

# Voice!



# Lifelong Learning Locality Planning



# Welcome

Welcome to the 17th citizens panel newsletter! This newsletter gives feedback to you, a member of Aberdeen citizens panel, on the results of the 17th questionnaire. Topics in this questionnaire covered the Community Planning themes of Locality Planning and Lifelong Learning.

This newsletter provides a summary of the results of the questionnaire you completed in June 2009, and how we plan to use this information. Your responses are important in informing and contributing to future plans by all partners of the City Voice.

Questionnaire data is analysed by our research consultants at The Robert Gordon University. As always, all information provided is kept strictly confidential.

The 18th survey, focusing mainly on the Community Planning themes of the Environment and Transport & Connections is included with this newsletter. Many thanks to all of you who have continued to complete the questionnaires and have returned them promptly over the last couple of years.

Please continue to get in touch if you wish to make any comments on the citizens panel. You will find my contact details at the end of the newsletter.

**Philippa Mason**  
City Voice Co-ordinator

## Future Questionnaires

This newsletter, and the full results of the 17th questionnaire, are available to view on the Community Planning website [www.aberdeencityvoice.org.uk](http://www.aberdeencityvoice.org.uk)

Internet access is provided at libraries throughout Aberdeen City and hard copies are available at The Point (Broad Street), and all city libraries.

Alternatively, hard copies can be posted out by contacting me on the details below.

I plan to issue Newsletter No.18, a summary of the results of the enclosed questionnaire in February 2010, along with the 19th Questionnaire.

If you have any further queries or would like to feedback your comments, please contact me:

### Philippa Mason

Freepost Plus RLZR-RYJT-KXJU  
Aberdeen City Voice  
5th Floor  
St Nicholas House  
Broad Street  
Aberdeen AB10 1AX

**Telephone** (01224) 522935

**Email** [cityvoice@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:cityvoice@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

**Aberdeen City Voice** is an initiative by Aberdeen's Community Planning Partnership, including Aberdeen City Council, Grampian Police, Grampian Fire & Rescue Service, Scottish Enterprise, NHS Grampian, Communities Scotland and Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations.

Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished with it 



## Frequently Asked Questions...

### **Q. How do you choose which questions are asked in the City Voice?**

**A.** The City Voice was designed to help the Community Planning partners consult with Aberdeen residents on a variety of subjects in a focussed and consistent way. Rather than all the Partners having a separate Citizens Panel, we decided to pull our resources together and create a single panel — the Aberdeen City Voice. When partners want to put questions into the City Voice, they must go through a strict process to ensure we get good quality questions and that the answers result in actions!

All questions have to go to the City Voice Editorial Board. The Editorial Board is made up of representatives from all the partners and works as a 'sounding board' to make sure questions are relevant, clear and easy to understand. The Board meets 3 times a year and have the power to change or even exclude any questions they feel do not follow the rules.

Having a joint Panel shared by the Community Planning Partners has lots of benefits. As well as being cost effective, it ensures good consultation practice across the Partnership. The City Voice panel are very highly regarded by all the Partners who rely on your views and responses to drive their services and ideas forward. On behalf of all the City Voice Partners Thank you for all your hard work!!

## Update - City Voice Out and About

Look out for the City Voice posters that should be appearing around the City.

We are always looking for new panellists to boost the City Voice membership numbers so if you know of anyone who wants to get their views across, please pass them my details! I have also been out and about in the community promoting the Panel's work and encouraging people to get involved. If you see the City Voice stall, please come and say hello and let me know if there is anything I can do to improve the questionnaire or newsletter.

**Voice!**

Add your voice to the hundreds of residents already making a difference in Aberdeen!

**Q What is Aberdeen City Voice?**

**A** Aberdeen City Voice is a panel of Aberdeen City residents. We contact them three times a year to ask for their views on a wide range of issues that affect the community. The City Voice is supported by Aberdeen's Community Planning Partnership so it covers a wide range of topics.

**Q Why should I join Aberdeen City Voice?**

**A** Its very important that the panel represents the whole of Aberdeen's population so we are now calling for more people to join. The results of these questionnaires are used to shape policy, measure performance and plan future service delivery. Basically, it tells the service providers what they are doing right and what they could be doing better!

