

Voice!

The Council Budget **Waste Services**
Open Space Strategy Low Carbon Society
Trees and Woodland **City Greenspace**



Welcome

Welcome to the 27th citizens' panel newsletter! This newsletter gives feedback to you, a member of Aberdeen's citizens' panel, on the results of the 27th questionnaire that you completed in October 2012. Topics in that questionnaire included the council budget, waste services, the open space strategy, low carbon society, trees and woodlands and the City's green 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 28th survey, focusing mainly on the Community Planning themes of 'Fairer' and 'Wealthier' 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 get in touch if you wish to make any comments on the citizens' panel.

Philippa Mason

City Voice Co-ordinator

Future Questionnaires

This newsletter, and the full results of the 27th 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 the Marischal College Customer Service Centre and all city libraries. Alternatively, hard copies can be posted to you by contacting me on the details below.

I plan to issue Newsletter No.28, a summary of the results of the enclosed questionnaire in June 2013, along with the 29th Questionnaire.

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

Philippa Mason

Aberdeen City Voice - Business Hub 18
Freepost RSSH-ATZJ-AUEY
4th Floor West
Marischal College
Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1AB

Tel: (01224) 522935

Email: cityvoice@aberdeencity.gov.uk

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

Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished with it



Update

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all City Voice panellists a happy new year! 2012 proved to be a very busy year for us. We launched our online edition, recruited 56 new panellists and sent you questions on 13 different subjects from public sector services including the City Council, NHS Grampian, Grampian Fire and Rescue Service and Aberdeen Alcohol and Drugs Partnership. 2013 promises to be just as busy so we hope you decide to stick with us and keep filling in those questionnaires! The timetable and proposed community planning themes for the 2013 are as follows;

February 2013 - Wealthier & Fairer

June 2013 - Healthier; Stronger & Safer

September 2013 - Smarter; Greener

We currently have 980 panellists, but are always looking for more citizens to help give us a broader view from across the City. To qualify, panellists must be 16 years + and live within the City boundaries. 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.

New Chair

I'm very pleased to announce that the City Voice Editorial Board now has a new Chairperson. The Editorial Board is made up of representatives from across the community planning partnership and for the next 6 editions Garry Burnett, Head of Aberdeen City Command, Grampian Fire and Rescue Service will be taking charge!



Garry said 'I feel very privileged and eager to take up the position of the City Voice Editorial Board Chair. The City Voice is a fantastic consultation tool used by many organisations to ensure their activities and objectives are effective and on the right track. It is my hope to progress the use of City Voice with a new communication strategy, to review current process and procedures, and ensure the

mechanics of the City Voice work as efficiently and effectively as possible. Inherent within my role as the City Fire Commander is my Board member position within Aberdeen Community Planning. I hope to use that vehicle to help further communicate and support the use of the City Voice. I look forward to working with the Editorial Board in 2013 to continue the good work that has been delivered in the past.'



27th Questionnaire - Panel Response

Here are the results of the 27th questionnaire you completed in October 2012. The results have now been analysed and a summary is presented in this newsletter. At the time of issuing the questionnaire, there were 959 of you on the panel - we received 659 questionnaires which gives us an overall response rate of 69%. The response rates were very similar for both the online and written returns. Thank you to everyone who responded. The response rate was slightly lower than the last questionnaire 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.



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The Council Budget

In autumn 2010, City Voice panellists were asked to identify the priorities for the Council budget. The feedback contributed to the annual priority based budgeting exercise and the creation of the Council's five year business plan. With many changes both within and without the council over the last 2 years, they were keen to come back to panellists to find out whether the priorities identified in 2010 were still relevant and appropriate. The results from this survey are going to be used to help inform the priority based budget for the financial year 2013-2014.

Panellists were given a list of 21 services provided by the City Council and asked to identify up to five that were most important to them. The results told us that the top five priorities chosen by panellists had fluctuated little since 2010 with the exception of 'tackling anti-social behaviour' that dropped by almost 10 percentage points. Figure 1 compares the results from 2010 and 2012. The percentages refer to the percentage of respondents selecting the service as one of the five most important.

