feedback have been used.
- More than half, 57% (n=438) of respondents, disagree or strongly disagree that Warwickshire County Council knows what is important to them. A further 34% (n=236) of respondents saying they neither agree or disagree.
- In total, 46% (n=352), respondents neither agree or disagree that Warwickshire County Council values residents' experiences and opinions.

4. Questionnaire results

There were 768 responses to the survey (including paper-based surveys), a response rate of 78.2%.

4.1 Respondent Profile

Figure 1 and Table 1 provide details on where panel members responding live in Warwickshire. The place of residence of panel members responding to the survey is broadly similar to the population of Warwickshire (aged 18+) with respondents from Warwick District slightly overrepresented.

Figure 1: Place of residence of respondents

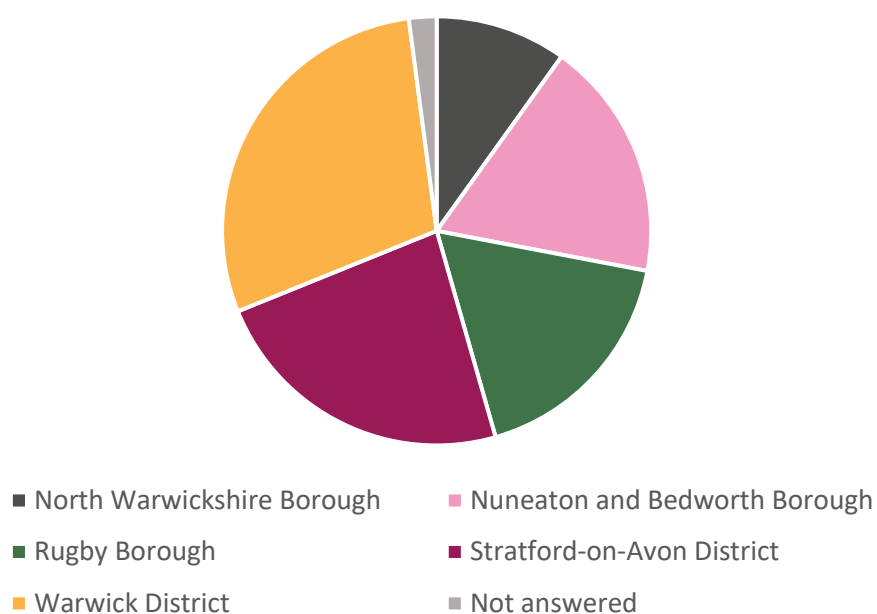


Table 1: Place of residence of respondents

District	Number of respondents	% of respondents	% total VoW panel *	% total Warwickshire**
North Warwickshire Borough	76	10.1%	11.2%	11.3%
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough	139	18.1%	19.1%	21.9%
Rugby Borough	135	17.6%	17.2%	18.4%
Stratford-on-Avon District	179	23.3%	23.6%	23.1%
Warwick District	223	29.0%	29.0%	25.2%
Not answered	16	2.1%	-	-

*This is the current composition of the Voice of Warwickshire panel (February 2022)

**This is the composition of the Warwickshire population aged 18 and over based on mid-2020 population estimates

Table 2 shows the characteristics of panel members responding to the survey and compares this to the characteristics of the Voice of Warwickshire panel and Warwickshire population (aged 18+) where possible.

Table 2 – Characteristics of respondents (768 respondents)

Characteristics		Panel respondents	% of panel respondents	% total of VoW panel	% total of Warwickshire
Gender	Female	392	51.0%	52.7%	51%
	Male	335	43.6%	44.2%	49%
	Non-binary	3	0.4%	0.4%	-
	Prefer not to say	10	1.3%	1.3%	-
	Prefer to self-describe	12	1.6%	1.4%	-
	Not answered	16	2.1%	-	-
Age in years	17-24	10	1.3%	1.6%	9.9%
	25-39	113	14.7%	18.7%	23.1%
	40-49	99	12.9%	14.2%	15.7%
	50-59	144	18.8%	18.7%	17.9%
	60-64	96	12.5%	12.1%	7.4%
	65-74	207	27.0%	24.4%	13.6%
	75+	71	9.2%	9.0%	12.5%
	Prefer not to say	11	1.4%	1.4%	-
	Not answered	17	2.2%	0%	-
Long standing illness or disability	Yes	123	16.0%	16.6%	20.1%
	No	609	79.3%	80.6%	80.0%
	Prefer not to say	20	2.6%	2.9%	-
	Not answered	16	2.1%	-	-
Ethnicity	Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0	0%	0.1%	0.1%
	Asian or Asian British - Indian	11	1.4%	2.4%	2.9%
	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%
	Black or Black British - African	3	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
	Black or Black British - Caribbean	4	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%
	Chinese	4	0.5%	0.5%	-
	Gypsy or Traveller	1	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
	Mixed - White and Asian	6	0.8%	0.7%	0.3%
	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	4	0.5%	0.5%	0.1%
	Other Asian background	4	0.5%	0.5%	0.8%