Panel members also receive a copy of our newsletter that updates them on past City Voice questionnaires and more importantly, what the service providers are going to do with the results! If you want to make your voice heard on a wide range of issues affecting your community please contact:

Philippa Mason, City Voice Coordinator  
 Telephone: 01224 522925  
 Email: cityvoice@aberdeencity.gov.uk

**YOUR CITY - YOUR SAY**

[www.aberdeencityvoice.org.uk](http://www.aberdeencityvoice.org.uk)

## 16th Questionnaire - Panel Response

Here are the results of the 17th questionnaire you kindly completed in June 2009. The results have now been analysed and a summary is presented in this newsletter. At the time of issuing the questionnaire, there were 900 of you on the panel —we received 720 questionnaires which gives us an overall response rate of approximately 80%. It is important that as many of you as possible respond each time so please keep up the good work.

**Please let me know if there are any reasons for you not replying.** Are the questionnaires too complicated? Too long? Are we asking about things of little interest to you? What would you like us to ask you about?

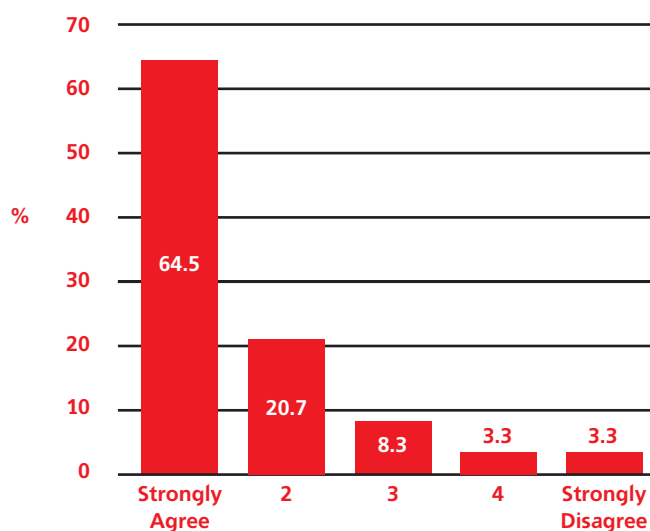
Please let me know when you return by letter, email or telephone.



Aberdeen City Council wanted to ask the Panel about their experiences of adult and community learning. This experience may include evening classes, activity groups and self help groups. You told us that in the last two years, 17% of you had taken part in a community learning course, group or activity. When we broke these results down by gender, women were more than twice as likely as men to have taken part in a course. The age group most likely to indicate they had participated in a course was the 55-64 year olds with 23% of respondents having attended in the last two years.

81% of panellists who had taken a course in the last two years rated it as good or very good and 85% would consider doing another course, as shown in Figure 1. Overall, this tells us that the community learning experience undertaken by panellists is generally very positive.

**Figure 1 - I would consider attending another course, group or activity**



The Panel were also asked if they knew about individual learning accounts. The individual learning account is a Scottish Government scheme that allows anyone over the age of 16, living in Scotland and earning under £22,000 a year to get up to £500 towards the cost of learning. Your responses told us that 45% of panellists knew what an individual learning account was and 13% of the panellists who did, had opened one.

**This is what we are doing**

The responses to this questionnaire make interesting reading, and will be used to inform aspects of adult learning and literacies practice in the city. 98% of respondents think it is important that people improve their skills/qualifications, and 17% of the Panel have actually attended some form of learning in the past two years. Participants in this group have taken part in a wide range of activities (36 were identified), many of which are clearly not offered/run by the Council's Community Learning and Development team.

It is heartening to see that over 80% of those who participated report having gained new skills, think the provision was either good or very good, and would consider undertaking further learning. These respondents also rate their courses as good value and think that classes were held at convenient times — however, only 63% said that prior information was clear and informative.

There is a mixed response in terms of activities being of interest; a wide enough range of learning opportunities being offered; ease of finding out about activities; and the timings and cost of classes. Over 80% of respondents feel that it is very important that learning opportunities are available in local areas, and 75% consider that crèche facilities should be provided. Approximately 20% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was easy to find out about the learning opportunities/activities on offer.

