

Voice!

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives
Roads Maintenance
Views on the City Voice
'A Year On'



Welcome

Welcome to the 37th citizens' panel newsletter! This newsletter gives feedback to you, a member of Aberdeen's citizens' panel, on the results of the 37th questionnaire you completed in March 2016. Topics in that questionnaire included Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives, Roads Maintenance and the City Voice Questionnaires and Newsletters.

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

The 38th questionnaire (which is included with this newsletter) will cover the following topics: Active Aberdeen Partnership, Roads - Winter Maintenance Policy, Economic Development, City Warden Services, Education Service / Adult Learning, Human Resource and Customer Service, and Transforming Online Services for Our Customers. We hope that you will find it as interesting as usual.

I would like to thank all of you who have continued to complete the questionnaires and have returned them promptly over the last couple of years.

Please get in touch if you wish to make any comments on the citizens' panel.

Beata Piskorz
City Voice Co-ordinator

Future Questionnaires

This newsletter, together with the detailed report of the 37th questionnaire, is available to view on the Community Planning website www.aberdeencityvoice.org.uk. Internet access is provided at libraries throughout Aberdeen and hard copies will be available at Marischal College Customer Service Centre and all city libraries. Alternatively, hard copies can be posted to you by contacting me on the details below.

We plan to issue Newsletter No. 38, a summary of the results of the enclosed questionnaire in October 2016, along with the 39th Questionnaire.

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

Annina Cavelti Kee
City Voice Co-ordinator

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



We are looking into improving our Panellists Recruitment Form and, as always, we would like to recruit more panellists. We are planning to send a recruitment form with the next City Voice questionnaire to all of our hardcopy panellists. We hope that you will then pass it onto a friend, colleague or family member and encourage them to join the City Voice panel.

Annina Cavelti Kee is currently on secondment, and I have taken over as City Voice Co-ordinator in the interim.

Help us to raise the profile of the City Voice and tell your friends and family about us and encourage them to sign up as well! The only requirement is that they are over 16 and live in Aberdeen City. They can sign up online at www.aberdeencityvoice.org.uk, or email us at cityvoice@aberdeencity.gov.uk or call us on: 01224 522935.

Remember...you can follow us on our blog <https://aberdeencityvoice.wordpress.com/> and we are on the Aberdeen City Council's facebook page and twitter feed!

37th Questionnaire - Panel Response

Here are the results of the 37th questionnaire you completed in March 2016. The results have now been analysed and a summary is presented in this newsletter. The specific topics covered by the survey were: Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Archives Service, Roads Maintenance and your experience as a City Voice member. At the time of issuing the questionnaire, we had 921 people on the panel and we received 616 completed questionnaires. This gives us an overall response rate of 67%. It is encouraging to see such a good response. Thank you to everyone who participated! It is vital for the success of the City Voice that we keep response rates as high as possible so please continue to complete the questionnaires. If you wish to change the format that you receive the questionnaire in, i.e. move from hardcopy to electronic questionnaires or from electronic ones to a hardcopy format, please do not hesitate to contact us. If there is another reason you are not replying, please let us know.

Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished with it



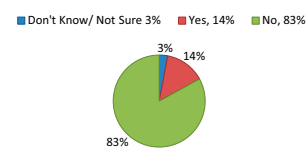


Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives

The first set of questions was put to the panellists to find out about their use and views on the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives services. This included asking respondents about their awareness of and interest in the service, the accessibility of the service, the Archive Service's outreach work, and fundraising options.

Survey findings show relatively limited usage of the Archives Service; 14% (85 out of 607 people who responded to this question) had used the service. As Figure 1 shows, 83% (504 out of 607 people) indicated that they had never used the service. This finding was consistent across local areas and different groups.