Figure 1

	2010	2012
Rubbish collection, recycling and street cleaning	66%	63%
Care for older people	59%	62%
Road and pavement maintenance	57%	56%
Schools	48%	46%
Parks and open spaces	27%	31%
Tackling anti-social behaviour	41%	30%

Care for children and young people, libraries and sports facilities and services also scored highly, all receiving between 22-29% of responses.

The next question asked panellists to consider the same list of services and identify those which they would like to see the Council spend more on, even if it meant spending less on other

services. The top 2 options for 2012 were unchanged from 2010 with road and pavement maintenance and care for older people scoring the highest percentage. There was little change in prioritising schools and rubbish collection but there was a drop of 8 percentage points for tackling anti-social behaviour. Parks and open spaces saw an increase in support of 7 percentage points.

The final question asked panellists which services they would be prepared to see the council spend less money on. In 2010, 40% of panellists rated planning and development of land and public buildings as one of their top 5, but this dropped to 29% in 2012. The most popular category in 2012 was consumer advice with 34% of panellists.

This is what we are doing

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The results of this survey have moved slightly away from the previous questionnaire presented in 2010, but only slightly. Both surveys showed citizens identified the importance of Care for Older People and also requested this be maintained as a priority for the Council. This result along with rubbish collection, the provision of education and the condition of the city's roads have remained consistently high. (a recent Scotland-wide survey also identified concern with road conditions is a top priority with all of the country's cities).

One surprising result is in the final question. The 2010 survey had Economic Development as an element that citizens felt required less funding. This has dropped to fifth place in the current results. This may be a possible reflection of the ongoing economic challenges faced by the UK as a whole and recognition that maintaining Aberdeen's comparative wealth and prosperity requires a long term strategy.

The questions that appeared in City Voice have also been distributed to citizens through many of the Council public officers and featured in a special budget section of the Evening Express. Responses from all three sources are being collated and will form part of the engagement activity that accompanies the Council's Five Year Business Plan and annual budget. This information will be available after the Council Budget meeting in February 2013. It will also be published on the Council's website www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Victoria Livingstone

Corporate Communications and Engagement Manager
Aberdeen City Council



Waste Services

Over the last 5 years, panellists have been giving the Council's Waste Team invaluable information about their recycling habits and opinions on the future of waste strategy in the City. The responses are used to monitor the use and awareness of the service, focus their priorities and help the Council plan future initiatives that will encourage people to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Figure 2 - If you are offered any of these services, which ones do you use?

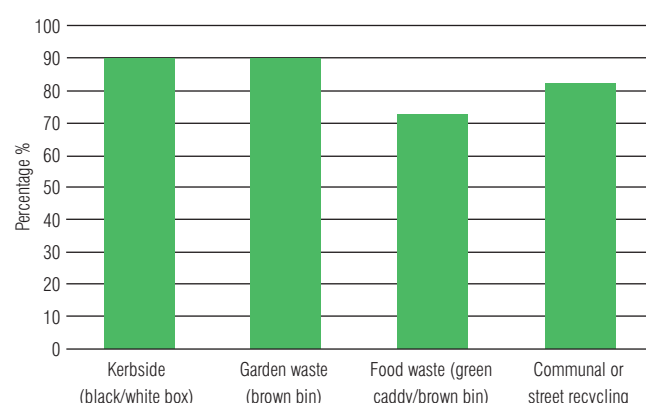


Table 2 shows us that the vast majority of panellists offered the different recycling services, uses them. 91% of panellists offered the 'brown bin' or garden waste collection make use of the service. This is followed closely by kerbside collections and communal or on-street recycling. Food waste collection is lower but is still used by three quarters of the panellists it's offered too. If we break this data down by area, kerbside recycling is more likely to be used in South neighbourhoods (94%) than in

the North (90%) or Central (85%) neighbourhoods but communal or on street recycling is much more common in city centre areas. This is probably due to the higher proportion of tenements and flats.

The Council were keen to find out if panellists would still use the food waste collection service if they stopped providing free bioliners. The results can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3



There were some interesting differences when this question was analysed by gender and age. Firstly, the proportion of men who said they would continue to use the service if the council stopped providing free bioliners (54%) was considerably smaller than the proportion of women (70%). In terms of age, older panellists were more likely than younger panellists to continue using the service.

The final question in this section aimed to find out what the main materials left in their refuse bins were after all the recycling, garden waste and food waste has been collected. The top three responses were rigid plastics (yoghurt pots, tubs, trays etc.), Cartons (including tetra pak) and plastic film (including plastic bags).



