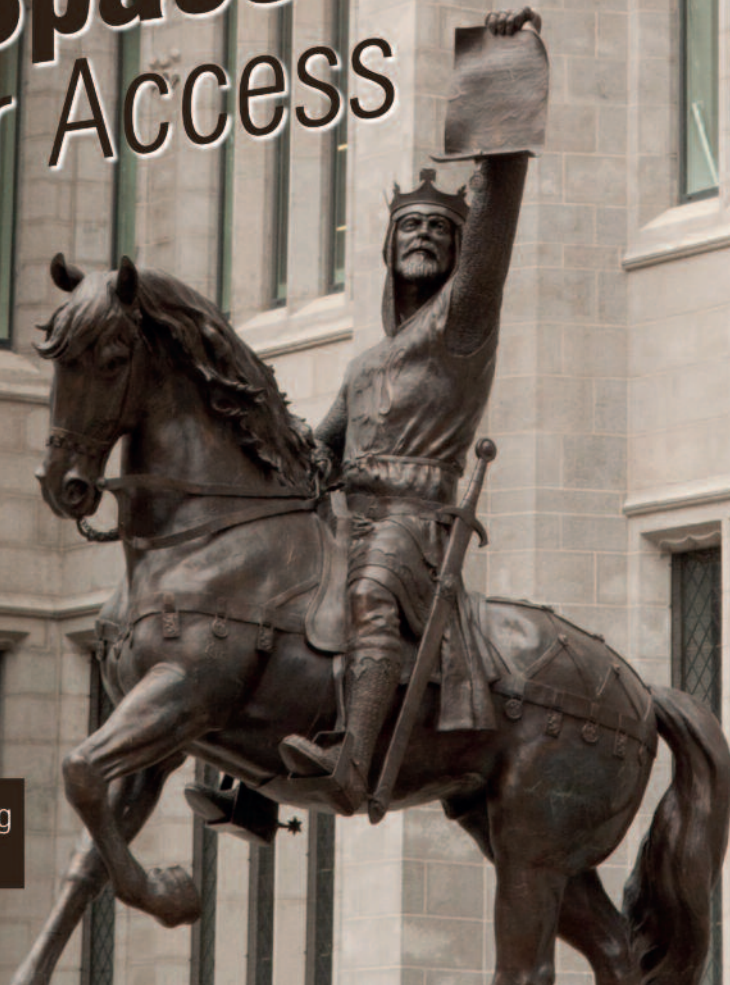


# Voice!

Aberdeen's Granite Heritage  
**Community Safety**  
Local Housing Strategy  
**Open Space**  
Outdoor Access





# Welcome

Welcome to the 22nd citizens' panel newsletter! This newsletter gives feedback to you, a member of Aberdeen citizens' panel, on the results of the 22nd questionnaire that you completed in February 2011. Topics in that questionnaire covered the Community Planning themes of Safety, Homes and Health & Social Care - with additional questions on Aberdeen's Granite Heritage, Outdoor Access and Open Space.

Your responses are important in informing and contributing to future plans by all partners of the City Voice. The data is analysed by our research consultants at The Robert Gordon University. As always, all information provided is kept strictly confidential.

The 23rd survey, focusing mainly on the Community Planning themes of Locality Planning, Children and Young People and Lifelong Learning 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 within this newsletter.

**Sharon Wilkinson**

(for Philippa Mason, City Voice Co-ordinator)

## Future Questionnaires

This newsletter, and the full results of the 22nd questionnaire, is 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 will be 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.23, a summary of the results of the enclosed questionnaire in September 2011, along with the 24th Questionnaire.

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

**Sharon Wilkinson**

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**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**



### Online

We are currently investigating the possibility of putting the City Voice online. This would allow panellists to complete the questionnaire using a secure website. Within the 23rd questionnaire (included with this newsletter), we have asked if you are interesting in using this facility. We are hoping to have it up and running in time for the 24th questionnaire - we will let you know how we get on!

### New panellists

We are always looking for new panellists to join the City Voice to help give us a broader view from the citizens of Aberdeen. All we ask is that the panellist is over 16 years old, and lives within Aberdeen City. If you know anyone who would be interested in becoming a panellist, just drop us an email or give us a call and we can send them out an information pack.