It is surprising that more people would contact Aberdeen College for help with literacies issues than would get in touch with the Council's Adult Learning team, although there is an obvious awareness of the Big Plus campaign. Although nearly half of the respondents are aware of Individual Learning Accounts, only 13% have actually used one, and most of this provision was through Aberdeen College.

Your responses highlight some interesting issues for the Adult and Community Learning Team, particularly in terms of how we market our service, and we will use this information to make future service improvements.

**Susan Summers**  
 Adult Learning Development Officer  
 Aberdeen City Council

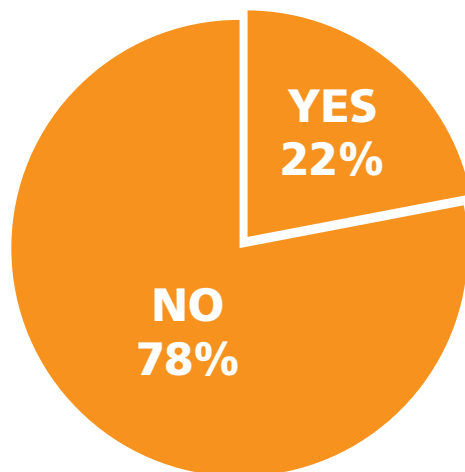
# Neighbourhood Planning

In 2005, The Aberdeen City Alliance, our community planning partnership, published the first Neighbourhood Community Action Plans. Since then, the partnership has been working to help build neighbourhood planning into the plans of all the City's public services. Over the next few years, we want to increase residents' involvement in neighbourhood planning so we can find out what the community wants and how this can be delivered at local level.

The 17th City Voice questionnaire asked the panel whether they were aware of the Neighbourhood Community Action Plan for their neighbourhoods. 32% of panellists were aware but 68% were not. This is a drop in last year's figure where approximately 42% of panellists were aware of the Plans.

22% of panellists said that they had been asked for their views on local issues and services in their neighbourhood in the last two years. This is an increase from 14% when the same question was asked last year. When this is broken down by age group, those in the younger age groups (16-24 and 25-34 years old) are less likely to report they have been asked.

**Figure 2: Apart from the City Voice, have you been asked for your views on local issues and services in the neighbourhood in the last 2 years?**



The Panel were also asked whether they thought they could influence what happens in their neighbourhood. The response to this question jumped from 27% last year to 44% this year. When results were broken down, 47% of panellists in the South neighbourhoods felt they could influence what happens in their area, compared with 46% in the Central areas and 40% in the North.

## This is what we are doing

The information given by the Panel has helped us to track the progress of neighbourhood planning over recent years. This year, the results will also be used to inform the review of neighbourhood planning being carried out by the Locality Planning Forum.

The results for these questions show a varied picture of involvement in Neighbourhood Planning. Some deterioration was expected as the Neighbourhood Planning process suffered some disruption as a result of the City Council restructuring its departments and a reduction of staff directly involved in supporting the process.

This is most evident in the reduction of people who know there is a Neighbourhood Community Action Plan for their area (down from 43% and 42% for the previous two years to 32% this year). There was an increase in the number of people who remembered being asked for their views about their area (from 14% up to 22%) but we have not yet regained the higher figure from 3 years ago of 41%. Our aim is for a much higher level of awareness amongst residents and we hope to achieve this as we establish more routine channels of communication and consultation over the next two years.

Satisfaction levels have remained unchanged (11%) but most people (73%) did not know enough about Neighbourhood Planning to comment. Of those who were dissatisfied (16%) most people criticised the consultation process. Once people are more aware of the process, we would hope to see an increase in satisfaction. The need to improve consultation has already been identified through direct contact with community organisations. Here we hope to rely less on one off consultations and move to more of an ongoing dialogue between local services and local people.

Those who feel they can influence what happens in their area has increased dramatically from 27% to 44%, exceeding the target we set for next year (30%). It will be interesting to see if we maintain this high level next year. Certainly as our improvements to the Neighbourhood Planning process take effect, we would want to see the level go even higher.

The other indicator we use to monitor the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Community Planning is the percentage of scheduled actions completed each year. This year, the figure is 71%. The intention is that for any action in a Neighbourhood Plan, we would expect that the timescales, resources and responsibilities are all in place so that only unforeseen circumstances prevent completion. This should give a completion rate of at least 90%.