This is what we are doing

Questions on household waste have now been included in the City Voice for 5 years and this means that we are establishing good data on changing levels of service use and attitudes to waste and recycling. The results also help us to plan marketing campaigns, identify areas for improvement and gauge resident's opinions on possible service changes.

This year's results show we still have a lot of work to do to promote the food waste service. Everyone with a brown wheeled bin for garden waste also has access to the food waste service; however the results show that many people with brown bins do not know that this is available. We have a lot of work planned over the coming year to introduce new food waste collections to more of the city and in light of these results we will use this opportunity to promote the existing food waste service at the same time.

One of the most popular responses to "what would encourage you to use the food waste service" was weekly collections. The new food waste scheme that will be introduced over the next couple of years for flats, will be weekly. Once this new service has been introduced, we are planning to change the existing food waste scheme so that it is also collected weekly rather than fortnightly. We are focussing on introducing the new service first so that everyone in the city has access to a collection for food waste before changing the existing service for houses with gardens.

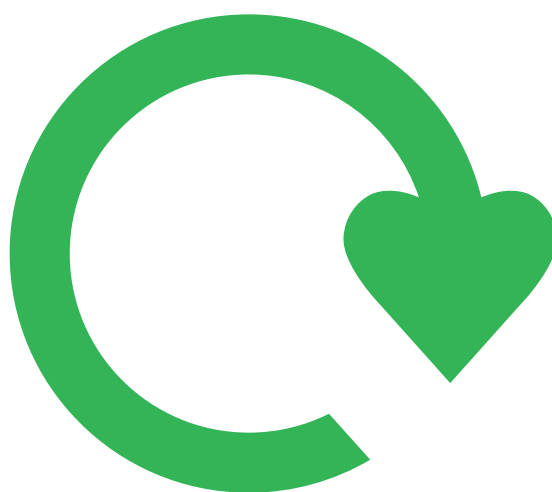
New regulations from the Scottish Government mean that the Council will have to dramatically change waste and recycling collections in the city. For residents with individual wheeled bins, by far the most popular of the options for future

recycling collections is to replace the existing box and bag system with a wheeled bin for all recyclable materials, including glass. In areas with communal bins, the most popular option is to provide a container for all recyclable materials, including glass, close to existing refuse bins, although the majority was less significant. We have been considering the benefits and costs of moving to 'commingled' recycling collections with glass included and it is interesting to see that this option is the most popular across the city.

One of the benefits of moving to commingled collections of recyclable materials is that it will be easier for us to start collecting more types of material. We are looking at the potential to include rigid plastics (yoghurt pots, margarine tubs etc.) and cartons (such as tetra-paks). It was interesting to see that these were the two top materials left in the general refuse bin after recycling and composting has been carried out. Rigid plastics were by far the most popular selection with almost three quarters of respondents choosing this option. Cartons came second with 44%.

Laura Blair

Waste Strategy Officer
Aberdeen City Council



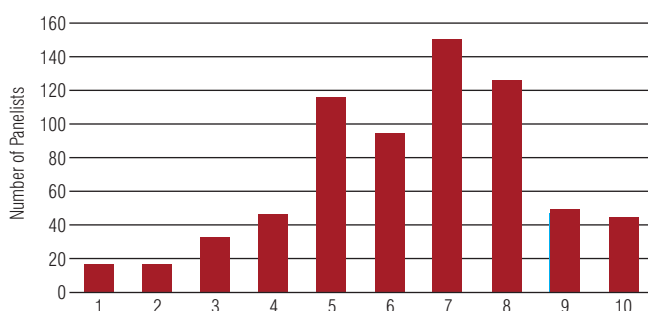


Open Space Strategy

Last year, the City Council published its Open Space Strategy 2011-2016. The strategy set out a new vision and aims to improve the quality of open space in the City. The council were keen to assess the progress of the strategy by gauging current satisfaction levels and measuring knowledge and awareness of the community involvement activities currently in place.

