

City Voice Newsletter – Issue 5

November 2005

It's been quite a while since we last issued a Newsletter to our panellists. Since then, there have been a number of important developments - the 5th and 6th City Voice questionnaires have been sent out and a number of new people have been recruited onto the panel. The public sector partners who use the City Voice appreciate the feedback they receive and remain committed to the panel.

Does the Panel have a future?

In July, the Committee agreed that to continue the success of the Panel, a member dedicated solely to the work would be required. We are currently in the process of recruiting a part-time member of staff, and we hope this will improve both the questionnaires and the feedback you receive in the future.

Results

This Newsletter concentrates on the responses we received to the 5th questionnaire, which covered the themes of Safety, Environment, Learning & Leisure, and Homes.

SAFETY

Speed Cameras

The North East Safety Camera Partnership (NESCAMP) has been working with various public bodies to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads in Grampian. They presented a range of statements and asked panellists to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with them.

- The majority of panellists (59%) either agreed or strongly agreed that using safety cameras mean that dangerous drivers are more likely to get caught.
- 83% either agreed or strongly agreed that the use of safety cameras should be supported as a method of reducing casualties.
- 16% agreed or strongly agreed that there were too many safety cameras in their area.
- Half of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that safety cameras were an easy way of making money out of motorists.

NESCAMP were encouraged to see that most people agreed that the aim of safety cameras is to reduce road casualties and influence driver behaviour. However, they were concerned that a perception exists that cameras are an easy way of making money out of motorists.

Community Safety

- 95% of respondents rated their Neighbourhoods as a very good or fairly good place to live.
- Noisy neighbours were felt to be either not very, or not at all common in 87% of the panellists neighbourhoods, while 77% panellists thought vandalism and graffiti was not very or not at all common.
- Two thirds of respondents (63%) said it was not very common or not at all common for rubbish or litter to be lying around, however 37% felt it was either a very common or fairly common issue.

The Service Provider found it heartening to see the majority of people regard Aberdeen as a safe, clean place. They note, however, that it is important not to become complacent and that quality of life in the City carries on being improved. Aberdeen received over £1.7 million funding this year from the Scottish Executive to tackle anti-social behaviour, and similar sums will be available in the next 2 years.

Fire Safety Messages

- The Fire Safety message “Fireworks – be safe not sorry!” was the message with the greatest awareness among the 460 respondents.
- 34% didn’t know whether safety messages they saw or heard were local or national messages, while 20% thought they were only national.
- The majority of panellists (86%) said they had made no lifestyle changes as a result of the safety messages they saw or heard .

Grampian Fire and Rescue Service found that the number of people that were able to recall specific messages was very encouraging. The number of responses provided the Service with a good mechanism with which to gauge the retention of fire safety messages used in its campaigns. The Service will continue to use campaigns as a way of promoting specific fire safety topics, while using more local radio and busses to carry fire service messages.

Sacro

SACRO is a Community Mediation Service whose mission is to reduce conflict and offending and make communities safer.

- 66% of respondents were previously not aware of the Community Mediation Service SACRO.
- 43% of panellists said that they didn’t know if they would get in touch with the Service if they had a dispute with their neighbour, while 39% said they would.

SACRO is available and accessible to all and self-referrals are encouraged, although referrals are usually received through the main agencies in the City Council and partner organisation. SACRO said they will continue to deliver a

range of promotional activities and develop a method to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach to information sharing.

ENVIRONMENT

Recycling Centres and Points

- The majority of panellists (77%) use the current Recycling Centres and Points, while 23% do not use the service.
- 42% of respondents who use Recycling centres use the facilities on a monthly basis, while 33% use them weekly.
- 88% of recycling point users find the service most convenient to use whilst shopping.
- 'Environmental Reasons' was given as the reason most panellists used Recycling Centres.
- The biggest reason for not using recycling collection was no kerbside recycling facilities available, followed by no transport facilities to the site.
- 181 responses found that overflowing containers was the biggest problem with recycling centres and points.

Marketing Campaign Awareness

- 86% of panellists are aware a campaign is running to encourage the recycling of household waste.
- Three quarters of respondents have heard of the campaign Waste Aware, primarily through the Waste Aware guide.
- 89% of panellists received the guide through their door and 86% find it useful.

The Waste Aware Team are currently looking for more recycling points across the City and has asked local community councils to help identify potential sites. The Points are monitored on a daily basis and since the purchase of a new collection vehicle the number of overflowing points has been virtually eliminated. The rollout of kerbside recycling facilities is due to be completed by the end of 2006. To raise further awareness across the City, school and community visits will be enhanced.

Ecological Footprint Project

- Three quarters of panellists said environmental problems are either very important or important to them.
- 42% of respondents think their lifestyle does not damage or is not at all damaging to the environment.
- The majority of panellists (83%) have not heard or are not sure if they have heard of the ecological footprint project.

The survey was conducted at the start of the ecological footprint project and provides an important baseline for capturing environmental awareness in Aberdeen. The results show that efforts must be directed towards closing the

knowledge gap between lifestyle and environmental consequences. A following survey is hoped for the future.

LEARNING AND LEISURE CULTURAL COMMISSION CONSULTATION

The Scottish Executive has established an independent **Cultural Commission** to establish Scotland as a vibrant, cosmopolitan, competitive country and an internationally recognised creative hub. They are interested in exploring the barriers to attendance and participation in cultural and arts activities, in order to remove them.

- The Theatre is the most common cultural activity taken part in by the panellists (142 respondents), followed by Concerts (116) and the Cinema (107).
- Not enough time is the reason given by most respondents for not taking part in cultural and arts activities (215).
- 245 panellists think that more information of what is happening in the area would encourage them to take part more.

Recommendations for the development of culture in Scotland were made from this report and numerous others, and were published in June 2005. The response from the Scottish Executive is still awaited.

HOMES

Aberdeen City Council owns and manages approximately 25,000 houses in the City, available to anyone over 16, through Homechoice. Homechoice is the common housing register for all social housing landlords in the City.

- The majority of panellists (71%) have not used the council housing service
- Of those that have used or are using the service, 61% either agree or strongly agree that staff respond promptly and efficiently to queries.
- An even number agree or strongly agree (33%) and disagree or strongly disagree (32%) that the council deals effectively and sympathetically with tenants in arrears of rent.
- Amongst Service users, 66% agree or strongly agree that council housing service is easy to access.
- 47% of service users agree or strongly agree that council house services provide good value for money, while 39% of all respondents agree or strongly agree.
- 32% of panellists agree or strongly agree that they were aware of the service that the Council provides for homeless people.

The responses were noted by the Housing Inspectors from Communities Scotland and for the Housing inspection team. The findings will be used to inform current training for front line housing staff and for the delivery plan currently before the Scottish Quality standard.

More responses are available from the 5th Questionnaire, on line at www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/acc/Consultations/aberdeencityvoice/outcomes.asp or by contacting Sonia Boyd on SoBoyd@aberdeencity.gov.uk or 522935.