



Newsletter No. 7 – June 2006

Welcome to the seventh citizens' panel newsletter. This newsletter gives feedback to you, the Aberdeen citizens' panel members, on the results of the 7th questionnaire, which included the themes of Health & Social Care, Safety, Being Informed and Getting Involved

This newsletter provides a summary of the results of the questionnaire you completed last March, 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.

Aberdeen Citizens' Panel is an initiative by Aberdeen City Council, Grampian Police, Grampian Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Enterprise Grampian, NHS Grampian, Communities Scotland and Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations. The partnership wants your opinions on services and issues relating to service provision and Community Planning. By knowing what residents think on different issues, we can aim to provide services that meet your needs.

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

The 8th survey, focusing mainly on the Community Planning themes of Being Informed and Arts, Heritage & Sport, 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 so far, or on future feedback newsletters. You will find my contact details at the end of the newsletter.

Sonia Boyd
City Voice Administrator

Your Comments

Firstly, thanks to all who expressed an interest in taking part in the discussion forum on Gypsy Travellers. I have passed your details on to Andy Lamb, Environmental Health Officer, and Sandra Bruce, Principle Development Officer (Communities of Interest), and hopefully they will be in touch with you soon.

Secondly, thanks for the comments relating to the changes made to the questionnaire and newsletter. I received some queries on the use of glossy paper and its cost versus 'regular' paper. I spoke to the publishers and they confirmed that the cost of 'silk' paper is no more expensive than ordinary paper, therefore, the cost of producing these documents is no more expensive than the previous arrangements of photocopying multiple copies. I will, however, look in more detail at the options of using recycled paper for future issues.

A couple of comments also came back about whether it would be possible to provide the questionnaire on-line or via email to reduce printing and postage and packaging costs. I am currently in the process of re-establishing the *Virtual Voice*, an online edition of the City Voice questionnaire. However, this may take some time due to problems we had with the previous version, but hopefully in the near future we should be able to provide you with the questionnaire on-line, or as an email attachment, if preferred. I will keep you informed of the progress we are making towards this. As not all of you have access to the Internet or a computer, however, the questionnaire and newsletter will also continue to be produced in 'hard copy'.

Thirdly, the new Council website has been launched in the last couple of weeks and as a result I will be updating the City Voice web pages. On these pages I hope to publish the history of the City Voice, information about the Partners involved, all previous questionnaires and newsletters, and current press cuttings. If there is anything in particular you would like to see on this website, please return your comments in the envelope provided.

7th Questionnaire – Panel Response

The 7th questionnaire was sent out to you in March. The results have now been analysed and a summary is presented to you in this newsletter.

575 of you completed and returned the questionnaire promptly, giving a response rate this time of around **57%**. We are ultimately striving for as near as possible to 100% response rate to get the most accurate picture possible of the views of Aberdeen City residents. By completing the surveys you are helping to shape future plans of the City Voice Partners.

At the time of distributing this questionnaire in March, there were 1,006 members on the panel.

HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Children

'For Aberdeen's Children' is Aberdeen's first Integrated Children's Services Plan, reflecting the value that the City places on its children and young people. 'For Aberdeen's Children' has been developed in partnership, combining national and local priorities while setting out the City's intentions and commitment to the children and young people of Aberdeen.

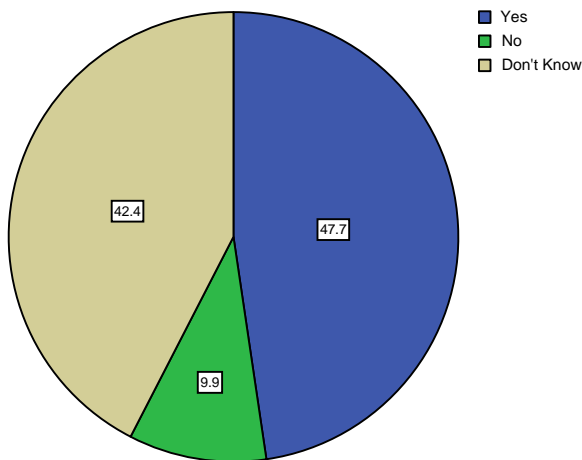
Central to the planning process and the delivery of services is the newly established shared vision, which has been adopted by all the partners to guide and underpin all that they do. The vision is:

"We believe that all children and young people in Aberdeen should enjoy being young. Aberdeen will be a city where young people are safe, nurtured, healthy and active; are included, respected and responsible; achieve their full potential; and are supported to participate in decisions that affect them".

Some of the key results are as follows:

- 76% of you agreed with the statement "Aberdeen is a safe place for children and young people to live"
- Approximately 54% did not believe that children and young people have enough opportunities to have their say in matters affecting them
- Nearly 99% of you agreed with the statement "The welfare of our children is important to Aberdeen's future"
- 90% agreed that families with children should be encouraged to stay in the city

The pie chart below shows a summary of responses on your views of whether the vision in 'For Aberdeen's Children' is achievable:



The pie chart shows that approximately 48% of you believe that the vision in 'For Aberdeen's Children' is achievable. Only 10% of you did not agree that the vision is achievable while 42% did not know.

You were asked to give examples of where you think there may be difficulties in achieving the vision. Some of the most common responses included:

- *There is a lack of parental discipline/support (38 comments from panellists)*
- *Problems with drink/drugs could pose difficulties (30 comments from panellists)*
- *Implementing the vision may be difficult in deprived areas (22 comments from panellists)*
- *There needs to be more facilities for children/young people e.g. youth centres, sports facilities (15 comments from panellists)*
- *Children need to be taken seriously and adults should listen to their views (14 comments from panellists)*
- *There is a lack of respect amongst young people (13 comments from panellists)*
- *Children need to learn about social responsibility and respect for others (10 comments from panellists)*

Children in Aberdeen – this is what we're doing

The Integrated Children's Services - Local Planning Group find these results very interesting. The perceptions of children and young people in Aberdeen are very heartening. The responses as to why it may be difficult to achieve our vision show that the public have similar concerns to ourselves, but also understand the resource issues we face.

The information will be used to inform the Integrated Children's Services Plan 2006 Update Report and the 2006 Position of Children and Young People in the City.

SAFETY

Crime Prevention / Reduction

Domestic housebreaking, thefts and break-ins to motor vehicles; all of these crimes and many more besides are commonplace within our society. The Police do all that they can to tackle these issues, however, private citizens can play their part as well by seeking out the Police for crime prevention and reduction advice.

- 12% of you had sought advice on crime prevention/reduction in the last 12 months, and most of you managed to find out the advice you were looking for.
- 88% of you were aware that you could get information from Police Stations, 65% from the Grampian Police website, 26% from The Point and 12% from iKiosks.

Other places you suggested information should be available included:

- *Libraries (suggested by 107 panellists)*
- *Community Centres (61 panellists)*
- *Schools (44 panellists)*
- *Supermarkets (38 panellists)*
- *Shopping Centres (37 panellists)*
- *Post Office (20 panellists)*

Crime Prevention/Reduction in Aberdeen – this is what we’re doing

These questions will be used to determine how we can better engage with the public and offer our services to enable them to reduce opportunities for crime directed towards them and their property. This has direct links with the Partnership Working section. It may not in itself result in direct action but it is entirely feasible that it will involve a more focussed approach being taken to imparting crime reduction advice.

Safety in the City Centre

Violence, often fuelled by alcohol or drugs, is commonly regarded as being endemic to city centres throughout Scotland.

