

## Information Letter to the Council

Dear Council,

In September and October 2020, our municipality conducted the survey 'waarstaatjegemeente', a vital survey for councils to understand their communities, amongst more than 500 residents and 200 entrepreneurs of the municipality of Wassenaar.

The survey consisted of two polls, one for residents and one for entrepreneurs. For the first time in The Netherlands, the survey was conducted in English. This way, expats could voice their opinion about the services in Wassenaar.

As we find ourselves in the midst of the corona pandemic, we took the opportunity to add questions about the corona measures.

*Waarstaatjegemeente* is an initiative of The Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG). Comparison of municipalities can be read on [www.waarstaatjegemeente.nl](http://www.waarstaatjegemeente.nl). This website compiles, edits and presents the data of and on the different municipalities, making it possible to compare them to each other.

In this information letter, we want to inform you about the most important results of the 2020 Poll. The data has been compared to the results of 2018, when we also held this survey. As you will read, appreciation of the services of our municipality amongst residents and entrepreneurs has increased in every respect. The reports of both the resident and entrepreneur surveys have been added to this letter. These results have also been shared for publication on [www.waarstaatjegemeente.nl](http://www.waarstaatjegemeente.nl).

### **Residents' survey: trust in our public leadership has increased**

Compared to the results in 2018, residents' appreciation of the services of our municipality increased in all respects. This is true for personal as well as digital services. Appreciation of the overall services increased in value from 6+ to 7-.

We are also happy to report that, over the past two years, residents' trust in our administration has increased from 18% to 31%.

### *Appreciation of municipality staff*

Much appreciation was voiced for the *hostmanship* of the municipality's employees. The vast majority of residents is positive about their expertise, empathy, solution-orientation and their capacity to give room to customers' considerations. 44% of residents is pleasantly surprised about the service they receive.

### *Above average: municipality communication*

A number that has increased significantly is that of municipality communication. Communication was given 6,5 this year and in 2018 this was 5,5. Significant increase is especially seen in, findability and comprehensibility of information. 76% of residents finds it easy to retrieve information. 72% agrees that the municipality uses clear and distinct language.

### *High appreciation of Living Environment*

Residents value their living environment with 8,5. This is in alignment with the Elsevier survey, where Wassenaar is at the top of the list of best municipalities in the Province South Holland, and in the top 5 of The Netherlands as a whole. The attention the municipality pays to creating an attractive living environment is valued at 7+. The majority of respondents agrees that flower beds, public gardens and parcs are well kept; that main roads, local streets and smaller paths and pavements are easily accessible, and that the neighbourhood is clean. Additionally, a vast majority (78%) indicates that very little is broken. 90% feels safe in the neighbourhood.

### *Wellbeing and Care*

Equally, in the area of wellbeing and care, the municipality has received a higher value than in 2018. 87% of the residents is satisfied about the health care services. 54% of the residents are satisfied about social welfare services. 78% is satisfied about sports facilities. The municipality's efforts to support participation of residents with physical limitations or people in a vulnerable position is valued at an average of 7-. Generally, people are satisfied about all services that Wassenaar offers. The report shows that residents are aware of the efforts made by the municipality for liveability in the neighbourhoods.

### *The most important outcomes of the survey per topic*

<b>Subject/Score</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2020</b>
Attention to Living Environment	6,52	<b>7,14</b>
Resident-Community Relationship		
Collaboration with the inhabitants	5,65	5,96
Community Service	6,31	6,76
Digital services	6,20	6,51
Communication and information	5,60	<b>6,45</b>

Wellbeing and (health)care		
Participation in society	6,14	<b>6,68</b>

### Entrepreneurs Survey: increase in services appreciation

The entrepreneurs' survey indicates that the appreciation of the services of the municipality has increased on all aspects, with the exception of digital services. (a slight decrease). Three of the twelve scores have increased with over 0,5 points. This is true for general service, business climate and administrative burden. Entrepreneurs are more reserved than our residents in their appreciation of the general services and give the municipality a 6,5. This is 0,5 points higher than two years ago.

#### *Appreciation of municipality staff*

The *Hostmanship* of municipality employees was evaluated more positively on all levels of service than two years ago. Important was the findability of the right person, their solution-orientation, expertise and empathy. Here, too, the entrepreneurs are more reserved in their appreciation than residents: 20% of entrepreneurs are surprised by the level of service they receive. It is still, however very much worth a compliment to the administrators and all other municipality staff that the entrepreneurs have contact with.

#### *Satisfaction about business climate*

Entrepreneurs give the business climate in Wassenaar an 'adequate' rating. They think Wassenaar is a representative and safe environment. They are mainly satisfied about the accessibility of the town, its many parking spaces for clients and limited criminal offences. They wish to keep it that way. What emerges from the open-ended questions is their satisfaction about Wassenaar's green character and the towns appearance.

