



Aberdeen City **voice**

Aberdeen's Citizens' Panel Newsletter
Number 11, November 2007



Welcome to the eleventh citizens' panel newsletter. This newsletter gives feedback to you, a member of Aberdeen citizens' panel, on the results of the 11th questionnaire. Topics in this questionnaire covered the Community Planning themes of Being Informed, Neighbourhood Action – Locality Planning, Prosperity & Jobs, Arts, Heritage & Sport, and Transport & Connections.

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

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

The 12th questionnaire, focusing mainly on the Community Planning themes of Land Use & the Environment, Clean City, Transport & Connections and Aberdeen's Image, was issued to you in September. 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 at the end of the newsletter.

Philippa Corley
City Voice Co-ordinator

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



News

Firstly, sorry again for the delay in getting this summary newsletter out to you.

Last June for the first time, we launched our online questionnaire. This was an opportunity for you to complete the 11th City Voice questionnaire online, and receive all correspondence by email. 310 of the 799 of you on the panel said you wanted to use this option, while 490 chose to continue answering a paper copy of the questionnaire.

Unfortunately, as mentioned in a previous letter, we had many technical difficulties with the online questionnaire, which neither met our, nor your needs adequately. As a result, we have suspended the online questionnaire until we have a more specific package in place. We hope to have this available by the time I issue the next questionnaire in late February 2008.

Many thanks to all of you who responded to both this most recent, and the last questionnaire. Again we received many additional comments, which have been passed on to the relevant service for response.

11th Questionnaire – Panel Response

Here are the results of the 11th questionnaire you kindly completed in June 2007. The results have now been analysed and a summary is presented in this newsletter. As already mentioned, for the first time we had both an online and a paper-based questionnaire. 490 of you chose to receive the paper copy, and 423 questionnaires were returned.

That gave us a response rate of 86%. In comparison, 310 of you chose to receive information about the online questionnaire, but only 155 of you completed it – a response rate of 50%. In total we received 578 prompt and helpful replies. At the time of issuing the questionnaire there were 799 of you on the panel – this gives us an overall response rate of 73%. It is important that as many of you as possible respond each time. This will help us put all your views and concerns before the Partnership which is involved in providing services for Aberdeen residents and planning for your future.

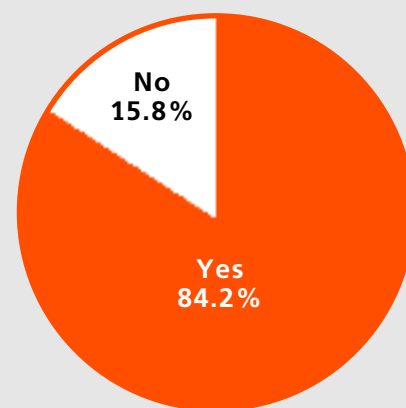
Please let me know if there are any reasons for you not replying. Are the questionnaires too complicated? Too long? Are we asking about things of little interest to you? What would you like us to ask you about? Please let me know by completing the tear of slip at the back of this newsletter.

Being Informed

The Phonebook

Currently, all contact information for Aberdeen City Council is available in The Phonebook, which is issued free each year to every home and is available in local libraries and community centres. We wanted to find out if you thought this information was easy to find and whether a more specific local phone directory with more detailed information would be more useful.

Q. Have you ever phoned the Council?



The chart on the previous page shows that approximately 84% of you have phoned the Council at some time. Your responses told us that if you needed to contact the Council but did not have the specific contact number, 80% of you use the Council listings in The Phonebook. Of that 80%, the vast majority (81%) found the contact information within The Phonebook useful. Of the 20% who did not find the Phonebook useful, the main reason given was that it was difficult to find the department or service needed.

Information about Grampian Police and Grampian Fire and Rescue is also available in The Phonebook. We asked you whether you used The Phonebook if you needed to contact these services but didn't have the specific contact details. Approximately 83% of you used The Phonebook for information in this case, of which 87% of you found The Phonebook useful. Of the respondents who did not find The Phonebook useful for these services, the main reason given was that entries did not appear in the most obvious place.

We also asked you whether you thought a local directory with public service contact names, numbers and departments would be useful. 78% of you agreed that this would be very useful.