- Approximately 90% of you feel safe or very safe in the City Centre during the day time
- Nearly 45% of you feel unsafe in the City Centre in the evenings/at night time during the week
- Only 28.5% of you feel safe or very safe in the City Centre in the evenings/at night time at the weekend
- Over 99% of you would report a violent crime to the police

| | Number of panellists |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Drunkenness | 349 |
| Antisocial Behaviour | 351 |
| Vandalism | 112 |
| Violent Crime | 122 |
| Theft | 93 |

The table above shows that Antisocial Behaviour was the most common reason given for feeling unsafe in the city centre at night (351 of you mentioned this). This was closely followed by Drunkenness with 349 responses indicating that this made you feel unsafe. Violent crime received 122 responses, vandalism was given 112 times and theft 93 times.

Other factors given included:

- *Drugs (15 comments)*
- *Begging (11 comments)*
- *Large groups of youths (9 comments)*
- *Fear of crime (6 comments)*
- *Muggings (4 comments)*
- *Lack of visible policing (3 comments)*

Safety in Aberdeen City Centre – this is what we’re doing

These questions are very pertinent at the moment due to the imminent launch of the Best Bar None scheme, as part of the 'Safer Aberdeen' programme which relates to the city centre economy. In addition, the information will be used in future funding applications as evidence. It is entirely likely that it will result in direct action, for example the placement of portable CCTV cameras within the city centre.

Youth Diversion

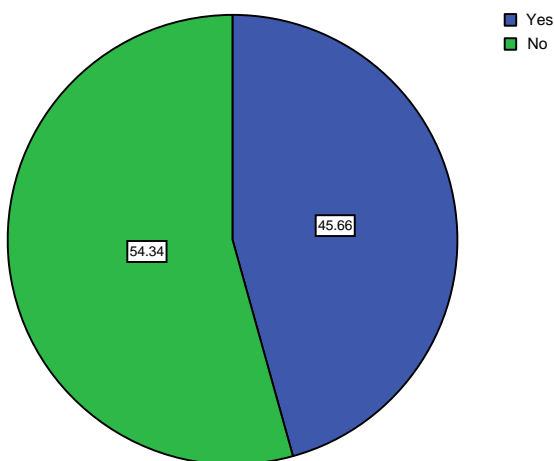
In recent years the subject of young people indulging in antisocial behaviour has risen to the very top of the political agenda. Boredom and a lack of facilities for young people are often listed as reasons for this behaviour.

- Approximately 60% of you do not believe that there are sufficient facilities available for young people to use during the evening to discourage them from engaging in antisocial behaviour

You were asked which facilities should be provided, the most commonly mentioned ones were:

- Youth clubs (70 comments)
 - Sports facilities/clubs - some of you made the additional comment that these should be affordable (34 comments)
 - Welcoming/safe meeting places such as coffee shop/internet cafe (35 comments)
 - Free/cheap activities for those that can't afford it (14 comments)
 - More community centres (13 comments)
 - Some respondents commented that there are plenty of facilities but young people don't use them (12 comments)
 - Skateboarding facilities (9 comments)
- 5% of you currently help out with a youth club in their area, with two-thirds in the 35-54 age group. Approximately 61% of you that help out with youth clubs are aware of the funding opportunities open to youth groups.

The pie chart below shows that 46% of you thought that an appeal to the general public to help out with youth diversion in your area would be successful.



- Approximately 51% of you thought that more people would get involved with youth diversion work if appropriate training was offered to you. A further 12.4% disagreed and 36% did not know

Youth Diversion in Aberdeen – this is what we’re doing

These questions will be used to try and engage with the local community to help us devise and manage youth diversion schemes. The officers most likely to be involved in this would be Crime Reduction or Neighbourhood staff. The Police realise that we can not devise these initiatives in isolation and rely upon the involvement of others, however, if that is not forthcoming it becomes much more difficult to embark upon anything. Like Crime Reduction this may not result in direct action but it will enable a more focussed approach being taken to devising youth diversion schemes.