Figure 1: Whether used Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Archives Service



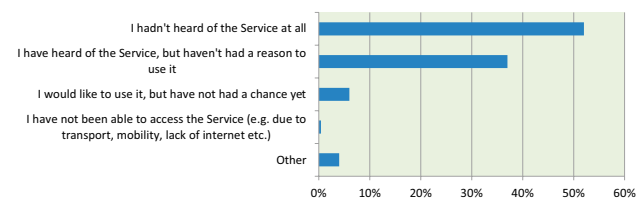
Base: 607 respondents

57% (48 out of 85 respondents) who have experience of the service either visited in person or contacted the Archive Service by phone. 47% of respondents (40 out of 85 panellists who answered this question) indicated that they had accessed information online. 74% (80 out of 108 respondents) who had used the Archives Service reported that they had been satisfied with the experience. None of the respondents who have had an experience of using the service reported having been dissatisfied. The 514 panel members who answered that they had not used the

Archives Service were asked about the main reasons for this (See Figure 2).

Just over half of those who had not used the Archives Service indicated that they had never heard of the service (52%), and more than a third had heard of the service but had no reason to make use of it (37%). A further 6% of those who had not used the service indicated that they would like to but had not had a chance to do so yet.

Figure 2: Main reason that have not used Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Archive Service

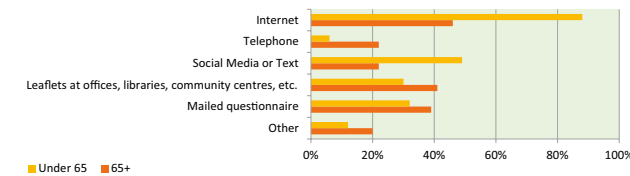


Base: 514 respondents

As Figure 3 indicates, a minority of panellists who responded to the question asking about their views on accessibility of Archives Services would be discouraged by the location, transport arrangements and/or opening hours of the reading rooms. In respect to Old Aberdeen House roughly a third of respondents would be discouraged by the location and transport/parking arrangements: 29% (164 out of 567 respondents) were discouraged by the location and 34% (191 out of 562 respondents) by public transport/parking arrangement. Asked about the Town House, about a fifth of the respondents indicated that they would be discouraged: 18% (104 out of 578 respondents) were discouraged by the location and 19% (107 out of 565 respondents) by public

transport/ parking arrangements. 24% of respondents (136 out of the 566 panellists who answered this question) found opening hours to be discouraging from visiting the Town House. 27% of respondents (149 of 552 panellists who answered the question) stated that opening hours were a potential barrier to using reading rooms at Old Aberdeen House.

Figure 3: Views on accessibility of Archives Service



Base: Variable, Town House: Location: 578, Public Transport: 565, Opening Hours: 566

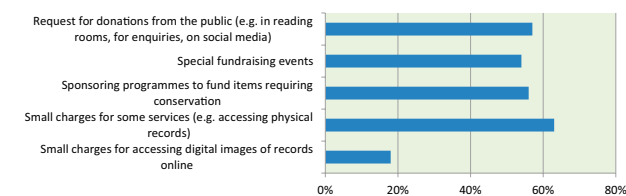
Base: Variable, Old Aberdeen House: Location: 567, Public Transport: 562, Opening Hours: 552

Survey findings suggest that interest in online access to the Archives Service is strongest in relation to providing digital access to historical records (relating to people or local areas), online exhibitions and guides to making use of collections. More than half of respondents expressed interest in each of these options.

The survey highlighted that costs associated with conservation and preservation of the Archives Service collections cannot always be met from existing service budgets, and therefore sought views on potential fundraising options for the service (See Figure 4). Survey results suggest relatively broad support for most of the listed fundraising options, with more than half of respondents indicating that the following approaches would be a good idea:

- 63% (328 out of 521 respondents) supported small charges for specific services, such as accessing physical records as a good idea;
- 57% (297 out of 521 respondents) supported requests for public donations, including in reading rooms or on social media;
- 56% (292 out of 521 respondents) supported sponsoring programmes for items requiring conservation;
- 54% (281 out of 521 respondents) indicated special fundraising events would be a good idea.