We would also like to remind panellists to let us know of any change of address details. Again just drop us an email or give us a phone and we will update your details immediately. This will make sure that there is no delay in you getting your questionnaire!

### 22nd Questionnaire - Panel Response

Here are the results of the 22nd questionnaire you completed in February 2011. The results have now been analysed and a summary is presented in this newsletter. At the time of issuing the questionnaire, there were 956 of you on the panel - we received 748 questionnaires which gives us an overall response rate of 78.2%. Thank you to all of you who responded. This response rate is just slightly higher than the last questionnaire and it's important to keep the return rates as strong as possible, so if there is a reason you are not replying, please let me know:

- Are the questionnaires too complicated?
- Too long?
- Are we asking about the things of little interest to you?
- What would you like us to ask you about?

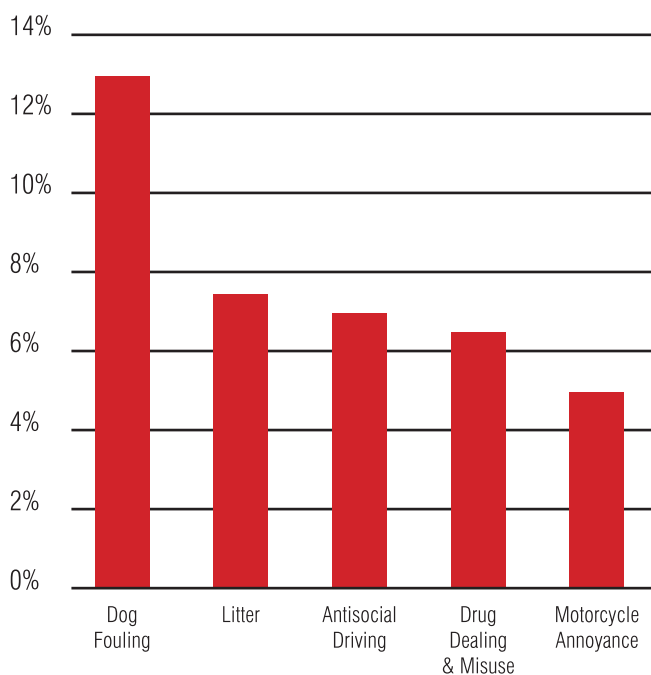
Please let me know when you return by letter, email or telephone.

# Community Safety

Aberdeen City Community Safety Partnership is an important focus for joint working around the issues of crime, disorder and danger. One of the high priorities for the partnership is tackling antisocial behaviour in the city.

Panellists were asked how they believed the level of antisocial behaviour in their area had changed over the past two years. The majority of respondents (56.6%) believe that there has been no change. The next greatest share of respondents (17.8%) believe there is now slightly less antisocial behaviour. Panellists were asked what types of antisocial behaviour were a problem in their area. Figure 1 indicates the top 5 issues that were seen as a 'very big problem'. Figure 1 shows that Dog Fouling was the issue that people thought was a 'very big problem' in their area. This was followed by litter, and antisocial driving. When the results are broken down by area, motorcycle annoyance is more of a problem in the North area, than South or Central.

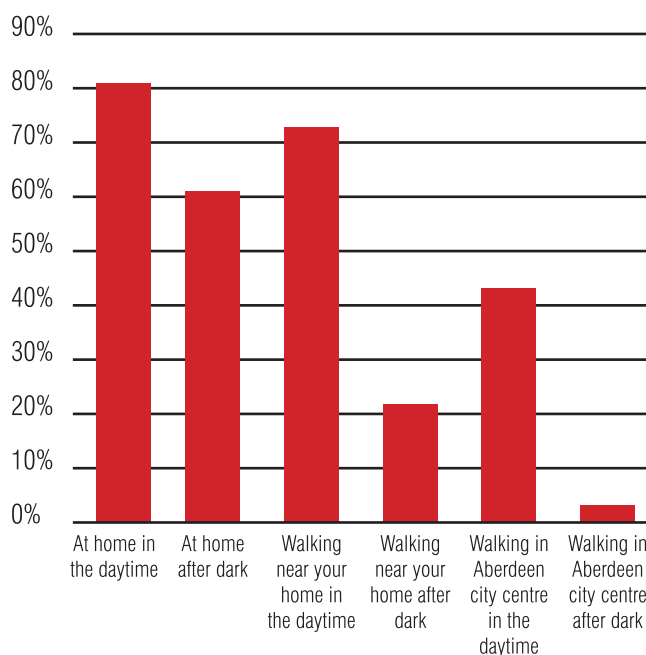
**Figure 1: Please consider the following types of antisocial behaviour and indicate the extent to which each one is (or is not) a problem in your area (graph relates to 'very big problem').**