Partnership Working

It is only by working together in partnership that all organisations involved in the City Voice can hope to achieve any lasting solutions. This can sometimes involve organisations being located within the same building to improve communication and co-ordination.

- the majority of you (approximately 78%) would like to see Police Stations in Aberdeen being located in shared premises with other organisations.
- the most popular organisation amongst respondents was the Community Centre (331 responses), followed by Schools (285 responses) and Social Work Offices (206 responses).

Other suggestions included:

- *Shopping Centres (21 comments)*
- *Supermarkets (5 comments)*
- *Hospitals (5 comments)*
- *Accident and Emergency (4 comments)*
- *Libraries (3 comments)*
- *Chemist (2 comments)*

Partnership Working in Aberdeen – this is what we're doing

Grampian Police are committed to partnership working and are looking to join up with Aberdeen City Council's Customer First Programme which entails one stop shops being created in key locations throughout the city. By knowing which places the public would like to see Police Offices located we can provide a better response. It is very likely that direct action will result and in future Police Offices may be co-located in places such as Accident & Emergency Units, libraries and schools.

Trading Standards

The Trading Standards Service is mainly responsible for statutory enforcement of a wide range of consumer protection and trading standards legislation. It also provides advice and guidance to businesses, money advice and debt counselling to consumers and consumer advice.

From 1 April 2006, initial requests for consumer advice will be provided by Consumer Direct Scotland (08454 040506) with follow up advice and investigation carried out by the Trading Standards Service.

The services that you rated as being most important in the work on Trading Standards were:

- Ensuring goods such as cigarettes, solvents and fireworks are not sold to children
- Checking goods and services for safety and quality standards
- Investigating unfair trading practices

Trading Standards– this is what we're doing

The Trading Standards Service welcomes the results of the questionnaire. It is noted that all of the issues identified were considered to be important by members of the citizens' panel. The results mirror to a certain extent the responses from business and consumers who use the Service and who are regularly surveyed.

The Trading Standards Service has always given high priority to investigating unfair trading practices and as a result of a partnership arrangement with Consumer Direct, which will deal with first contact consumer advice, the Service will be able to devote more resources to the investigation of unfair trading practices. Ensuring that petrol, fireworks and poisons has also always been given high priority and it is pleasing to note support for this in the responses.

Ensuring age restricted products are not sold to children has featured as one of the top two most important issues for the three groups surveyed. During the current year officers from the Trading Standards Service will be visiting retail premises in Aberdeen and will be advising traders of their responsibilities in relation to age restricted products. The Council's Accord Card is to be PASS approved which means it meets recognised national standards as a proof of age card. Traders are encouraged to ask young persons to produce their Accord Card and via an Accord Card reader to check the persons age band. The Service will also be carrying out a test purchase project involving young persons to check that retailers are adhering to the law in relation to sales of age restricted products.

The Trading Standards Service will be participating in a number of national projects together with other Scottish Local Authority Trading Standards Services. These projects will involve the checking of goods for safety and/or quality aspects. In addition, as part of their routine visits to trade premises and investigation of consumer complaints issues of safety and quality will be addressed.

GETTING INVOLVED

- The election that you indicated that you were most likely to vote in was the Scottish Parliament election in May 2007 – 510 of you indicated you would vote in this election, a slightly higher number than the City Council and UK Parliament elections. 396 of you indicated you would vote in the European Parliament election and 329 in the Community Councils elections
- 113 of you participate in Neighbourhood watch, 73 in a Faith organisation and 42 in a Tenants/residents association. A further 35 of you participate in a School Board or PTA, 24 in Community Councils and 17 in a Neighbourhood Planning Network
- Approximately 21% of you participate in community leisure/sports/arts groups and approximately 30% of you give time as a volunteer
- Approximately 50% of you receive information about community activities

Getting Involved in Aberdeen – this is what we're doing

These questions were also posed in the very first Questionnaire. It is our intention to repeat them from time to time to see if there is an increase in participation in voting, community groups and other forms of citizen involvement. This will help measure the impact of the work we are doing to increase and improve the influence community views have in decision-making and in more active communities generally.