Panellists were asked how satisfied they were with the quality of open spaces in the City. The term 'open space' refers to green areas within and on the edges of settlements and could include parks, gardens, playing fields, woodlands, river corridors, play areas, amenity spaces, allotments and civic spaces. The results can be seen in Figure 4

Figure 4: On a scale of 1-10 (where 1 is very dissatisfied and 10 is very satisfied), generally how satisfied are you with the quality of open spaces in the city?



The results in figure 4 show that the majority of respondents (66%) provide an overall positive response (i.e. a 6,7,8,9, or 10). In terms of individual responses, the most popular rating was 7 (23%) followed by 8 (19%).

Panellists were also asked how satisfied they felt with their safety in the City's open spaces using the same satisfied/ dissatisfied scale. Once again, the majority of respondents provided a positive response (60%) with the most popular response being 7.

Part of the strategy aims to involve communities in developing open space/ green space management plans to maintain the City's open spaces. This involvement might include actively doing work in the open spaces, attending meetings or drafting and preparing documents. 15 panellists reported that they were currently involved in this activity and a further 15 said they had been involved previously. Panellists take part or have taken part in various ways including through their Community Council, 'Friends of' groups, schools, and conservation and gardening groups. Panellists who had not been involved previously were then asked if they were interested in getting involved. 142 panellists said that they were but 94% of them did not know who to contact or how to get involved. Panellists were then asked specifically about park user groups (such as 'friends of' groups) and along with the 34 panellists currently or previously involved, a further 100 panellists said that they would be interested in finding out more.

This is what we are doing

Firstly, I would like to thank City Voice panellists for giving their views and opinions on the quality of open spaces in our City. The results show similarities with the Open Space Audit 2010 results, particularly in the north and central part of the city where the quality of the open spaces is still poor compared with other parts. No major changes have been noticed in the base line figure since the publication of the Open Space Audit 2010 and the Open Space Strategy 2011-2016. This information is really useful as it will help us focus our resources on the north and central parts of the city to improve the quality in those areas and attract funding for future projects.

The results suggest that the majority of residents are satisfied with the quality of open spaces in the city but it is interesting to note dissatisfaction is higher in the 65+ age group. Almost 70% of respondents had not seen any publicity or promotion of the city's open spaces in the last 12 months. This was also reflected in the results of a public consultation carried out when we prepared the Open Space Strategy 2010-2011. Having this evidence now means we can prioritise this issue and include it in future action plans.

The results for public involvement in preparing open space management plans clearly shows that there has been little or no involvement with the exception of a few groups and community councils. This raises questions about how we can increase public involvement in managing local open spaces in the future. The results tell us that respondents in the 16-34 year old category are more likely to be interested in getting involved in managing open spaces, and this information is useful in helping us target them more specifically in the future.

The results of the survey will be used to benchmark the quality of open spaces in the city, re-prioritise the open space strategy action plan and prepare the annual monitoring and progress report. These will enable us to allocate our resources more effectively for the year ahead.

Aftab Majeed

Environmental Planner
Aberdeen City Council





Low Carbon Society

In June 2011, Community Planning Aberdeen reviewed its priorities and adopted the five Scottish Government key themes, which include 'Greener'. This theme deals with issues relating to land use, the environment, transport and housing. A working group was established to identify the key priorities for this theme and they were identified as 'waste' and 'low carbon society'. The working group commented that 'low carbon society' was difficult to define and can mean different things to different people. In order to help the group focus its priorities, they were keen to find out what the panel thought about low carbon society and where the group should focus their efforts on achieving this aspiration.

Panellists were asked for their views on what the most important aspects of a low carbon society were. The top three aspects were;

- 1) Increased energy efficiency
- 2) Reducing the resources we use (reduce, reuse, recycle)
- 3) Use of greener modes of transport (walking, cycling, public transport)/ reducing travel

City Voice panellists were also asked which sectors they thought the Greener theme should focus on. The most popular responses were:

- 1) Transport and travel
- 2) Waste reduction and recycling
- 3) Energy generation and renewables

The final question in this section asked for further comments on how Aberdeen could focus on becoming a low carbon society. 142 panellists' added comments and these have been grouped into themes. The largest theme related to better road/ traffic management (23% of respondents). Recurrent responses in this theme related to reducing traffic lights, increasing the use of roundabouts, pushing forward with the bypass, tackling congestion at the Haudagain roundabout and getting rid of bendy buses. The next most popular theme was that public transport should be improved (20% of respondents). This included various suggestions including enforcing lower

emission buses and extending provision across the city. After this, the most prominent theme related to the enforcement or introduction of greener planning policies and / or building standards (16%). In particular, these panellists were keen to see more energy efficient buildings and more widespread encouragement of solar panels in new building developments.