A local phonebook for Aberdeen – this is what we're doing

We will use the results from your questionnaires to review how our entries are worded in future editions of The Phonebook. This will enable all our residents to find information on the service they require more quickly and easily.

Patricia Frazer

Neighbourhood Community Planning Officer, Aberdeen City Council

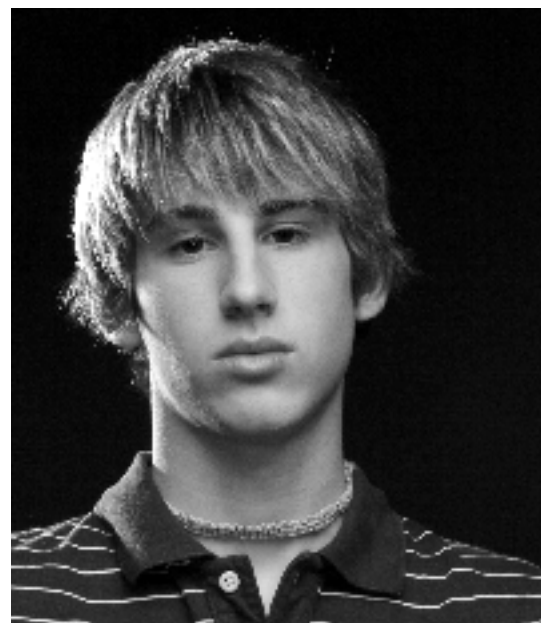
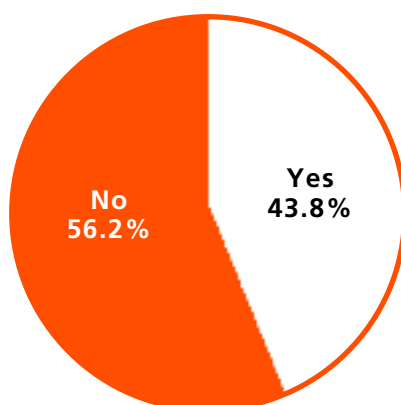
Neighbourhood Action - Locality Planning

In 2001, Aberdeen City Council created 37 Neighbourhoods across the City, based on what were deemed to be 'natural local communities'. Since then, other public authorities including Grampian Police, NHS Grampian and Grampian Fire and Rescue have taken steps to align with these Neighbourhoods.

In June 2005, we asked you how much you knew about your Neighbourhood and we now wanted to repeat these questions to find out if the results had changed. Your questionnaires told us that 78% of you knew that Aberdeen City was divided into Neighbourhoods and 59% of you knew the name of your Neighbourhood. Although this is encouraging, we want to increase this awareness further and therefore plan to put more resources into communicating our progress to residents in each Neighbourhood.

Our work over the next three years to raise levels of participation in Neighbourhood planning should raise the level of awareness of consultation opportunities and reports. It is encouraging to see that awareness of Neighbourhood Community Action Plans has improved from 19% in 2005 to 44% now.

Q.Do you know that there is a Neighbourhood Community Action Plan for your Neighbourhood?



Awareness of Neighbourhood Community Action Plans does differ slightly in terms of where you live with 49% of respondents from the Central area being aware of the plans as opposed to 41% in North and South areas. There was a more obvious difference in awareness between younger and older panellists with 23% of 25-34 year olds aware of the Community Action Plans as opposed to 47% of 54-64 year olds.

It was also really useful to hear your views on the best methods of providing information and feedback to local communities. Your views have not changed since we first asked you in 2005 with 'providing a newsletter' followed by 'publicity in local newspapers' being the most popular options. These results will continue to inform how we distribute information in the future.

Neighbourhood Planning in Aberdeen – this is what we're doing

Over the next three years, we plan to raise the levels of awareness and participation in Neighbourhood planning and delivery of local services. We will put more resources into communicating progress with residents in each Neighbourhood and this should lead to even stronger levels of public awareness in the future.

Dave Valentine

Strategist, Aberdeen City Council

Prosperity and Jobs

Gender Pay Gap

In recent years, new legislation has come into place making it unlawful to discriminate against people in the workplace on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or religion/ belief. We wanted to understand your experiences of discrimination within the workplace and find out how aware you were of the measures in place to address this discrimination.