Panellists were asked how safe they would feel in a number of different scenarios. As can be seen from Figure 2, the majority of people feel safest when at home during the daytime. Only 3.3% of respondents feel very safe when walking in Aberdeen city centre after dark, compared to 18.1% of respondents who feel very unsafe.



**Figure 2: How safe would you feel in the following situations? (Graph relates to 'very safe').**



During the day time, more females (45.9%) than males (42.0%) felt very safe walking in Aberdeen city centre. However, walking in Aberdeen city centre after dark only 4.3% of males and 2.5% of females felt very safe.

### This is what we are doing

Under the Antisocial Behaviour etc Scotland Act 2004 it is a statutory requirement that each local authority and relevant chief constable work together to prepare a strategy for dealing with antisocial behaviour.

This is to ensure that everyone understands the extent and nature of antisocial behaviour occurring within the local authority area, and the services which are available to address these problems.

A key element of this work is engaging with the community in order to understand how individuals and neighbourhoods are affected by antisocial behaviour. The findings from the 22nd City Voice will influence this work and will prompt various agencies to take actions based on public priorities and the perception of available services.

**Margaret-Jane Cardno - Community Safety Manager**  
Aberdeen City Council



# Local Housing Strategy

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) is a statutory document that must be produced every five years by councils in Scotland. Aberdeen City Council last published its LHS in 2006 and therefore needs to produce another to cover the period from 2012 to 2017.

Panellists were given a list of housing priorities for Aberdeen to choose from. They were asked to state how much of a priority they believed each one to be. Panellists rated 'Encourage landlords in the private rented sector to carry out essential repairs to their properties' as a 'very high priority'.

**Figure 3: From the following list of possible priorities for Aberdeen, please indicate the extent to which you think each should be a low or high priority (results in table show those rated level 5 - very high priority).**

Encourage landlords in the private rented sector to carry out essential repairs to their properties	42.8%
Provide support to ensure that vulnerable people are able to remain in their own homes	39.9%
Increase the supply of affordable housing e.g. More social rented housing and low-cost home ownership initiatives	34.8%
Ensure opportunities to regenerate our most deprived communities are maximised	32.5%
Make improvements to the condition of social rented housing to meet national standards	28.3%
Encourage homeowners to carry out essential repairs to their properties	27.5%
Ensure homeless people are adequately housed	26.7%
Provide support for people who are at risk of becoming homeless	26.3%
Encourage population and economic growth in the city by providing more housing	20.7%
Encourage mixed housing developments e.g. Houses and flats, different house sizes and tenures	16.6%
Encourage the expansion of the private rented sector	5.2%

## This is what we are doing

The information provided by the City Voice panellists provides an insight into the future housing priorities. This information from the City Voice will be incorporated with other consultation the Council has undertaken in the preparation of the LHS to give an overall assessment of what people (outwith the Council) think the housing priorities should be for the next five years.

The request for additional analysis of the City Voice respondents by ethnic group and tenure has helped us to understand better the result from the survey. Although there was a bias towards owner occupiers this has helped as the Council finds it difficult to consult with this group. The tables also show that about 2% of respondents came from an ethnic minority background which



Panellists were then asked if there were any other issues which they thought should be addressed within the Local Housing Strategy. The top ten issues that panellists identified were:

**Figure 4: Are there any other issues you think should be addressed in the Local Housing Strategy?**

Critical of current policy: not meeting the needs of the most deserving etc	16.4%
Clean up bad areas / encourage pride in bad areas	11.6%
Greater mix of housing types	11.1%
Should not build on green belt / open space	9.4%
Open up empty accommodation	9.4%
Crack down on antisocial tenants / reward good tenants	8.8%
Pay more attention to social mix when housing tenants	8.2%
Better infrastructure / amenities	6.4%
Too much development in city	5.8%
Too little affordable accommodation	5.8%

Most responses (16.4%) related to some form of criticism of current housing policy. These were mainly based on the idea that the most deserving people were not benefiting from the Local Housing Strategy. 11.1% of panellists thought that there should be a greater mix of housing types. Many respondents wanted to see more options to allow people to downsize, particularly for elderly or disabled residents.

The information was also broken down by housing tenure. This showed that 87.4% of respondents are owner-occupiers, 8.9% rent from the Council or a Housing Association, 2.4% rent privately, 0.4% rent through their job or business, and 0.4% are characterised as 'other'.

is slightly below the Census 2001 estimate of this part of the Aberdeen population (2.9%). However as part of the other consultation undertaken by the Council a special consultation event was arranged for the ethnic minority community, therefore the information in this survey will be compared to the responses from the event mentioned.

The information from the City Voice and other consultation will be correlated and form a chapter of the LHS. The outputs from the consultation and other work being undertaken will be used to develop the strategic objectives and outcomes for the new LHS.

**Les McGonigle - Local Housing Strategy Officer**  
Aberdeen City Council

# Aberdeen's Granite Heritage

Aberdeen is renowned world-wide as 'The Granite City'. Granite buildings and the space between them make a significant contribution to the quality of our environment. Often, however, we can be so familiar with our surroundings that we stop noticing them.

The results of the survey shows that the majority of respondents are either quite interested (47.8%), or very interested (40.7%) in Aberdeen's granite heritage. Panellists were also asked how important they thought it was to look after Aberdeen's granite heritage. Almost two thirds (66.0%) of respondents believe that it is very important to do so, with 28.6% of respondents saying it is quite important.

Panellists were asked what their favourite street in Aberdeen city centre was. 27% of panellists choose Union Street, with a further 17.9% selecting Queens Road. Figure 5 shows the top ten favourite granite buildings selected by panellists. The majority of panellists selected Marischal College as their favourite granite building.

**Figure 5: What is your favourite granite building in Aberdeen city centre?**

Marischal College	58.5%
Citadel	6.0%
Town House	5.8%
His Majesty's Theatre	5.5%
Music Hall	5.5%
Central Library	2.7%
Kings College	2.7%
Sheriff Court	2.1%
Art Gallery	1.5%
St Mark's Kirk	1.5%

Panellists were also asked what granite building they would like to see improved. 15.4% of panellists thought that Greyfriars Kirk should be improved, with 4.5% selecting Triple kirks. A further 2.7% selected the Music Hall. Panellists were also asked which one street they would like to see improved. The majority of respondents (36.9%) thought that Union Street should be improved. A further 9.0% of respondents selected Bridge Street, and a further 4.3% selected George Street.

Panellists were then asked if they had ever visited a building during Doors Open Day, with 51.8% of respondents saying they had. Panellists were then asked if there were any interesting old or new buildings that they would like to see open on Doors Open Day. 145 panellists responded to this question, with the top ten buildings being:



**Figure 6: Are there any interesting old or new buildings that you would like to see opened on Doors Open Day?**

Marischal College	13.1%
New library at University of Aberdeen	8.3%
Harbour Control Tower	7.6%
Town House	4.8%
Seven Incorporated Trades Building	4.1%
The Tivoli Theatre	4.1%
Robert Gordon University	3.4%
The Law Courts	2.8%
Glover House	2.8%
Harbour Offices	2.8%

## This is what we are doing

Aberdeen's granite heritage is important to most people and most think it should be looked after. Marischal College is by far the favourite granite building in the city centre followed by a range of other well known and prominent public buildings and structures. Most respondents focused on the architecture, design and aesthetic features of the building as being what they particularly like about their favourite building, followed by the fact that they are built of granite. Many refer to the 'feel' of the building as being an aspect of their favourite building that they particularly like. This intangible, more emotional response to the city's great works of architecture is interesting. Information on favourite buildings and streets, along with how you think they need to be improved is helpful. We can use this information to inform future thinking about how we look after Aberdeen's heritage.