This is what we are doing

The results from the recent City Voice questionnaire are very interesting and will help the Greener theme focus our work efforts over the next two years. The areas that were highlighted as top answers in this questionnaire correlate with answers that we received from a recent poll that was carried out at Greener theme workshop.

It is interesting to note from the results that respondents felt the most important aspect of a low carbon society is 'increased energy efficiency' followed by 'reducing the resources we use'. However, the low carbon sectors which the respondents felt were most important to focus on through the Greener theme work was 'transport and travel'.

The Greener theme will feed these results back to the working group early in the new year which will assist us in focussing our work stream for 2013/14 and in finalising the Single Outcome Agreement.

Kathryn Hossack

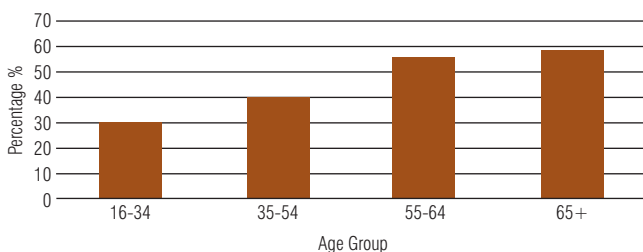
Planner - Local Development Team
Aberdeen City Council

Trees and Woodland

In August 2012, the Council completed the 'Tree for every citizen' project. The project was set the target to plant 210,000 trees, one for every citizen, across the city. These trees will provide a wide range of benefits to local communities and are valuable wildlife habitats.

Panellists were asked if they were aware this project had been taking place. Responses were split pretty evenly with 48% aware and 52% unaware of the project. Awareness varied across the City with panellists in the north neighbourhood more likely to have heard of it. There was also a correlation with age with awareness much higher in older age groups. This is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Before reading about it in the City Voice, did you know about the 'Tree for every citizen' tree planting project?



Panellists were asked what type of land future tree planting projects should take place on. The most popular responses were 'in parks and gardens', followed by 'amenity spaces' and 'existing open spaces'. Panellists were also asked which types of trees they would like to see planted in the future. Panellists provided a wide and diverse range of suggestions, the most popular being native species, oak, birch and rowan.

The council were keen to find out your views on future planting locations, particularly in regards to planting in the gardens of private properties that front onto streets and in the city's streets. The results can be seen in Figures 6 & 7.

The City Council is currently preparing a strategy to help manage its forests, trees and woods. This is collectively referred to as the 'urban forest'. Panellists were asked if they were familiar with the term 'urban forest'. Your results tell us that the vast majority (85%) were not and there was no notable variation across the genders, age groups or geographical areas. Panellists were also asked if they thought trees were important in their urban area. Your results tell us that a very large majority (92%) think that they are.

Figure 6: Would you like to see more trees planted in the gardens of private properties that front onto streets?



Figure 7: Would you like to see more trees planted in the city's streets?



This is what we are doing

The results from City Voice 27 gave us lots of valuable information, some of which we expected and some more surprising. For example, we were surprised that just under half of panellists had heard of the 'Tree for every citizen' project. There was a great deal of publicity about this project so we thought that more people would have known about it. It is however encouraging that the majority of people who did know about it, thought that it was a worthwhile project.

The responses to the five questions relating to the species of trees and where the Council should carry out tree planting gave us a wide and diverse range of suggestions and this is vital in helping to inform future tree planting projects. It is encouraging that the overwhelming response supports the planting of native tree species. To date, this has been the Council's policy on tree planting and it is good to see this is supported by the public.

Overall, your responses will help to inform the preparation of a Tree and Woodland Strategy for Aberdeen. The Scottish Government has set a target, through its Forestry Strategy, of 25% woodland cover across Scotland, by 2050. We aim with the preparation of the Tree and Woodland Strategy to ensure Aberdeen's contribution to this target.