Your responses tell us that you were most aware of gender and age discrimination. Gender discrimination is the longest standing anti-discrimination policy and age legislation received high levels of publicity when it was introduced a year ago.

It is encouraging that the great majority of you have no personal experience of discrimination in the workplace but of those of you who did report discrimination, age discrimination was the most common.

Following the publication of our Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan in June 2007, we were particularly interested in your awareness of gender equality and what your views were on the gap between pay of men and women. When we asked why you thought this pay gap existed, you said it was for the following reasons;

- Occupational segregation – that women's employment is concentrated in certain occupations and these occupations are generally the lowest paid
- Part time hours – the majority of part time workers are women and have a higher chance of earning less per hour than full time colleagues
- Interruptions to work experience – women returning to the work after time spent looking after children often find it difficult to find a job that matches their skills

Two thirds of the panel agree that the Council should take action to close the gender pay gap.

Gender Pay Gap in Aberdeen – this is what we're doing

The results of your questionnaires will be taken to the Equalities Action Network for action. Your responses will also assist our work in implementing key actions in the Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan.

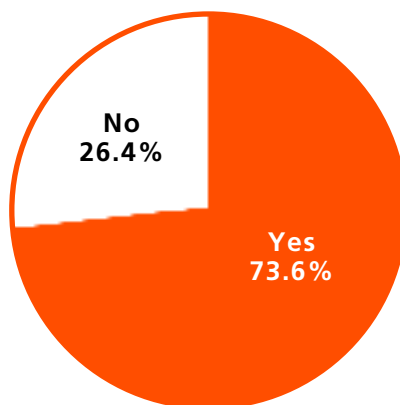
Babs Greenwood, Development Officer, Aberdeen City Council

Night-time Economy

Everyone is entitled to a clean, safe and vibrant city centre and you are no exception. Aberdeen city centre is attracting more investment and creating more leisure developments, and a key feature of this has been the growth in the night time economy and expansion of bars, clubs and licensed premises of all kinds.

We understand that this opportunity also brings challenges and has given rise to late night problems such as alcohol related crime, anti-social behaviour and the exclusion of certain groups, such as older people from the enjoyment of the city centre.

Q. In the last six months, have you visited Aberdeen city centre in the evening?



The chart above shows that just under three-quarters of you have visited the city centre in the evening in the last six months.

For those of you who haven't visited, we understand that safety is a major concern. Those who did visit the city centre in the evenings also raised safety as an important issue.



Recently, there has been a lot of publicity concerning anti-social behaviour and low cost drink promotions. We wanted to find out if you thought these promotions were an important part of choosing which pub or bar to visit. You told us that it was the friendliness of staff and standard of service, volume and type of music and availability of seating that were the most important factors when choosing where to visit.

We also asked you how you got home after an evening out in the city centre. Almost 50% of you said that you either get a taxi or a bus. When we asked how satisfied you were with the availability of night time transport, over 70% of you said that you were less than happy.

Finally, we asked you how your enjoyment of the city centre could be improved. Some of the most frequently suggested ideas were:

- More visible police presence
- Less drunk people
- Better bus service
- Control anti-social behaviour
- Greater diversity of outlets (restaurants, family places, cafes etc)
- Fewer pubs/clubs
- More taxis
- Licensed premises being more responsible with alcohol sales

Aberdeen's Night Time Economy – this is what we're doing

Your responses have allowed us to gain important feedback on the night time economy. Your answers have helped us to identify which aspects matter most to you and how they can be improved. Initiatives are already in hand that will address some of the issues you raised. It is hoped that the begging boxes installed in the Union Street area will reduce the problem of begging and we will continue to use taxi marshals at city centre taxi ranks. We are also exploring changing the position of night time taxi ranks and continue to focus on initiatives that make the city centre a cleaner and safer place.

Dale Sherriff

Researcher,
Safer City Centre Initiative,
Aberdeen City Council

Your responses reflect the current policing priorities within the city centre. These include increased staff presence, high visibility patrols and closer co-operation with our partners, especially Aberdeen City Council. Your responses also show that the public's perception of crime can sometimes differ from the levels of recorded crime and this discrepancy is something that we continually strive to address. These results will enable us to continue targeting our resources as effectively as possible and will also support future funding applications.