Responses on Doors Open Day will be passed on to the independent Doors Open Day Committee which organises the Aberdeen event and will help inform how it publicises the event and targets buildings for inclusion within the event in the future. It was noted that many people would like to see more modern buildings opened and that the new University Library and the Harbour Control Tower featured prominently in the list of properties you would like to see opened.

**Douglas Campbell - Project Officer**  
Aberdeen City Council



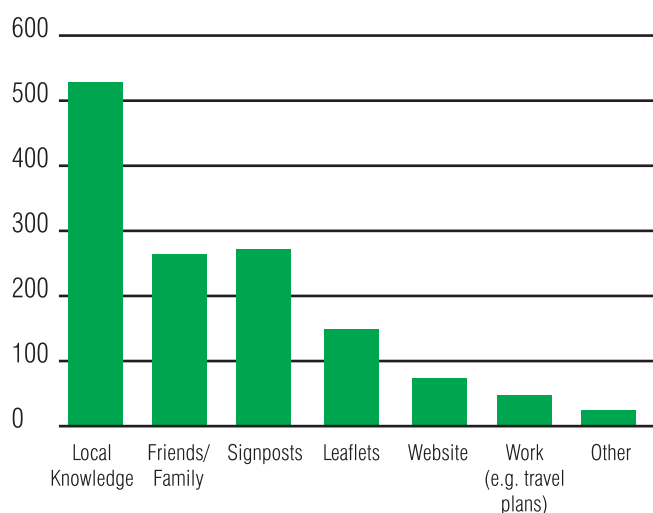
# Outdoor Access

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 introduced a right of responsible access to most land and inland water in Scotland. This right applies to all non-motorised users including walkers, cyclists, horse riders and canoeists. Access rights do not extend to any form of motorised recreation or passage (except people with a disability using a vehicle or vessel adapted for their use). Aberdeen's path network plays an important role in facilitating the enjoyment of these access rights.

The panellists were asked how often they use the path network for a number of different leisure activities. Apart from walking, the majority of respondents never use the network of paths for leisure activities. 22.1% of respondents use the path network daily for walking, with 3.2% using them daily for cycling. Very few panellists rated the quality of paths as 'excellent' in meeting the needs of users. However the walkers and cyclists who used the paths most often rated the quality of paths as good - 32.4% and 21.1% respectively.

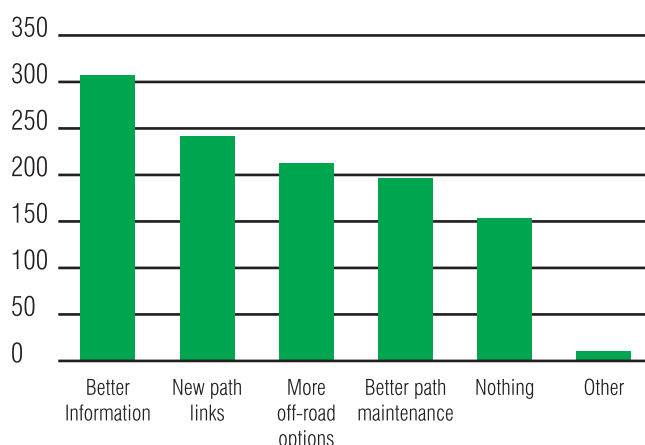
Panellists were asked how they found out about paths and outdoor access. Figure 7 shows that the majority of respondents had local knowledge of the paths, with friends and family being the second highest source of information.

**Figure 7: How have you found out about paths and outdoor access opportunities in Aberdeen?**



Panellists were also asked what would encourage them to take part in outdoor access more. The majority of respondents said that better information would encourage them (43.0%), with new path links (34.0%) being the second most popular answer.