Duncan McGregor
Arboricultural Planner
Aberdeen City Council

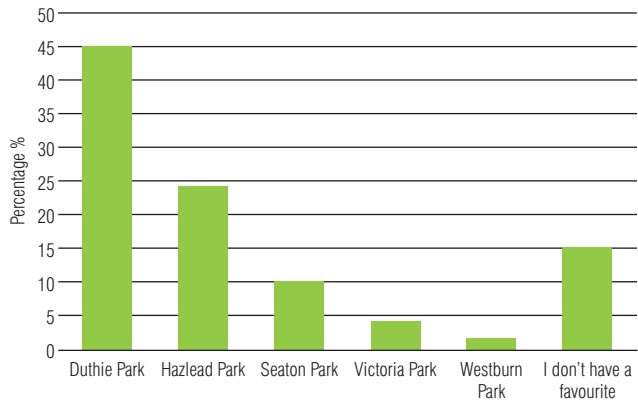


City Greenspace

Aberdeen City Council manages a range of green spaces, from formal parks and gardens to woodlands and natural countryside areas. In order to inform this management, the Council writes an Open Space Strategy. The strategy is influenced by strategic priorities, public consultation and budget requirements. Part of this strategy considers our formal parks so the council were keen to find out your views and opinions to help them focus their service delivery and policy direction.

The first question asked panellists to identify their favourite park. The results can be seen in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Which is your favourite large formal park in Aberdeen City?



The responses provided by men and women showed little difference, but there was considerable variation depending on where panellists lived. Although Duthie Park was the most popular response in each area, it was considerably more popular in the south than in the north or central neighbourhoods. Duthie Park was the most popular choice across all age groups but was most popular with those aged 65+.

Panellists were then asked what they liked most about their favourite park. The most frequently selected features were mature trees (49%), open space (48%), layout (45%), peace and quiet (41%) and play areas (20%). The other options offered were selected by less than a fifth of respondents. Panellists were asked if there was anything else they particularly liked. Responses included the Winter Gardens, animals/wildlife, café, safety or child friendliness, sports facilities and general cleanliness/ tidiness.

The questions moved on to ask how your favourite park could be improved. Almost a quarter of panellists said 'nothing'. This was followed by 16% of the panel commenting that the water features could be improved and 11% saying food/ drink facilities.

The council wanted to find out if panellists thought they should introduce more natural areas to formal parks. 65% of panellists agreed or strongly agreed that this was a good idea. They also asked if the panel agreed they should introduce more wildflower meadow areas to parks, road verges and other greenspace areas. Once again, a clear majority (71%) agreed that they should.

The Countryside Ranger Service offers a programme of year-round outdoor and wildlife orientated activities and events. Panellists were asked if they had attended any events in the last year. The results tell us that the vast majority (84%) had not. 6% had attended a family fun event and 4% had been on a health walk. Panellists were asked which types of events they would like to see included in future Countryside Ranger timetables. The most frequently provided answer was to better publicise existing events. Panellists also suggested historical events, plant identification walks and events for people with special needs.

The final question was in relation to Hazlehead Park and its recent classification as Scotland's first 'climate change' park. Panellists were asked which climate change sectors they thought were most important for the park management to focus on. The most popular options were awareness and education (34%), new tree planting and woodland expansion (27%), diversification of habitats (23%), naturalising existing ponds/ creating new ponds (22%) and sustainable drainage (21%).

This is what we are doing

First of all, the Environmental Service team would like to thank City Voice panellists for their time and effort in providing this valuable data. It was very encouraging to see that 25% of people think that nothing needs improving with any aspect of their favourite park. This feedback is very welcome at a time when the parks have seen some criticism as to the lack of investment. It is also encouraging to note that the areas in which folk would most like to see improved are areas that the service are currently focussing resources and budget towards i.e. food / drink facilities, play areas and toilets.

It was also encouraging to see that the over whelming majority would like to see more natural areas in our parks. This is a key element to projects such as Hazlehead Climate Change Park so it is good to know the public, on the whole, agree with us.

It is very obvious from the responses that the Countryside Ranger service requires more promotion to make folk aware of what is on offer. This will be a priority for the service in 2013.

The results from City Voice 27 will initially be presented to the Service Management Team and will provide good statistical evidence that will be used to determine not only the direction and focus of service delivery, but also influence budgetary and policy decisions.

Steven Shaw

Environmental Manager
Aberdeen City Council