	Other mixed background	5	0.7%	0.7%	0.2%
	Other White background	34	4.4%	4.5%	3.3%
	White British	647	84.3%	84.3%	89.0%
	White Irish	8	1.0%	1.7%	1.1%
	Prefer not to say	12	1.6%	1.6%	-
	Prefer to self-describe	7	0.9%	1.0%	-
	Not answered	16	2.1%	-	-
Religion	Buddhist	4	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%
	Christian	373	48.6%	49.0%	66.3%
	Hindu	2	0.3%	0.7%	1.0%
	Islam	7	0.9%	1.3%	0.9%
	Judaism	2	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%
	Sikh	3	0.4%	0.8%	1.7%
	Spiritual	9	1.2%	1.2%	-
	Other religion or belief	18	2.3%	2.6%	0.4%
	No religion	284	37.0%	36.8%	22.7%
	Prefer not to say	44	5.7%	6.0%	-
	Not answered	22	2.9%	1.0%	6.6%
Sexual orientation	Asexual	14	1.8%	3.1%	
	Bi/bisexual	14	1.8%	1.9%	
	Heterosexual/straight	632	82.3%	81.8%	
	Gay Man	10	1.3%	1.5%	
	Gay woman/lesbian	7	0.9%	0.9%	
	Pansexual	8	1.0%	1.1%	
	Other	1	0.1%	0.1%	
	Prefer not to say	59	7.7%	8.9%	
	Not answered	23	3.0%	0.8%	

4.2 About your involvement

In this section of the survey respondents were first asked why they wished to get involved in the Voice of Warwickshire Panel. There were several options to select from and respondents were asked to select all options that were applicable. Figure 2 and Table 3 show a summary of responses to this question. The most common response was to influence local decisions with almost three quarters of respondents selecting this reason (72.3%, n=555).

Figure 2: Responses to “What made you want to get involved in Voice of Warwickshire?”

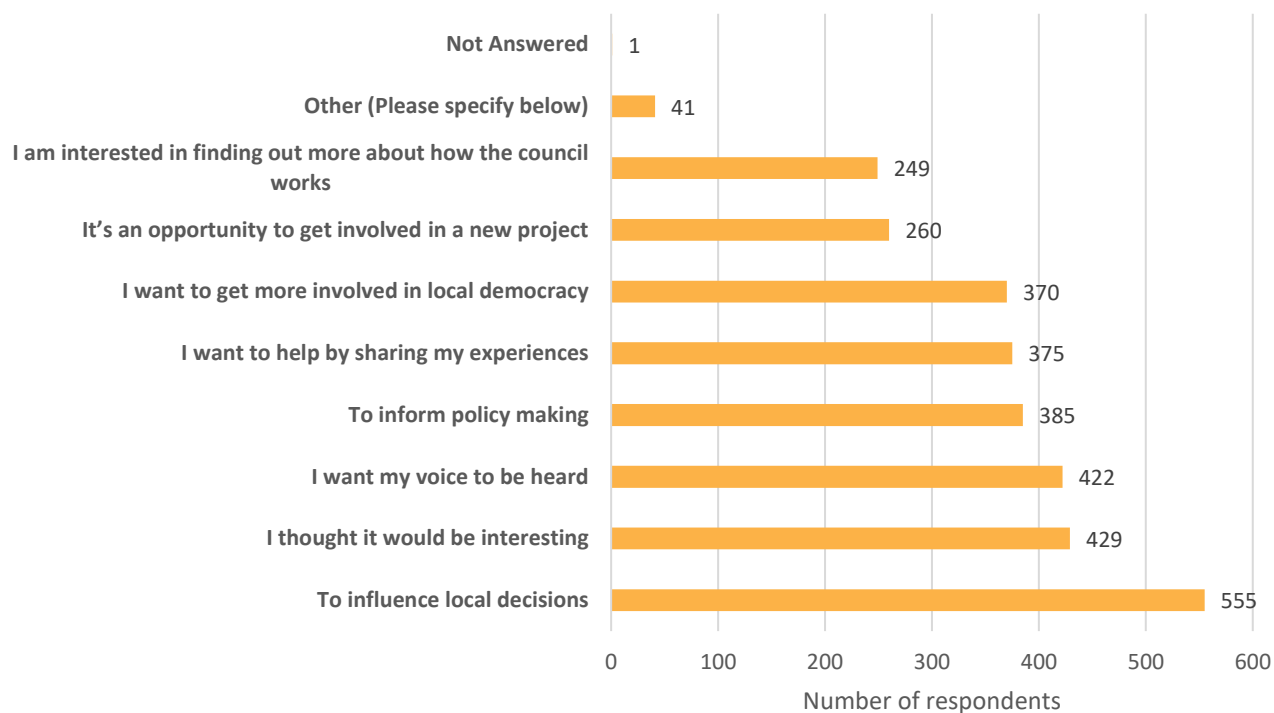


Table 3: Responses to “What made you want to get involved in Voice of Warwickshire?”