Figure 4: Views on fundraising for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives



Base: 521 respondents

If you would like more information on this subject please visit our website:
<http://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/cityvoice/city-voice-archive/>

This is what we are doing

The City Voice consultation provided the opportunity to ask a broad cross-section of the City community, including many people with little or no experience of the Archive Service, about the current usage of it and gather independent opinions on its future direction. This survey was developed as part of a wider consultation with all of our stakeholders, including those in Aberdeenshire and further afield, about usage and development of the service. The City Voice responses will be considered as part of a wider analysis of the responses to these, and the final findings will contribute towards a long-term development plan for the service. It is anticipated that this will address the issues raised by the City Voice respondents concerning awareness of the service and access to it.

Part of the development plan will also relate to new accommodation for the service, and work has already started on that. The feedback received by City Voice respondents relating to issues with the two buildings / access / location / opening hours will be used to support a business case that is being developed for a new building. The feedback on digital / online access to collections produced some interesting results, suggesting more support for basic digital access (e.g. images of records online, online exhibitions). Whilst there was less support for more technical innovations (e.g. apps) it was still a significant amount, and this came particularly from the age-group of respondents under 55 - those noted as having more diverse reasons for using the service. This suggests that exploring more technical ways of accessing the collections alongside more basic means will help to diversify the userbase of the service, which may also help to increase overall usage figures. We plan to explore this avenue further.

Fundraising will also be part of the longer-term development plan for the service, and we were pleased by the broad support for most of the fundraising initiatives suggested. However, we were surprised by the majority support for charging to access records in the reading rooms against the minority support for charging to access them digitally. We are mindful of the need to attract visitors to the city as well as to the Archive Service, but equally mindful of the desire to provide access to remoter areas in a cost-effective way. There is clearly a balance to be struck here, and we will need to consider this in any future fund-raising strategies that we develop.

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ROADS MAINTENANCE

Aberdeen City Council wanted to find out about the panellists' view on Aberdeen City Council's Roads Maintenance service. This includes satisfaction with specific aspects of roads maintenance performance, views on budget priorities, and giving feedback on roads maintenance.

Satisfaction levels were strongest in relation to the intensity of street lighting and the condition of bus routes and other main roads. 65% of respondents (362 out of 558 panellists who answered this question) were satisfied with city centre lighting, 57% with residential area lighting (332 out of 584 respondents), and 49% with condition of main roads (285 out of 581 respondents). These were the only aspects of the service where satisfied respondents were not in a minority.

The aspects of roads maintenance showing the lowest satisfaction levels were: the time taken to repair roads and the condition of side/local roads. Only 13% of respondents (70 out of 538 panellists who answered this question) were satisfied and 63% (339 out of 538 respondents) were dissatisfied. 20% of respondents (116 out of 583 respondents) were satisfied and 60% (350 out of 583 respondents) were dissatisfied with the condition of side/local roads. Satisfaction levels were also low in relation to time taken to repair footways: 14% of respondents (68 out of 487 panellists who answered this question) were satisfied and 53% (258 out of 487 respondents) were dissatisfied. Looking at time taken to repair cycle ways and cycle paths: 17% of respondents (50 out of 295 panellists who answered this question) were satisfied and 33% (97 out of the 295 respondents) were dissatisfied.

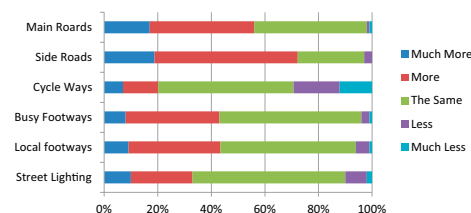
Budget priorities

As Figure 5 indicates, few respondents suggested that they would wish to see less spending on any aspect of roads maintenance. This was most likely to be suggested in relation to cycle ways and to a lesser extent street lighting. 29% (147 out of 507 respondents) suggested a reduction in spending on cycle ways and 10% (56 out of 563 respondents) suggested a reduction in spending on street lighting.