The analysis of these answers is still underway so we will report further in one of the future newsletters.

BEING INFORMED

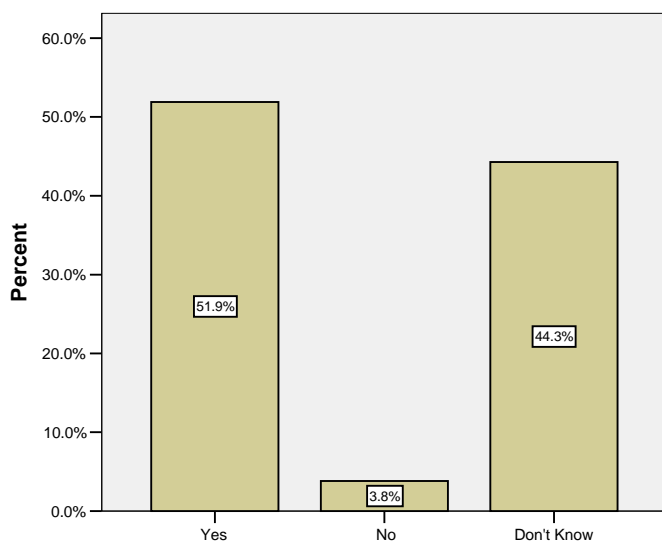
Communities of Interest

Certain communities are recognised by the Council as Communities of Interest because research evidence has shown that individuals within them are likely to experience unfavourable prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage simply because they are members of this group. They include children and young people, older people, minority ethnic people (including Gypsy Travellers and refugees), people with disabilities, women, people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community and people from different religions or beliefs.

The Council has developed specific action plans with these communities in the city to make sure that all sectors of the community have equality of opportunity to access the employment prospects and services provided by the Council. The Council has also developed Communities of Interest Forums to ensure there is a two way channel of communication between the Council and the various Communities of Interest.

- 9.3% of you felt you had been discriminated against when receiving services from the Council and other partners
- approximately 26% of you are interested in taking part in a Communities of Interest Forum, however, only a very small percentage are aware of how to go about it

The Fresh Talent Initiative was introduced by the Scottish Executive in 2004 to encourage local councils to attract migrant workers. The graph below shows that approximately 52% of you believe that the Fresh Talent initiative has resulted in an increase in the number of migrant workers coming to Aberdeen. A further 4% did not agree while 44% didn't know.



You were asked to specify where the new workers were most evident. The main results are summarised below:

- *Increase in workers from Eastern Europe*
- *More foreign bus drivers*
- *The city feels more 'cosmopolitan'/hear more languages spoken*
- *More overseas workers in the service sector*
- *Dentists*
- *Fish processing*
- *Hospital staff*
- *Working in shops*
- *Care staff*

- Approximately 32% of you believe that the council is doing enough to tackle discrimination. A further 9.5% of respondents believe that they are not doing enough and 58% did not know

- The majority of you (approximately 59%) do not know if Aberdeen has become more inclusive of the needs of Communities of Interest in recent years. Approximately 31% believe that it has become more inclusive while 10% do not
- About 53% of you would like to learn more about other cultures

Communities of interest in Aberdeen – this is what we’re doing

There are some positive responses from you which we need to follow up including the number wanting to learn more about different cultures and taking part in communities of interest forums. We have been trying to inform the public that our documents are available in alternative formats and it would appear we have had some success but we do not intend resting on our laurels. 78% of you knew about this.

However, there are also some negatives which need our immediate attention. For example, one in ten people reported having felt discriminated against when receiving services from the Council and other partners. We will continue to monitor this situation very closely. We are disappointed at the lack of awareness of the Communities of Interest Forums and Action Plans as 9 out of 10 of you had not heard of these although more than 50% of you were aware of the Fresh Talent Initiative.