Option	Total	Percent
To influence local decisions	555	72.3%
I thought it would be interesting	429	55.9%
I want my voice to be heard	422	54.9%
To inform policy making	385	50.1%
I want to help by sharing my experiences	375	48.8%
I want to get more involved in local democracy	370	48.2%
It's an opportunity to get involved in a new project	260	33.9%
I am interested in finding out more about how the council works	249	32.4%
Other (Please specify below)	41	5.3%
Not Answered	1	0.1%

There was also an open text box for respondents to advise if they had any other reason for joining the panel. There were 41 respondents who added further reasons with several respondents giving more than one reason for joining the panel. Responses were themed and are summarised in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Themed open text responses to ““What made you want to get involved in Voice of Warwickshire?”

Theme / description	Count	Example quotation(s) for illustration
<p>I want my voice heard</p> <p>This broad theme was mentioned by the largest number of respondents.</p>	<p>16 respondents</p>	<p><i>“It’s important to get involved in your local decision making authorities otherwise it’s not really being honest when you wish to criticise decisions.”</i></p> <p><i>“ I think it’s important to encourage two-way dialogue to ensure future decisions consider the needs, hopes, desires and experiences of people living within Warwickshire”</i></p> <p><i>“Feeling disengaged with the Council and the updates I receive, seems very town centric, not realising about the number of villages.”</i></p> <p><i>“Sometimes what happens is by the time we are asked it is already a done deal”.</i></p>
<p>I have keys skills, knowledge and interest</p>	<p>15 respondents</p>	<p><i>“I worked in local government as a management account for 10 years. I feel that my experience in working across many diverse areas will allow me to make informed responses to surveys and questions. I understand the pressures local government are under and also the concerns of residents.”</i></p> <p><i>“I am a manager of a GP Practice, working to better the healthcare of the local population. I’d love to use my skills and knowledge from this to have discussion and learn more about our community.”</i></p>
<p>I would like to do something to contribute and improve my community</p>	<p>12 respondents</p>	<p><i>“Council Tax is a big part of peoples monthly outgoings and I feel that where their money is spent sometimes doesn’t address their personal issues and they have no opportunity to influence future spend.”</i></p> <p><i>“I have lived in Warwickshire all of my life and would like to see improvements in facilities locally.”</i></p> <p><i>“Just to articulate my thoughts on relevant matters in the hope that, if others agree, relevant areas of interest can be sensibly advanced/ addressed. And who knows, if it works, tiny Warwickshire might be able to give a real lead to the wider country.”</i></p>
<p>To ensure the panel is representative</p>	<p>7 respondents</p>	<p><i>“To help with the diversity of the voice of Warwickshire”</i></p> <p><i>“I don’t currently feel people of my demographic are represented and supported by the Council, and would like to help ensure that all residents are considered and feel that the Council does things to support them.”</i></p>

		<i>"I am in a younger age group and want to represent people my age as I think councils often get polarised views in groups like this"</i>
I have been previously involved in consultation and panels	5 respondents	<i>"Was on a people's panel previously"</i> <i>"Until I retired, I led user engagement for healthcare in Coventry and I know the value of engaging with people where they are at, and listening to them, and acknowledging the legitimacy of their opinion, and being accountable to them. This all makes for good use of resources and anticipating or managing perceived wrongs or un-met needs. While I try to represent more than just myself, I think it is important for public servants to be accountable and this is a really good and non-threatening way to do it."</i>
Improve my understanding	4 respondents	<i>"I hoped it would enable me to be better informed about County Council proposals on such matters as road traffic improvements, and be involved in the consultation and decision-making process, thereby sharing several decades of local experience."</i>
Interested in future projects	4 respondents	<i>"I have lived in Warwickshire all of my life and would like to see improvements in facilities locally."</i> <i>"Having spent all my life in Warwickshire. I am most interested in any future ventures and projects around the area. I hope I will be able to make a valuable contribution with my views."</i>

The second question asked if respondents had previously taken part in any other Warwickshire County Council (WCC) consultation or engagement activities. There were 768 responses to this question.

The majority of respondents (60%) advised they had not previously been involved in any engagement activities run by WCC. Respondents were given several other options to select from and could select more than one response:

- Surveys
- Focus groups or workshops
- Community forums
- Webinars
- Not sure/ don't know
- Other

Those that had previously taken part in consultation and engagement activities were most likely to have completed surveys (23.3%, n=179) (Figure 3 and Table 5)

Figure 3: Responses to “Have you previously taken part in any other Warwickshire County Council (WCC) consultation or engagement activities?”