The majority of respondents suggested an increase in spending on one or more specific aspects of roads maintenance, and there were a number of areas where respondents were particularly keen to see an increase in spending. This was most notable in relation to side roads (three quarters suggested an increase in spending, 456 of 569 respondents) and main roads (more than half suggesting an increase, 312 of 558 respondents).

Figure 5: Prioritising roads maintenance budgets

Base: Variable 507 to 569 respondents



Base: Variable 507 to 569 respondents

Nearly half of respondents felt that the council does not give enough opportunity for feedback on roads maintenance; 47% of respondents (273 out of 581 respondents) suggested this in relation to general maintenance, and 45% of respondents (261 out of 581 respondents) in relation to planned works. Views were similar across all groups.

Those who felt that the council does not give enough opportunities to give feedback on roads maintenance activities were asked

for their views on options to improve the approach to gathering feedback (Figure 6).

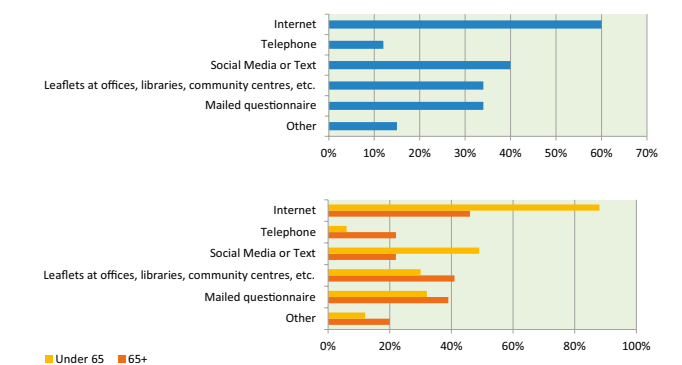
Respondents supported a broad range of approaches to improving opportunities to give feedback. Support was most widespread in relation to internet-based feedback: 60% (219 out of 365 respondents) supported this. A substantial proportion of respondents: 40% (146 out of 365 respondents) suggested social media or text, 34% (124 out of 365 respondents) suggested leaflets in offices, 34% (124 of 365 respondents) suggested mailed questionnaires.

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Figure 6: Improving opportunities to give feed back on roads maintenance



Base: Variable, 365 to 581 respondents

If you would like more information on this subject please visit our website:
<http://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/cityvoice/city-voice-archive/>



This is what we are doing

The results of the survey reflect the general view of those responsible for delivering the service that we are not in a position to keep pace with the rate of deterioration of the network as a whole. We are concentrating the funding available on main routes and the levels of satisfaction are in line with what would be expected.

We note that respondents to the survey are not in favour of a further fall in Roads Maintenance budgets and a significant proportion would like to see more funding made available. A Roads Asset Management Plan is being developed which is intended to enable a clear case to be put before the elected members for adequate budgets to safeguard the future condition of the network.

The City Voice surveys are part of this process.

We are aware that our response times to defects are not always as good as might be wished and a programme is progressing to change the way work is organised so that more work can be done at times when traffic levels are at their lowest and we can visit areas at times when potholes and gullies are not obstructed by parked vehicles.

Gathering feedback on our work is important if we are to carry out satisfactory jobs and not cause unacceptable levels of disturbance or disruption. We appreciate that our practices could be improved and we will use the information gathered to reconsider how we can best achieve a satisfactory level of feedback.

This is the third set of responses we have got to our questions on basic road maintenance issues. It is our intention to build up a continuing picture year on year of our customers views of our efforts in order that future works programmes may be targeted effectively.

Angus Plumb

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Views on...

Aberdeen City Voice!

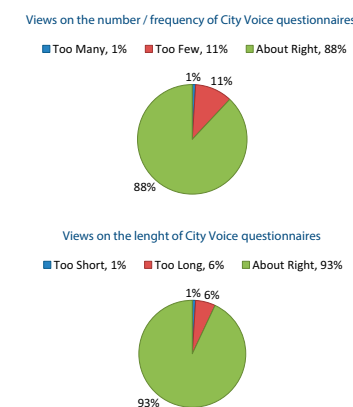
Questionnaire

The next set of questions asked panellists to consider their experience as a member of the City Voice. This included gathering views on City Voice questionnaires and newsletters, the City Voice online presence, and overall satisfaction with experience as a City Voice member.