Action is being taken to promote awareness which includes:

- the launch of the first Communities of Interest Report
- publication of a Plain English version of the Council's Race Equality Scheme
- distribution of Disability Advisory Group Leaflet
- a number of awareness raising events/initiatives on equalities to take place over the next 12 months

Whilst we are pleased to learn that over 75% think that Aberdeen is becoming a more accessible city, sadly only 32% of you think that the Council is doing enough to tackle all forms of discrimination. This particular statistic, along with others, shows an urgent need to ensure all the Council's visions, principles and policies are translated into action to make a difference on the ground.

These comments along with other data will greatly help us develop our services to make our city more inclusive.

Community Planning

Community Planning is an initiative developed by the Scottish Parliament that became a statutory obligation for all local councils in 2003. It has an important role to play in improving public services through effective public partnership working involving local communities.

- the majority of you (62.5%) were not aware of the community planning idea

The table below shows that the areas of the public sector that you considered to be the most important. Of the 8 options, safety was the agency that you cited most as being ‘very important’ (487 respondents). Learning was also cited as being ‘very important’ by 426 of you while Environment was also mentioned 408 times as being ‘very important’. There were very few services regarded as being ‘not very important’ or ‘not at all important’ however, 49 of you thought social inclusion was not important or not at all important.

| | Very Important | Quite Important | Not very important | Not at all important |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Safety | 487 | 78 | 3 | 0 |
| Public Involvement | 190 | 343 | 31 | 4 |
| Joint Working | 250 | 275 | 37 | 3 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|----|---|
| Environment | 408 | 147 | 9 | 2 |
| Social Inclusion | 237 | 278 | 45 | 4 |
| Prosperity | 279 | 243 | 38 | 3 |
| Health | 395 | 159 | 8 | 2 |
| Learning | 426 | 129 | 7 | 2 |

The top three group and public bodies selected by you to participate in the Community Planning Process are:

- Citizens' and Community Groups (283 respondents)
- The Council (283 respondents)
- The Business Community (229 respondents)

Aberdeen's Community Plan

After public consultation, Aberdeen City Council created and adopted a Community Plan - **aberdeen futures**. This plan sets out what Aberdeen City Council wants the City of Aberdeen to be like in the future, and how the Council will work with other organisations to achieve this.

Underpinning the development and implementation of **aberdeen futures** is the Council's aim to ensure sustainability, social inclusion and promote strong local democracy. This means that the Community Planning partners will work together with the people of Aberdeen to make sure that everyone, both now and in the future, can share in a better quality of life.

- the majority of respondents (57%) had heard of Aberdeen's Community Plan (**aberdeen futures**) although most of you knew very little or nothing at all about the details of the plan

The table below shows that many of you believe that "there is an increased awareness of the need to live sustainably to ensure a good quality of life now and in the future" (326 agree). Many of you also believe that "more information is being provided to the public by the Council and its Partners" (284 agree, 139 disagree). In addition, a large number of you (274) agreed that "there are more opportunities for the public to be involved in major decisions".

The statement that most of you disagreed with was that "The gap between rich and poor has reduced" (405 responses disagreed with this statement). An addition 326 of you disagreed with the statement that "the way the Council makes decisions is clearer" while 329 disagree that "the sense of civic pride amongst Aberdeen residents has increased".

| | Agree | Disagree |
|--|--------------|-----------------|
| More information is being provided to the public by the Council and its Partners | 284 | 139 |
| There are more opportunities for the public to be involved in major decisions | 274 | 177 |
| More opportunities exist for disadvantaged groups to get involved in decisions affecting them | 206 | 135 |
| The gap between rich and poor has reduced | 39 | 405 |
| More opportunities have been provided for communities to address planning at the local level | 197 | 194 |
| The sense of Civic pride amongst Aberdeen residents has increased | 88 | 329 |
| The way the council makes decisions is clearer | 62 | 361 |
| There is increased awareness of the need to live sustainably to ensure a good quality of life now and in the future | 326 | 126 |