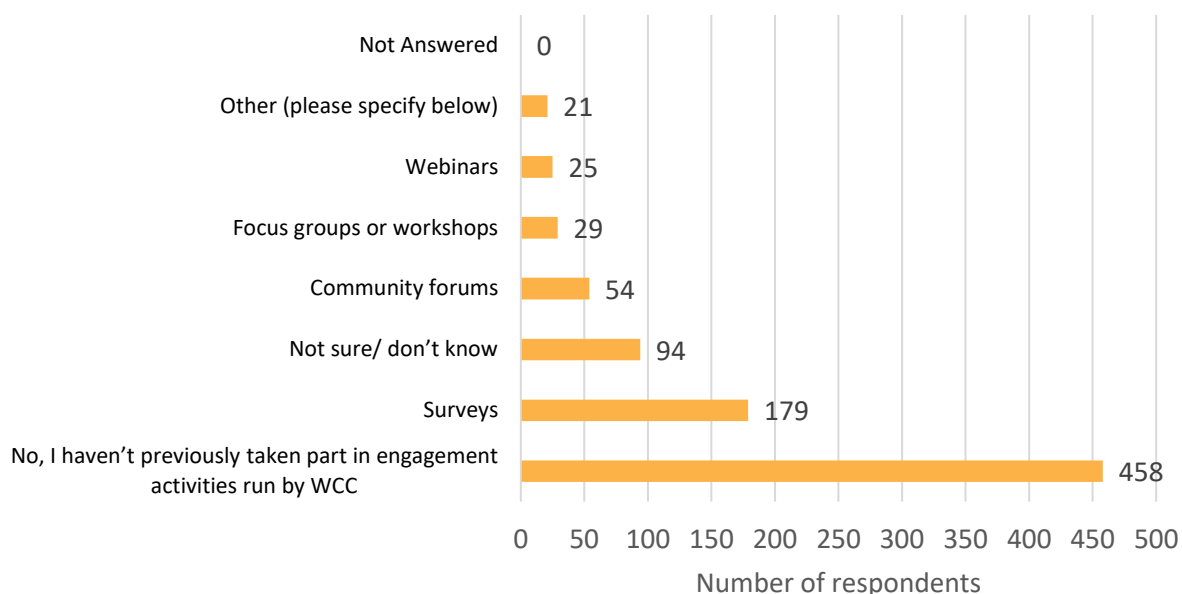


Table 5: Responses to “Have you previously taken part in any other Warwickshire County Council (WCC) consultation or engagement activities?”

Option	Total	Percent
No, I haven't previously taken part in engagement activities run by WCC	458	59.6%
Surveys	179	23.3%
Not sure/ don't know	94	12.2%
Community forums	54	7.0%
Focus groups or workshops	29	3.8%
Webinars	25	3.3%
Other (please specify below)	21	2.7%
Not Answered	0	-

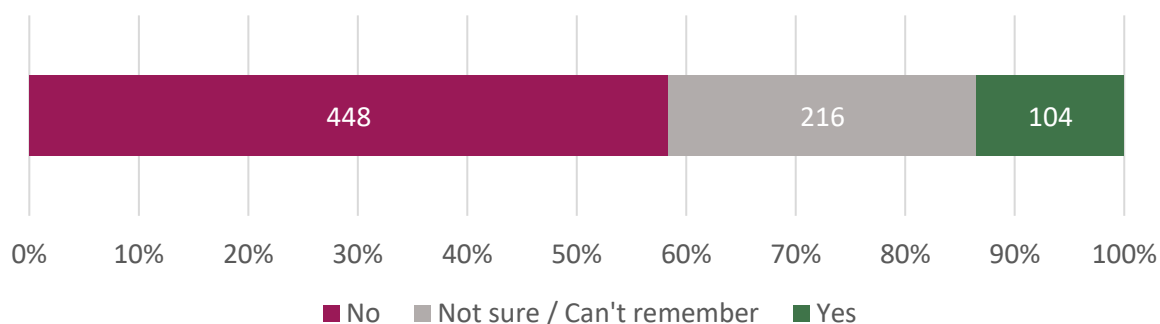
Respondents were given an open text box to respond if they had participated in any other activities. In total, 21 respondents advised they had taken part in other activities, a number of these were types of surveys or specific consultations but other methods included panels, COVID champions and meetings (Table 6).

Table 6: Other responses to “Have you previously taken part in any other Warwickshire County Council (WCC) consultation or engagement activities?”