Now that our City Centre Unit has been expanded, our intention is to monitor your responses to these types of questions on an annual basis. This will enable us to gauge whether your views and opinions change over the coming years and measure the success of new and continuing initiatives.

Sgt Andrew Verreydt

Police Partnership Development Officer,
Grampian Police

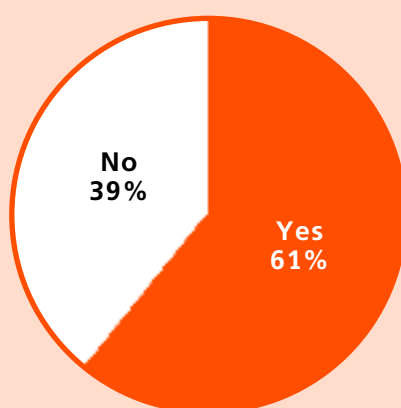
Arts, Heritage and Sport

Library & Information Services

Aberdeen City Council Library and Information Services operates the Central Library, 17 branch libraries, a mobile library and a home library service to citizens who are house-bound. In order to plan and develop our service for the future, we are embarking on public consultation to gauge your current use of our services and understand how they can be improved.

The results from your questionnaires told us that just under two thirds of you had used library and information services over the last year. Usage was lowest in the 16-24 year old age group with only 25% having used the services over the last year compared with an average of 62% for older age groups.

Q. Have you used any of the above libraries in the last 12 months?



Library usage varied across the city with the Central library, Airyhall and Ferryhill library used most often. The vast majority of you visited the library to borrow books but a large number of respondents also used the reference and information resource facilities. Awareness of the lending and information services we provide is strong but there was less awareness about some of the other services we provide, in particular the workshops, talks and children's sessions that we offer.

Aberdeen's Library & Information Services – this is what we're doing

The results of your questionnaires are extremely useful. They tell us that although there is some awareness of library services, we need to do more to promote our full range of facilities. The results also tell us that we need to raise awareness and usage within the 16-24 year old age group as they appear to be under-represented.

The Library and Information Services Team will feed these results into service planning and development. They will also be used to inform further surveys and community consultations that will be undertaken by the Library and Information Continuous Improvement Group over the coming year.

Fiona Clark, Library & Information Services Manager, Aberdeen City Council

The Green Townscape Heritage Initiative

In October 2006, we were awarded money from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop The Green Townscape Heritage Initiative. This initiative offers funding to property owners to tackle the problems of neglected buildings and other social and economic needs in the areas between Union Street and the train station and Ship Row to Bridge Street. This also includes the Adelphi, The Green and Market Street.

The results from your questionnaires confirmed our initial findings that although most of you knew where The Green and Adelphi were, the majority of you only went through them as a shortcut to other destinations rather than visiting them in their own right. Those of you that did visit these areas tended to go for the restaurants with a smaller percentage going for the shops.

Your views on the different routes through the area also confirmed our initial findings but helped us to gain a more detailed understanding of why this is for example many of you raised the issues of litter and traffic problems in this area. There is also a clear contrast between how these areas are perceived during the day and night with many people feeling unsafe in these areas at night time.

It is interesting to see that there was almost a 50/50 split between people who did, and people who did not go to the Indoor Market, but that the Indoor Market building itself was by far, the least favourite building in the area. You rated the Tivoli Theatre as your favourite building in the area with Marishall College, the Marine Museum and the Town House all receiving strong votes.

Panellists were asked what improvements could be made to the wider Green area to make you more likely to visit. Some of the comments were:

- Encourage retail development (especially independent shops)
- Street markets
- Improve access to the area
- Clean whole area
- More cafes
- More green areas/flowers
- Clean buildings
- Pedestrianise area
- Better lighting
- More restaurants

The Green Townscape Heritage Initiative – this is what we're doing

The results from your questionnaires have helped us to understand your views and thoughts on the wider Green area. These results, along with the results of two other public consultations will be sent to the Heritage Lottery Fund as a fundamental part of our bid to win funding to run a Townscape Heritage Initiative. Your opinions and recommendations on improvements to the area are useful and diverse and have helped us shape our bid and target certain buildings and areas for grant assistance.