Following further consultation over the autumn, The Aberdeen City Alliance will be presented with a new improved approach to Neighbourhood Community Planning which will come into operation on 1 April 2010.

## Dave Valentine

Strategist — Community Planning and Regeneration  
Aberdeen City Council



# Local Development Plan

Every Council in Scotland is required by the government to have a Local Development Plan. A Local Development Plan is the document that guides development within the City. It allocates land for housing and business use and sets down policies to ensure development is of a high standard and is appropriate in a given location. Aberdeen City Council carried out a number of consultation events on the local development plan over the summer but were also keen to find out what the Panel thought the main planning issues in Aberdeen City were.

Your results told us that the three most important planning issues identified by the Panel were;

- 1 Development in the City Centre
- 2 Location of new housing
- 3 Levels of affordable housing

Location of new shops/ schools and services and quality of new developments were also both noted by panellists as more important issues.

## This is what we are doing

The results from the Aberdeen City Voice will help to inform the planning policy recommendations for the next 5-10 years. These recommendations will be contained within a 'Main Issues' report that is due to be published for wider consultation in mid October. The consultation on this report will be open for eight weeks. The report will be available on the Council website, in the reception area of St Nicholas House and in all libraries. As well as being able to give your views at public consultation events, you will also be able to give your comments on an online consultation form.

The Panel gave us some really useful comments on the clarity of the local development plan process, ensuring participation and a need to ensure that we are achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development is a key issue in planning policy and will be incorporated into all the possible policy options outlined in the Main Issues report. If you would like to find out more about the Local Development Plan and further consultation events, please visit our website on [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/localdevelopmentplan](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/localdevelopmentplan)

## Gale Beattie

Team Leader — Development Plan  
Planning and Infrastructure  
Aberdeen City Council

# Sport And Physical Activity



The sports service provided by the City Council is changing. In February 2008, the Council decided that it would transfer its sports service to a new trust called SportAberdeen. The Trust has been set up to help manage the Council's sports facilities and offers lots of financial, operational and service advantages. The Council wanted to find out what sports facilities you currently used and what your experiences of these facilities was. They also wanted to find out about your expectations for the Trust so these could be built into planning the new service.

Figure 3 shows the results from the last 3 years measuring the Panel's levels of physical activity. This will be useful to track as the new Trust develops over the next few years.

The panel were also asked how the Trust could improve public participation in sport and physical activity in the future. The three most popular options were

- 1 Ensure affordable prices
- 2 Make classes more accessible to beginners
- 3 Provide more information on the sports available and how to get involved.

## This is what we are doing

The information received from your responses will feed into the development of current and future business plans for Sport Aberdeen. It will act as the baseline on current user perceptions and help us track the progress of the new Trust over the coming years.

It is very positive to see that almost 45% of respondents participate in some form of physical activity on a weekly basis. The challenge Sport Aberdeen has is to provide more opportunities within and outwith current facilities to help raise that percentage even higher. Given the accessibility of sites and services, it is vital that Sport Aberdeen takes advantage of being located within the heart of a number of communities.