- Nearly 83% of you agreed that Aberdeen City Community Plan is a worthwhile initiative
- The majority of you (nearly 61%) did not know whether the Community Plan had produced improvements in the City and benefits for the public

Community Planning in Aberdeen – this is what we’re doing

Community Planning in Aberdeen is currently undergoing a review. This information will be extremely useful for all Partners to determine the direction that Community Planning should take in the City in the future.

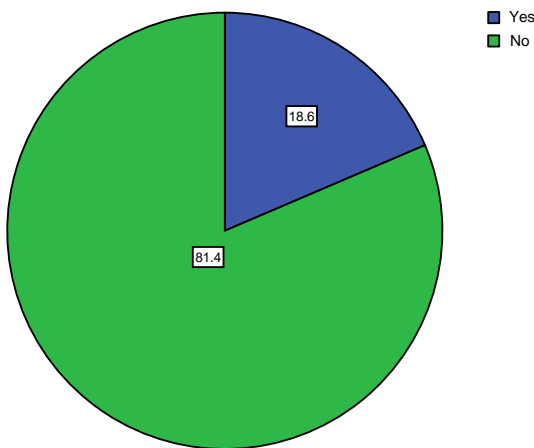
Two of the key Community Planning Forums – Getting Involved and Being Informed – are merging. This information will also be of great use to the new Forum when creating its Action Plan.

Grampian Police Website

The Internet now covers all aspects of our lives and is an extremely useful tool for providing information. Businesses and organisations recognise this and invest a great deal of time and resources into developing their own websites.

- 77% of you have access to the Internet. The results showed that the older respondents among you had less access to the Internet than younger respondents; 45% of over 65s compared with 92% of 16-24 year olds

The pie chart below shows that of the respondents who do have Internet access, approximately 19% have visited the Grampian Police Website.



The main reasons given for looking at the website are:

- *Just to see what was on the site/general information*
- *Recruitment*
- *Contact names and numbers*
- *Looking for information about crime in the local area*
- *For information about weather/roads*
- *To get information about setting up a neighbourhood watch group*
- *Research information - crime rates, statistics etc*
- *Careers information*

- Approximately 77% of you who had visited the website had found the website helpful and easy to understand

Grampian Police Website– this is what we're doing

Grampian Police are constantly updating their website and are always looking for feedback on things that people either want to see or indeed, wish to see removed. Now that the Police have their own dedicated website manager it is possible, indeed, very likely, that direct action will result and this will be manifested by changes in the website.

Future Questionnaires

This newsletter and the full results of the 7th questionnaire are available to view on the Aberdeen City Council website (www.aberdeencity.gov.uk) in the section titled Aberdeen City Voice. Internet access is provided at libraries throughout Aberdeen City and hard copies will be available shortly at The Point (Broad Street), and all city libraries. Alternately, hard copies can be posted out by contacting me on the details below.

I aim to issue Newsletter No. 8, a summary of the results of the enclosed questionnaire, in late September along with the 9th Questionnaire. **One section of the questionnaire will cover the recently installed iKiosks that you may have seen in various locations around the City. IKiosks form an important and innovative part of the Council's eGovernment modernisation and Access Aberdeen programme. The iKiosk network is an exciting innovation for Aberdeen, enabling citizens, businesses and visitors to access a wealth of practical and useful information for free at these convenient locations in the city. You may want to try one out over the summer!**

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

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Additional Comments

Please let us know if your personal details have changed:

Name: _____

Previous Address: _____

New Address: _____

I no longer wish to be a panellist

Please feel free to make any additional comments on the Questionnaire or Newsletter:

Please return the above information in the prepaid envelope provided, or email SoBoyd@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

Thanks for your assistance.