

SALC Executive Meeting 13th September 2021

Agenda Item 8

SALC Summary Report on Member Survey 2021

The survey report consists of 25 pages giving the breakdown of the responses and the final three pages providing the conclusion. To date I have produced a summary of the report for two area committees (North Shropshire and Oswestry), the Social Impact Task Force and the LEB. Copies of the report will be sent to all Town and Parish Councils and Voluntary Organisations that participated, this after the SALC Executive in September.

We had 67 responses from across both Unitary Authorities, Voluntary Groups and T&PCs. Although the numbers were low the information that was gleaned is extremely useful and provides a good base to build on. SALC's thanks go to Sarah Dodds and Charlotte Green for creating the survey and compiling the report.

The document highlighted the rapid response that both Town & Parish Councils and Voluntary Sector provided as Covid took hold and during the pandemic period of the last (at the time of the report) twelve months. It is also heartening to see how the local community rallied round to ensure that residents, especially those alone and vulnerable were cared for.

The movement online and the greater use of IT came to the fore as this enabled communication, meetings, and group activities to be carried out in a safer environment. This may be an area that could be further encouraged with support from Unitary Authorities and Town & Parish Councils.

When asked about the concerns and priorities for the future, the community groups seem to focus priorities around ensuring some basic human needs are met; food, income/employment and mental health and wellbeing. Town and Parish Councils, on the other hand, seem to focus more on population needs and planning for the future, considering issues such as the impact on children and young people, educational attainment and social mobility.

The partnerships created during the pandemic hopefully will continue to thrive and prosper. The survey also revealed the main area of development is the opportunity to grow partnerships with business and local employers.

Diversity, inclusion, and equality were not currently high on the agenda, but I feel in due course this will come to the fore as other Covid issues recede. This is an area that should be revisited as nationally research does highlight concern of potential increased inequality post pandemic. There is however strong recognition of the importance of engagement and on meeting the needs of local people.

As hinted at earlier in this report both SALC Members, Voluntary and Community Sector Groups themselves need some support. The Voluntary Sector highlights the need for financial support and grants, and access to specialist advice. SALC members mention support planning for the future and climate change is an example given as a future challenge and issue that will require increased knowledge and action.

Covid is not going away anytime soon so there is still work to do.

Overall, there is a strong commitment to continue local action and provide support. Despite the wish to return to a more usual way of living and working, the feedback demonstrates that there is hope that increased feelings and displays of community spirit and unity may be retained.

Ray Wickson

Chairman