**Figure 8: Which of the following would encourage you to take part in outdoors access more?**



## This is what we are doing

Aberdeen is required to prepare a Core Paths Plan under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The Plan was approved in 2009, aiming to form a complete paths network throughout the City, encouraging healthy and sustainable access opportunities for all. We have been investing external grant funding on the improvement of the network of core paths and other paths in the city, including mainly path works, but also starting to extend signposting throughout the network. The City Voice results show us that better information about the paths network is the most important thing that would encourage people to use the outdoors more and that many people find out about paths through signposts. Therefore, we will continue to try to source funding for the promotion of the path network in this way.

The answers to our questions about the amount you use the paths network of Aberdeen for a range of activities, are important to us because we want to check that the work we are doing on improving the paths network is having the right effect, in getting more people out enjoying the outdoors. We will compare these results with future editions of the City Voice to identify trends.

The information you provided will feed directly into a review of the paths network and how it caters for different types of use, such as for walking, cycling, horse riding etc. This will in turn be used to help us prioritise the projects we take forward and the designs for the path work that is being planned. For example, the answers to the questions on how well the paths network meets the needs of different types of activities, show us that perhaps more should be done to cater for cyclists in some areas. The results also show that there is some conflict between user types, and this will be considered further, with the Outdoor Access Forum for Aberdeen, in order that possible solutions or measure to help address this can be found.

**Rachel Sharp - Senior Planner**  
Aberdeen City Council



# Open Space

Aberdeen City Council is preparing an open space strategy for the city. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that we maximise the value and benefits of our open spaces. The council wants to ensure that Aberdeen's open spaces are well managed, of good quality and meet the requirements of our communities.

Panellists were asked that they thought the three key features of good quality open space should be. The most popular selection was 'well maintained and free of litter', with 'easily accessible with adequate paths' being the next most popular answer.

**Figure 9: What do you think should be the three key features of a good quality open space?**

Well maintained and free of litter	59.0%
Easily accessible with adequate paths	49.7%
Clean and safe facilities in usable condition	46.7%
Well located and close to community	38.3%
Contribute positively to biodiversity and provide habitat for wildlife	33.5%
Accessible for disabled users	29.0%
Good transport connection and access routes	23.2%
Diverse play, sport and recreational activities	14.3%
Places for social interaction	13.3%
Good quality equipment and furniture	7.1%

Panellists were then asked how long it took them to walk to their nearest open space. The majority of respondents (60.4%) said that it only took them about 5 minutes to walk to their nearest open space. A further 21.6% of respondents said it took them 10 minutes. Panellists were then asked if there were any improvements they would like to see to open spaces in Aberdeen. Of the 611 panellists who answered this question, 374 wanted to see improvements. The improvements included:

**Figure 10: What improvements to open spaces in Aberdeen would you like to see?**

Cleaner	25.6%
Better maintenance	25.4%
Better facilities (e.g. seats, cafes)	25.1%
Protect green spaces	13.8%
Enforce rules/law	9.8%
Restrict building	8.8%
Improved accessibility	8.5%
Increase amount of open space	7.8%
More control of dogs	7.5%
More trees/displays	4.3%
Better transport links	3.5%
More information/signage	3.5%
Better lighting	2.3%
Community Ownership/involvement	2.3%
Encourage activities	2.0%
Encourage wildlife	2.0%
Segregated facilities (e.g. dogs)	2.0%
Longer opening times	2.0%
Pedestrianize areas of the city	2.0%

Panellists were then asked what their favourite open space in Aberdeen was. 617 respondents answered this question, with 29.7% choosing Duthie Park as their favourite. A further 18.5% selected Hazlehead Park (including woods and playing fields), and a further 10.9% selecting Union Terrace Gardens.

## This is what we are doing

The data collected and the information provided shows some interesting results on management and maintenance of open spaces and panellists' overall satisfaction with the quality of open space. The data collected and the information provided will be used alongside the open space audit results to prepare the final open space strategy and develop open spaces projects and action plan.

The data collected will be used to monitor the open spaces across the city and the results will also be used to set indicators to judge progress of the open space strategy and the future investment to improve the quality and accessibility of open spaces in the City. It will also help us in using and distributing our resources for the future management and maintenance of open spaces equitably and focus on the areas where they are mostly needed or required.

The information provided will also be used to provide the right size and type of open spaces including the required facilities according to gender, age and class.

**Aftab Majeed - Environmental Planner**  
Aberdeen City Council