Activities	Number of respondents
Consultations	6
Covid champion	3
Planning consultations	3
Transport plan consultation	3
Paper Based surveys	2
Online surveys	2
Workshops	2
Parental panel	2
My place survey	1
Email participation	1
Cycling and walking consultation	1
Children’s centre consultation	1
Warwickshire together solar panel supply auction	1
WCC composting venture	1
Focus group	1
Community energy tariffs	1
Warwickshire wildlife	1
Peoples panel	1
HS2 group meetings	1

The third question respondents were asked was “Have you previously responded to any Warwickshire County Council led consultation or engagement surveys on Ask Warwickshire (ask.warwickshire.gov.uk)?”. There were 768 responses to this question, with 58% advising they have not previously responded to any Warwickshire County Council led consultation or engagement on Ask Warwickshire and further 28% saying they weren’t sure (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Responses to “Have you previously responded to any Warwickshire County Council led consultation or engagement surveys on Ask Warwickshire (ask.warwickshire.gov.uk)?”



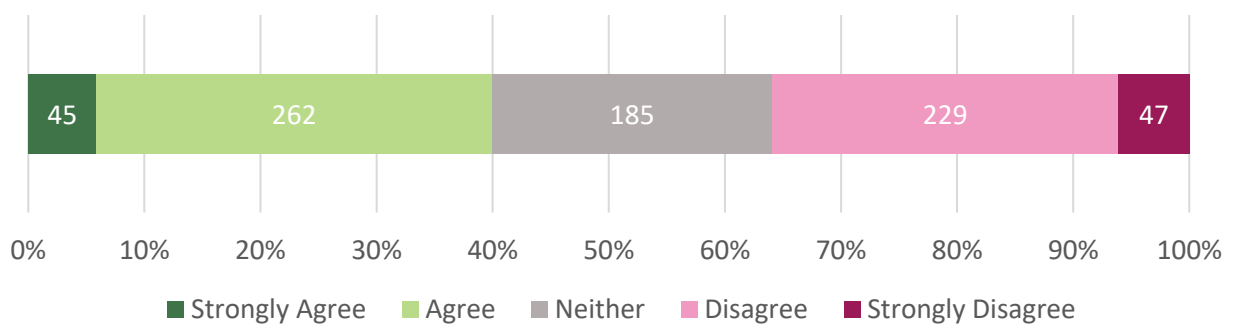
4.3 Views on engagement within Warwickshire County Council

Respondents were asked to think about how local councils currently gather and use the views of residents and to what extent they agreed with the following statements:

- **There are opportunities for me to share my views on issues that matter to me**

Almost 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there are opportunities to share their views on issues that matter to them, whilst 36% disagreed or strongly disagreed (Figure 5).

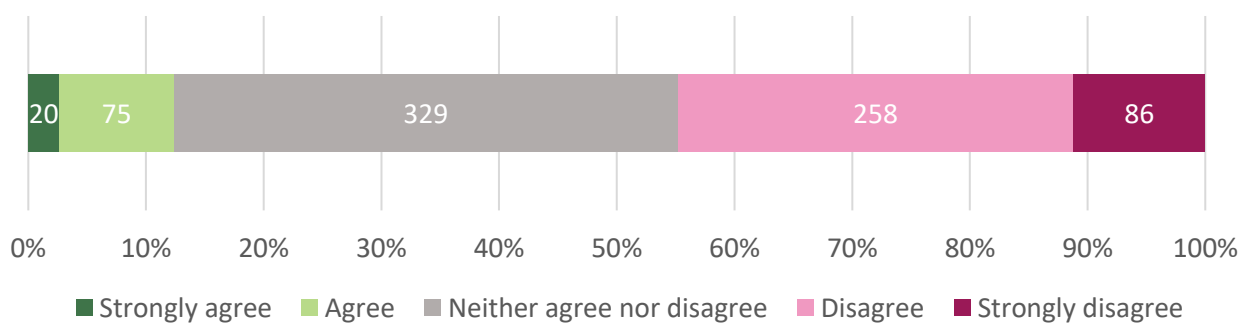
Figure 5: Responses to “There are opportunities for me to share my views on issues that matter to me”



- **I am listened to in the decisions that affect me**

Almost 45% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement whilst a further 43% of respondents said they neither agree or disagree that they are listened to in decisions that affect them (Figure 6).

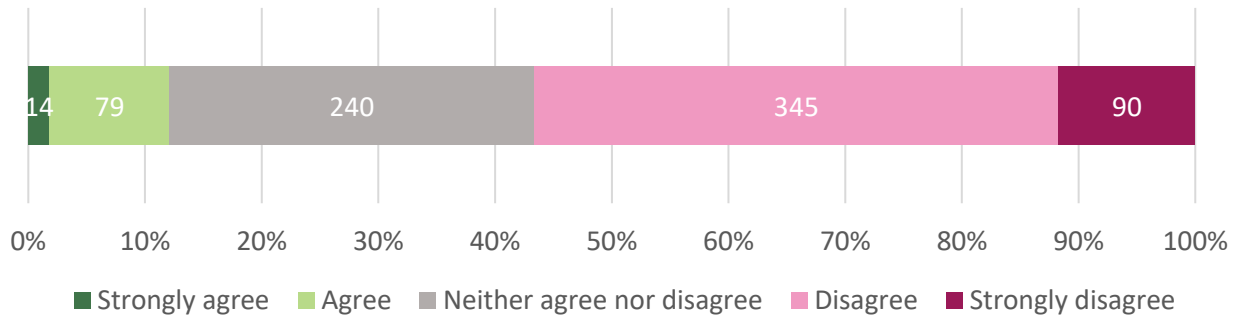
Figure 6: Responses to “I am listened to in the decisions that affect me”