#### *The most important outcomes of the entrepreneurs' survey*

<b>Subject/Score</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2020</b>
Representivity company environment	7,22	7,25
Safety in the company's environment	7,26	7,64
General services municipality	5,71	<b>6,46</b>
Digital Services	5,58	5,51
Professionalism	5,58	5,94
Handling of permit applications	5,98	6,16
Collaboration with entrepreneurs	4,98	5,19

Communication and information	5,34	5,77
Business environment municipality	5,77	6,22
Administrative pressure	5,06	<b>5,58</b>
Business Climate	5,28	<b>6,09</b>
Living environment	7,14	7,53

### **Municipality Communication around Corona Measures**

Because the survey was held in the midst of the corona pandemic, we added a list of questions on the corona measures taken. Residents as well as entrepreneurs were asked to rate the following topics:

- Communication about national corona measure
- Communication about municipality specific measures
- Amount and frequency of communication
- Reachability by phone
- Reachability by e-mail
- Current and update information on the website
- Enforcing rules
- The extent to which residents and entrepreneurs felt supported

Ratings given by residents varied between 6,01 (enforcement) and 7,02 (website information being up to date). Residents indicated that communication and enforcement of regulations could have been better. But compliments were also given. Specifically, for the Wassenaarse slag beach (beach-coaches) and for room given to the catering industry and shop owners.

Entrepreneurs' ratings varied between 6,05 for communication 6,76 for website information being up to date. Tips were given on communication and municipality measures. Also, compliments were given about the municipality's communication to health care organisations.

The corona-related questions were tailored to the situation in Wassenaar and therefore the results can't be compared with other municipalities. There was, however, a national survey which resulted in a report on how the corona pandemic resulted in close collaboration of the municipality with entrepreneurs (*'Corona geeft ondernemersdienstverlening een impuls (hoe gemeenten dichterbij ondernemers zijn komen te staan door corona, hoe dat te behouden en verder uit te bouwen).'*)

This report shows that 45% of entrepreneurs felt supported by their municipality, 22% even felt highly supported.

These results have been shared with our Team that deals with Population and Care and are being used to further improve services.

### **Conclusion: continuing along this path**

The results of both surveys show us that we are on the right track. Especially during this time, where the corona pandemic has challenged us organisationally, we are happy to have been able to keep the standards of our service levels.

#### *Continuing this trend in the new organisation*

Over the next few years, we want to continue this upward trend. The results of the surveys serve as starting point for further improvements. The national average, that on some aspects is higher than the results in Wassenaar, show us that there is room for improvement. Our upcoming, new civil service organisation, where employees will be working for Wassenaar only, will help us realise this. We consider the strong increase in appreciation as a compliment to our employees and is a trend we want to continue in our new organisation.

#### *Investing in collaborations with our residents*

The biggest challenge lies in the area of participation. This is why, in the time ahead, we want to invest in working together with our residents. Resident participation is an overall topic in the development and execution of the strategic agenda of Wassenaar's road map toward 2030 ('Op weg naar 2030').

In this first quarter of 2021, we will formulate a plan of action with concrete actions, knowledge development and ways to collaborate towards an enjoyable living environment. The survey further suggests that residents are willing to participate more in their neighbourhood initiatives. Our main organisational contact point for neighbourhoods will further develop a program.

Starting in 2021, we aim to involve more residents in societal issues, initiatives and the decision-making process. The new website, that was recently launched, contributes to the further improvement of the digital services and communication with residents and entrepreneurs. An example of this is the room for feedback we have recently added to the website.

#### *Treasuring our facilities*

The results of the survey will be discussed with our social welfare organisations. The municipality will continue to treasure and keep investing in facilities that work well. For example, maintaining educational facilities. The recent agreement that was made to stimulates sports in the community, will contribute to further increase in participation in sports activities.

#### *Focus on economic policy and entrepreneurs*

The results of the survey will also be shared with entrepreneurs. Over the past years, we have had a clear focus in our economic policy: developing the town centre and the beach. The decision-making process is quick, and the municipality is capable of delivering on what she promises.

Our entrepreneurs have voiced their appreciation for this, and you can read that in the results. This is the direction that we will be continuing to follow in the years ahead. In the next year and a half, we will mainly be investing in our relationship with entrepreneurs. The focus of the municipality on entrepreneurs and accessibility for entrepreneurs remains, especially during this pandemic, a

priority. The new website will contribute to improved experiences with the digital facilities.

### **To conclude**

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all residents and entrepreneurs for taking part in this survey. With your input, the municipality received valuable information with which our services can be improved.

Kind regards,