As Figure 7 shows, a large majority of respondents feel that the frequency and length of City Voice questionnaires is about right. 88% (517 out of 587 respondents) felt that the frequency of surveys is about right. Most of the remaining respondents, 11% (64 out of 587 respondents) suggested that the frequency of surveys could be increased.

93% (544 out of 585 respondents) felt that the length of City Voice questionnaires is about right, and only 6% (35 out of 585 respondents) suggested that questionnaires are too long.

Figure 7: Views on frequency and length of City Voice questionnaires



Base: Frequency: 587 respondents, Length: 585 respondents

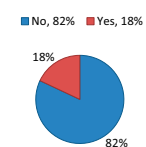
City Voice Newsletter and detailed Reports

The final section of the 37th survey addressed City Voice Newsletter and the detailed report.

The vast majority of respondents who receive the survey as a hardcopy indicated that they read the hardcopy City Voice newsletter. Respondents who receive the survey by email were less likely to read the newsletters online; only 3 in 10 respondents indicated that they do this.

Relatively few respondents indicated that they had read the City Voice detailed reports online (18%, i.e. 97 of 541 respondents), and respondents were significantly less likely to read the detailed reports online than to read the newsletters (See Figure 8).

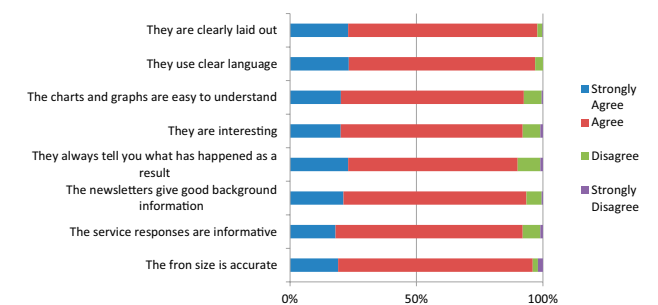
Figure 8: Whether read City Voice detailed reports online



Base: 541 respondents

Views were overwhelmingly positive on the quality of City Voice newsletters. At least 90% (380 out of 442 respondents) rated each aspect of the newsletters positively. Views were particularly positive in relation to the way that newsletters are laid out (97% (409 out of 442 respondents) gave a positive rating and use of clear language see Figure 9 below:

Figure 9: Views on quality of the City Voice Newsletter



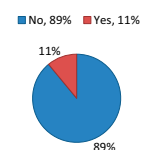
Base: Variable, 408 to 442 respondents

City Voice Online Presence

More than half of respondents were aware of the City Voice website although only a quarter of respondents had visited the website, 59% (317 out of 537 respondents) were aware of the site, and 25% (89 out of 537 respondents) have visited the site. It is interesting to note that awareness and use of the City Voice website was broadly consistent across the main demographic groups.

The minority of respondents who had used the City Voice website were very positive about the standard of the site. 9 in 10 of these respondents described the appearance and content of the website as good. Only 1 in 10 respondents were aware of the City Voice blog (63 of 570 panellists who answered this question). Of these respondents, 10% indicated that they follow the blog — equivalent to around 2% of all survey respondents. The relatively low awareness of the City Voice blog suggests that there may be considerable scope to increase the number of panellists following the blog (See Figure 10).

Figure 10: Awareness of the City Voice blog

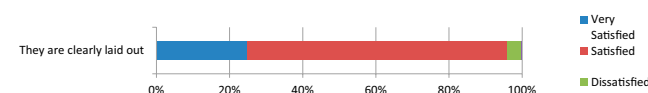


Base: 570 respondents

Overall views on the City Voice membership

Overall satisfaction with respondents' experience as a City Voice member was extremely positive. 96% (511 out of 553 respondents) indicated that they were satisfied with their experience as a City Voice member (See Figure 11).