- **I feel that residents are told how their views and feedback have been used**

More than half (56.6%) of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they are informed of how their views and feedback have been used (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Responses to “I feel that residents are told how their views and feedback have been used”

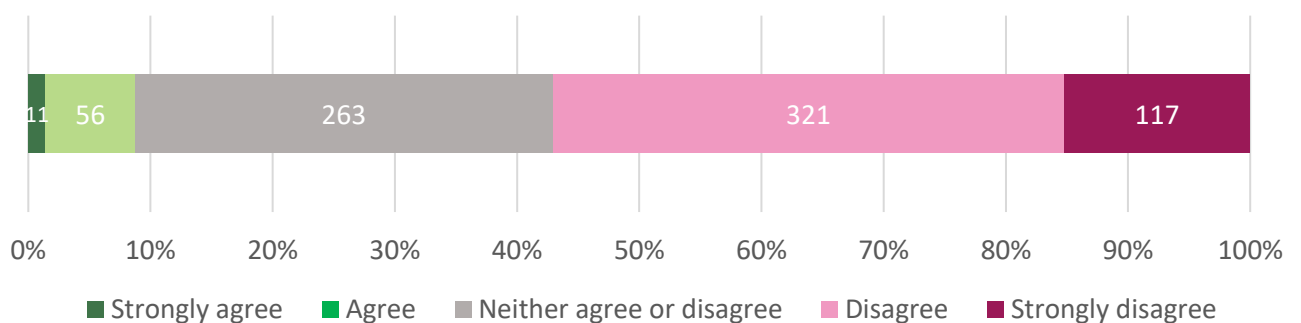


Respondents were then asked to think specifically about Warwickshire County Council and were asked to respond to a couple of statements:

- **Warwickshire County Council knows what is important to me**

There were 768 responses to this part of the question. 57% of respondents disagree or strongly disagreed that Warwickshire County Council knows what is important to them with a further 34% of respondents saying they neither agree or disagree (Figure 8).

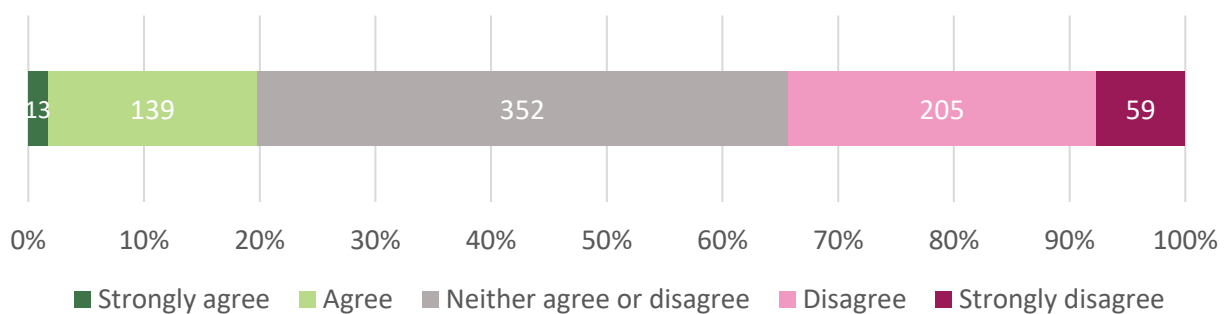
Figure 8: Responses to “Warwickshire County Council knows what is important to me”



- **Warwickshire County Council considers and values residents' experiences and opinions**

Just over one-third (34.4%) of respondents said they disagreed or strongly disagreed that WCC considers and values residents' experiences and opinions with a further 46% of respondents saying they neither agree or disagree (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Responses to "Warwickshire County Council considers and values residents' experiences and opinions"



4.4 Aims of the Voice of Warwickshire

The final question was in relation to the aims of the Voice of Warwickshire panel. The aims of the panel were outlined as - the panel will:

- Provide a representative voice from a wide cross section of the community in Warwickshire.
- Help Warwickshire County Council deliver the Council Plan by collecting views on key topics.
- Provide the Council with insight about residents' opinions to support and improve their decision making. It is not a decision-making body.
- Ensure members have a positive experience of engaging with the council about the things that are important to them.
- Help us to understand how a Residents' Panel can best be delivered and managed in the future.