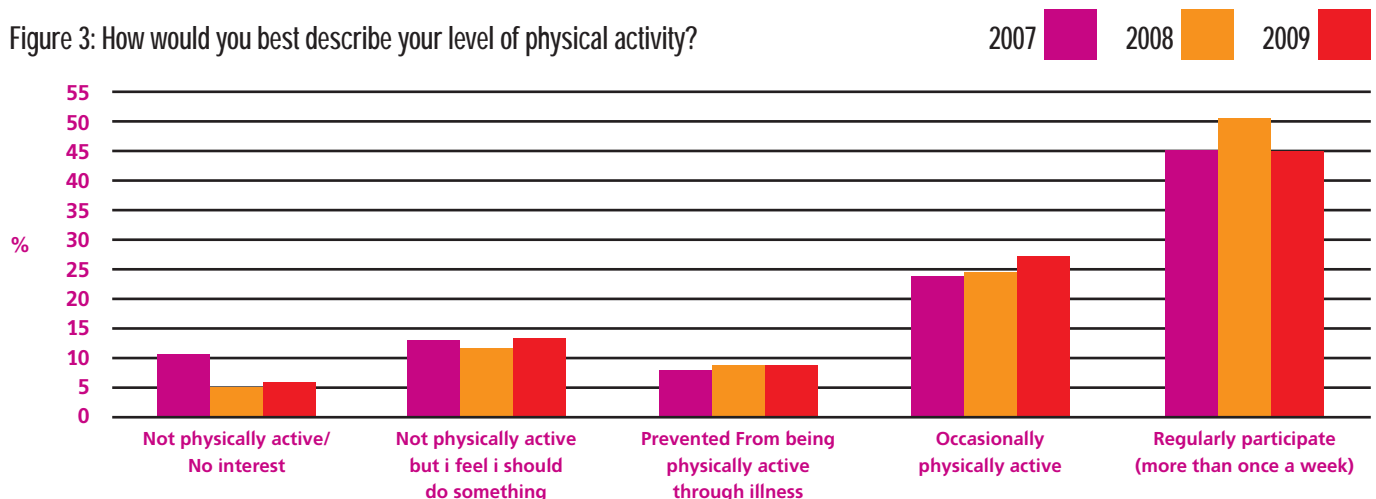
The pricing structure of the service is very important to both panellists and the SportAberdeen trust. One advantage of the Trust is that it will have greater flexibility in its approach to pricing policies. The challenge for Sport Aberdeen (and other providers) is to match the convenience of the locations to an overall pricing policy that gives our community easy accessibility to the services on offer.

As the profile of sport in Aberdeen City rises over the next few years, we will continue to consult with our users (and non users) to understand their needs, experiences and expectations on the quality and availability of the services provided.

## Steve Russell

Leisure Services Manager  
Aberdeen City Council

Figure 3: How would you best describe your level of physical activity?



# Economic Promotion

Having a strong and recognisable regional identity is an important part of promoting our region. The regional identity or regional brand is the way for us to distinguish ourselves from other regions and promote ourselves in a consistent and recognisable way. The Regional Identity Team, who consist of public and private organisations in the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire area, wanted to find out if, and how the Panel were aware of the regional identity and if so, where had they seen it promoted.



Figure 4: Before reading about it in the City Voice, had you heard of the term 'Aberdeen City and Shire' as a reference name to the region?

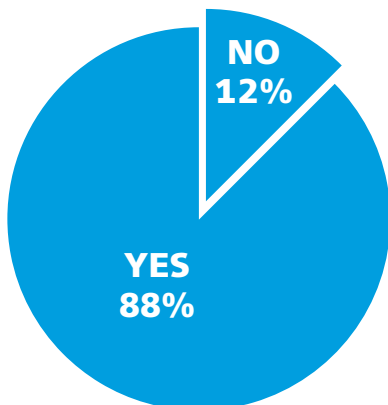


Figure 4 tells us that almost 88% of City Voice panellists recognised the term Aberdeen City and Shire. Over three quarters of the Panel had seen the regional logo with the vast majority having seen it on Union Street. 91% of panellists didn't recognise the regional mascot - Deen.



## This is what we are doing

The regional identity acts as a collective voice, bringing the region together under a united banner, logo and identity. This is important for business where the branding can be used at exhibitions and events to showcase all the region has to offer and for tourism, to help attract visitors to the area.

The answers provided by the City Voice Panel have given us some really useful information. We were pleasantly surprised that so many of you recognised the term Aberdeen City and Shire, the logo and had seen it around the region. As well as the places we listed, you also told us that you had seen the logo in the airport, at conferences and on the Homecoming literature.

In terms of the recognition of Deen, the City and Shire mascot, we are not surprised that so few people recognise him. Deen is a new addition to our regional identity promotional items and has only had limited outings as yet, but we hope to see this improve in the future.

The research conducted with the Citizens Panel is just the start of a wider research exercise into our regional identity. Your results will be used by the brand partners and Councillors to support the business case for an ongoing commitment to the regional identity from both Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Councils, and will help form the basis of next stages of consultation.

## Emma Watt

Brand Manager — Economic Promotion  
Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Identity Team