Figure 11: Satisfaction with time as a City Voice member



Base: 553 respondents

If you would like more information on this subject please visit our website:

<http://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/cityvoice/city-voice-archive/>

This is what we are doing

First of all I would like to thank all the panellists who took the time to complete the last questionnaire. Your views are very important to us.

We read with interest your views, comments and suggestions about the City Voice.

We were happy to hear that the vast majority of the panellists indicated that they were satisfied with their experience as a member of the City Voice. The majority of you think the questionnaire frequency is about right (517 of 587 respondents and 544 of 585 respondents respectively); the majority was also happy with the quality of the City Voice questionnaires.

However, we have noticed that some of you think the range of topics do not always seem relevant to you individually and / or found that the answer options does not always allow you to express your particular views (i.e. many of you would prefer more 'not applicable' options and more open ended questions). We are definitely in a position and willing to take your latter comment into consideration and provide you with more 'not applicable' options and free comment boxes. Your concerns about the relevance of topics are,

however, a bit more complicated. We understand your point of view and think it is a valuable and important aspect to address. We appreciate that not all the questions seem, or indeed are, equally relevant to every panellist. However, there is not a 'straight forward' solution to this aspect. As City Voice co-ordinator my options to influence the variety of questions are limited. We depend on the different community planning partners (NHS Grampian, Police Scotland, Fire and Rescue Scotland, ACVO and Aberdeen City Council) for the submission of questions. It is the partners who propose and determine what topics / questions might be relevant to them and to the panellists. These might sometimes be questions that do not seem to be of relevance to everyone. But they can still be very valuable for some panellists and the respective service. Some of you have also suggested that panellists should be consulted about what topics should find its way into the City Voice. Again, we think that this is a very valuable point and definitely something to which we want to give further consideration. However, as with the aspect of relevance raised above - we are dependent on the services that submit questions. We are reluctant to ask you about what you would like to be consulted on as we may not then be able to actually put questions about these topics forward. However, we are keen to find ways to give the panel greater influence on what is being discussed and at the same time making sure that the services (who would be addressed by these questions) can actually action the request.

We know that you are particularly interested in finding out what the services are doing with your responses. For this reason we have extended the trial of the 'a year on' column in the City Voice newsletter. In this section we go back to the services which submitted questions a year ago and ask them what has happened since they consulted the panel. From your responses we can see that we need to improve our efforts raising awareness and accessibility of the online version of the City Voice newsletter. The newsletter does not appear to be read very widely; only 29% (162 out of 560 respondents) indicated they were also reading the newsletters. The detailed report is even less widely known 18% (97 out of 541 respondents) read the report. We will be looking for ways to improve the accessibility of those two documents. The same applies to our general online appearance - we still have a lot of room to improve our service, something we are willing to do! Again, thank you very much for all your support throughout the year - we really appreciate your support. Without you there would not be a City Voice!

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Voice!

A YEAR ON!

This section looks back at some of the topics which were raised in the 34rd edition of the City Voice, in June 2015. The idea is to find out if the answers given by the panellists had any further, longer-lasting impact on the services who submitted the questions.

In June 2015, Panellists were asked to rate the features of a play area by thinking of their most recent visits as well as if their children or the children they supervise use the play areas unsupervised. Panel members were also asked to consider how the presence of a 'No Ball Games' sign affected the play of children in their care

Outdoor Play - A year on:

The feedback received from City Voice was a vital contribution to the decision to remove all the 'No Ball Games' signs on Aberdeen City Council owned land.

Scottish football legend Denis Law removed the first of hundreds of No Ball Games signs, which will allow ball games to be played freely in parks and community spaces. All of the signs are expected to be dismantled in time for the UK's National Play Day on Wednesday 3rd August 2016.

The removal of these restrictive signs will see Aberdeen become the first city in Scotland - and one of only a handful in Britain - to have no signs in its parks and community spaces forbidding the playing of ball games. It is hoped that the move will improve the health and well-being of the city's children by encouraging them to play outdoors in the newly liberated spaces.