Respondents were asked if they had anything additional they would like to see the Voice of Warwickshire residents' panel achieve. This was an open question with free text for the respondents to write their views.

Analysis was undertaken and themes based on qualitative comments are presented in Table 7. In total, 367 respondents gave a comment to this question, some providing multiple responses on what they would like the panel to achieve. The most common response was for the residents' ideas and views to be listened to and for residents to understand how their views and ideas had affected any outcomes within Warwickshire County Council.

Table 7: Themes based on qualitative comments asking resident panel members if there is anything else they would like to see the panel achieve.

Theme / description	Count	Example quotation(s) for illustration
<p>Understanding why and how decisions are made and how residents' opinions have been listened to</p>	<p>78 respondents</p>	<p><i>"Feedback on how the input from residents is actually used to steer decision making at the council."</i></p> <p><i>"Provide feedback to residents on how, specifically, residents views have influenced the council's decision making."</i></p> <p><i>"Genuinely listen to our views and properly explain why a decision has subsequently been reached to overcome the feeling that the decision has already been taken, and consultation is a necessary evil."</i></p> <p><i>"Strive to ensure that residents are more aware of the way in which their views are sought and acted on"</i></p>
<p>Local voices listened to</p>	<p>76 respondents</p>	<p><i>"Capturing the views from all residents and encouraging local support"</i></p> <p><i>"A local voice that is heard and acted upon"</i></p> <p><i>"To liaise with residents on problems and find solutions in the local community."</i></p> <p><i>"If this initiative delivers local voices and listens to them, it will be a good thing and align stakeholders"</i></p> <p><i>"It would be beneficial if residents views and genuinely listened to and acted upon."</i></p>
<p>Improved communications with residents within Warwickshire</p>	<p>36 respondents</p>	<p><i>"I would like to see the Panel help to drive better communication from Warwickshire County Council to residents"</i></p> <p><i>"Ensure that any resulting communications to residents are clear, concise and free of jargon, so everyone can fully understand what is being said, leaving no room for misunderstanding or conjecture."</i></p> <p><i>"To help the council understand how their communication is received and understood by public and if possible, help identify obstacles and misunderstandings."</i></p>

Equality for everyone in Warwickshire	27 respondents	<p><i>"Equality of voice, input, funding and facilities for all parts of the county."</i></p> <p><i>"All areas to be equally / fairly included in all decisions."</i></p> <p><i>"To make sure that views of the "silent majority" in the County are adequately reflected in the decision making processes."</i></p>
Ensure greener decisions across Warwickshire	17 respondents	<p><i>Look into more ways to reach carbon neutral targets, including a move towards environmental building standards such as passive house, use of insulation, heat pumps, etc.</i></p> <p><i>"A more welcoming ecological and mindful Council working towards being the best ecological town and council that it can and to show what we can do to help the climate and all residents live in a way they can afford and prove that money is not wasted that projects are thought through, and people are listened to"</i></p>
Better understanding of what Warwickshire County Council is responsible for	8 respondents	<p><i>A working knowledge of how individual town councils interact with WCC, how decisions are made and by whom.</i></p> <p><i>"Understanding what responsibilities, the councils have and letting people know"</i></p>
Positive outcomes for Warwickshire	7 respondents	<p><i>"Positive outcomes for future proposals"</i></p> <p><i>"Positive outcomes from consultations with full feedback of reasons for decisions"</i></p>
Improved disabled access	6 respondents	<p><i>"I have found the provision of services and facilities for disabled people well below those provided elsewhere. I would like the residents panel to look closely at the areas they live and work in regards disability inclusion standards."</i></p>
Hold decision makers accountable	6 respondents	<p><i>"Hold decision makers to account by having them feed back to the panel"</i></p> <p><i>"Ensure consensus driven change is established and to hold policy makers to account."</i></p>

Other themes mentioned by a smaller number of respondents included improving the management of highways (three respondents), improved partnership working (two respondents), improving the community's mental wellbeing (two respondents), respondents offering to use their skills and knowledge to assist the panel (two respondents) and using the panel to test out ideas and initiatives (one respondent).

Copy of survey:

Voice of Warwickshire Residents' panel

Welcome to the Voice of Warwickshire residents' panel. Over the next 12 months you will have the opportunity to share your views on big issues in Warwickshire, like health and wellbeing, climate change and sustainability, community safety, education, transport, economic growth, inequalities and inclusion, and more.

By taking part you will be helping us to deliver the new Council Plan by sharing your views on the big decisions that will affect Warwickshire and the area where you live over the next few years.

For this first introductory survey we are wanting to find out your views on engagement with Warwickshire County Council to date and your expectations for the Voice of Warwickshire group going forward. We are also interested in why you chose to sign up to be part of Voice of Warwickshire. We are keen to collect this information now so that we can review if and how this changes throughout the year and look at what impact the group is having.