Frances Swanston
Planner, Aberdeen City Council

Sports & Physical Activity in Aberdeen

We wanted to find out which sports and physical activities you participated in, which facilities you used and what your experience of these facilities was. We also wanted to know about the problems and barriers you encounter in participating in sport and physical activity. As well as the traditional, formal definition of sporting activities, we also wanted to know about your informal physical activities including cycling, walking briskly, strenuous household chores and gardening.

It was encouraging to see that regular participation in sport and physical activity was found to be higher than in surveys that have been previously conducted in Aberdeen City. This may in part be due to the inclusion of more informal activities such as gardening and household chores that are beneficial to our health but not always included in sport and physical activity surveys.

We asked you to rank how important you thought certain aspects were when you chose a sporting facility. You reported that cleanliness should be our highest customer priority with issues relating to staff also ranking very highly. This information is very helpful as it gives us a benchmark to measure future improvements.

Sports & Physical Activity in Aberdeen – this is what we're doing

As well as understanding whether you participated in physical activities, we were also interested in understanding the reason that you did not participate in sport and physical activity. For many of you, this was due to health reasons. In response to this, we are proposing to develop a number of structured activity programmes for older people and for people with specific health problems.

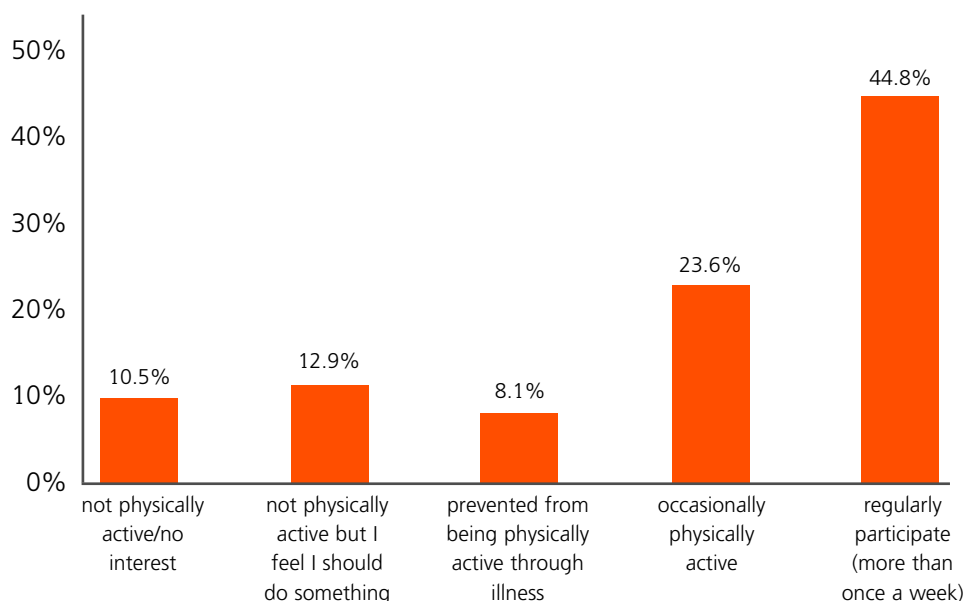
It was also very useful to find out your preferred methods of receiving information about sporting facilities in Aberdeen. Advertising in the local press and a guide delivered to each household were your preferred options.

We will continue to produce the annual sport and recreation guide that goes to every household and also plan to improve our web pages.

Overall, your feedback has been very helpful and will be used to help formulate policies that encourage and improve the opportunities for sport and active lifestyles in Aberdeen City.

Fiona Wedderburn
Culture & Leisure Strategy Officer,
Aberdeen City Council.

Q: How would you best describe your level of physical activity?





Future Questionnaires

This newsletter and the full results of the 11th questionnaire are available to view on the Community Planning website (www.communityplanningaberdeen.org.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 plan to issue Newsletter No.12, a summary of the results of the questionnaire you completed in September, in late February 2008, along with the 13th Questionnaire. I will also issue an email over the coming few months to those of you that said you want to complete the questionnaire online, to keep you informed of the progress we are making.

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

Philippa Corley

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Community Planning
in Aberdeen

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

Thanks for your assistance.