Road Maintenance Services had submitted questions to receive more feedback on panellists level of satisfaction with the present performance of the condition of bus routes, other main roads, side / local roads, time taken to repair roads, the condition of busy and local footways, time taken to repair footways, intensity of street lighting in the city centre and in residential areas and time taken to repair street lights. Panel members were also asked where they would like to see more spending on.

Roads Maintenance Service - A year on

City Voice is being used by Roads Services to provide customer feedback on the work we do to maintain the City's road network. We are in the process of developing a Roads Asset Management Plan which presents the case for investment in roads maintenance in the language of accountancy. Part of the framework being developed at a national level includes community requirements and customer expectations as headings for input into the plan.

We need a cost effective method of gathering reliable data on the customers' response to our activities. City Voice gives us the opportunity to achieve the results we desire.

City Voice is being used to gather a series of responses to a standard set of questions aimed at giving a basic view of customer response.

City Voice 34 was only the second time we had put our questions on general maintenance forward and it is our expectation that we will need a substantial series of responses before any truly meaningful correlation can be assessed between the customers' response and our decisions. Nevertheless there were some indications in the report that there was some correspondence between what we as engineers are aiming to achieve and the customers' response to our actions.

We have not taken specific decisions on the basis of the limited data produced so far but what we get back from City Voice will be useful in future decision making processes.

The statistical analysis provides a good basis on which results can be compared year on year. It is an essential feature of the financial analysis in the Asset Management process that programmes are analysed over a twenty year timescale and the statistical charts will form an excellent basis for displaying the customer response.

The Environmental Health and Trading Standards Service submitted questions to the panellists in order to establish - the current level of awareness of these services and the value that the panel places upon them.

Panel members were asked if they ever had any contact with Environmental Services as well as if they had any contact with the Trading Standards Service. Panellists were then asked to list three services of which they are aware of being provided by the Environmental Health Services.

Environmental Health and Trading Standards - A year on

Our questions were to establish a baseline of awareness of services provided by environmental health and trading standards (EH&TS) services.

The responses indicated that there were many services we provided that were little known or unknown. EH&TS were also

thought to be responsible for services provided by other parts of the council or even external agencies. When asked directly respondents indicated that they would like to know more about our services.

As a consequence, we have been putting together information and data to illustrate the range and volume of work undertaken, together with some interesting case studies. This will be published online and updated annually. As EH&TS is now part of "Protective Services" along with the Public Analyst's Laboratory, the work of the lab will also be incorporated. We hope that the information should be available online in the next few weeks, and that the public will then be able to provide further feedback on the information and its usefulness.

Police Scotland asked about current policing priorities and how safe the panel members feel they are in their city. Panel members were asked how relevant they feel the policing priorities are, as well as if they think there should be any additional police priorities.

Police Scotland Priorities – a year on

I am delighted to be able to update City Voice panellists a year on from the questions we posed relating to our policing priorities.

We are extremely proud to be one of the partners involved in securing Aberdeen City Centre's Purple Flag status for a third year running. This award is closely scrutinised on a national level and is only awarded to city and town centres that excel in effective management of their evening and night time economy. The award is not easily achieved and is the result of a large number of partners working together to ensure that our city centre continues to be a safe place. Statistically violent crime and antisocial behaviour continue to drop and are lower than they were two years ago, however taking cognisance of the results from the 34th City Voice questionnaire, we recognise that more can be done to promote the positive work of the Police and other partners to reassure the public and ensure that they feel safe when enjoying the city centre.

Our current national and local priorities mirror the results from the questions we asked you last year, so local policing within all communities of Aberdeen City will be focused on these and looking to continue to keep people safe.

I take this opportunity to promote our newly launched local policing consultation 'Your View Counts', which allows you to tell us what is important to you in your community. This form of consultation is available all year round and can be found online at www.scotland.police.uk/yourviewcounts