We are keen to capture the views of all 880 residents who have registered with Voice of Warwickshire to ensure we have a representative overview.

All those completing the survey will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 Love to Shop voucher.

The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you for taking the time to share your views.

Kate Price
Consultation and Engagement Officer

About your involvement

'Voice of Warwickshire' is a new residents' panel and we would like to understand a little more about your interest in this and in Warwickshire County Council engagement activities generally.

1. What made you want to get involved in Voice of Warwickshire?

(Please tick as many options that apply)

- I want to get more involved in local democracy
- I want my voice to be heard
- It's an opportunity to get involved in a new project
- I want to help by sharing my experiences
- I thought it would be interesting
- I am interested in finding out more about how the council works
- To inform policy making
- To influence local decisions
- Other (Please specify below, continue on separate sheet if required)

2. Have you previously taken part in any other Warwickshire County Council (WCC) consultation or engagement activities?

(Please tick as many options that apply)

- Surveys
- Focus groups or workshops
- Community forums
- Webinars
- No, I haven't previously taken part in engagement activities run by WCC
- Not sure/ don't know
- Other (please specify below)

3. Have you previously responded to any Warwickshire County Council led consultation or engagement surveys on Ask Warwickshire

- Yes
- No
- Not sure / Can't remember

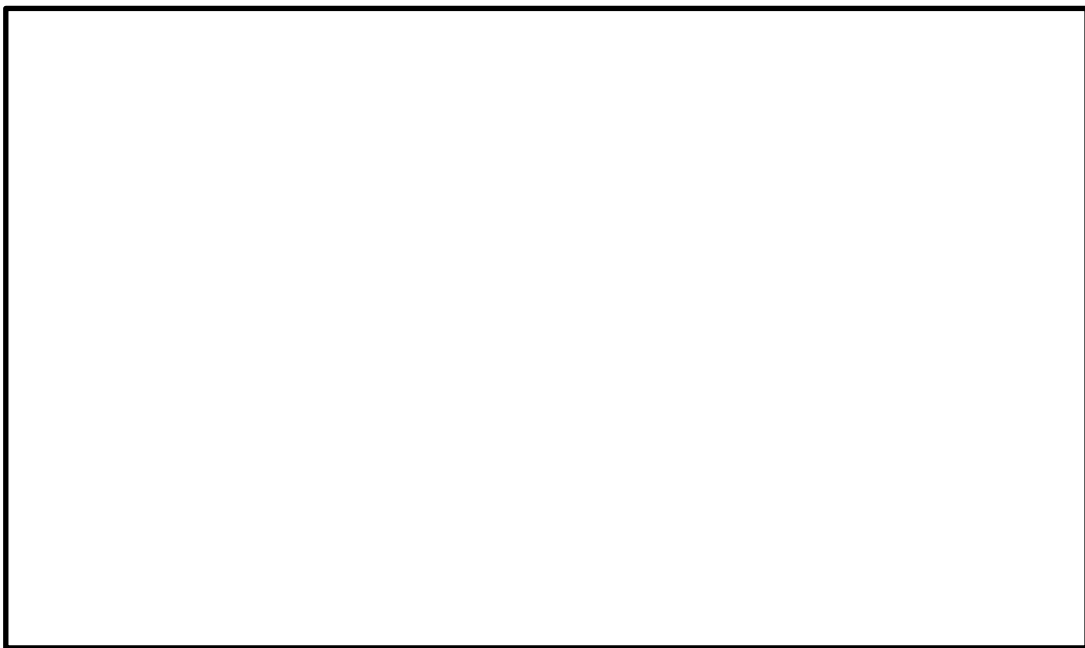
4. Thinking about how Warwickshire County Council currently gathers and uses the views of residents, to what extent do you agree with the following statements: (please select all that apply)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
There are opportunities for me to share my views on issues that matter to me					
Warwickshire County Council knows what is important to me					
I am listened to in the decisions that affect me					
Warwickshire County Council considers and values residents' experiences and opinions					
I feel that residents are told how their views and feedback have been used					

Our aims are that the Voice of Warwickshire residents' panel will:

- Provide a representative voice from a wide cross section of the community in Warwickshire.
- Help Warwickshire County Council deliver the Council Plan and corporate priorities by collecting individual views and opinions on key topics.
- Provide Warwickshire County Council Corporate Board with insight about residents' opinions to support their decision making, helping Warwickshire County Council to deliver services that meet the needs of residents.
- Provide members with a positive involvement experience and opportunity to inform decision making around the things that are of value and important to them.
- Help us to understand how a Residents' Panel can best be delivered and managed to achieve outcomes and ensure a good experience for members.
- Support and improve decision making. It is not a decision-making body.

5. Are there any other things that you would like to see the Voice of Warwickshire residents' panel achieve?



Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.