

Voice!

**Arts, Heritage
and Sport
Jobs and
Prosperity
Neighbourhood
Action-
Locality Planning**



Welcome...

to the 14th citizens' panel newsletter! This newsletter gives feedback to you, a member of Aberdeen citizens' panel, on the results of the 14th questionnaire. Topics in this questionnaire covered the Community Planning themes of Neighbourhood Action - Locality Planning, Prosperity & Jobs and Arts, Heritage & Sport.

This newsletter provides a summary of the results of the questionnaire you completed in June/ July 2008, 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 15th survey, focusing mainly on the Community Planning themes of the Environment and Transport & Connections 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.

This newsletter, and the full results of the 14th questionnaire, are available to view on the Community Planning website www.aberdeencityvoice.org.uk. 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.15, a summary of the results of the enclosed questionnaire in January 2009, along with the 16th Questionnaire.

Please let us know if your personal details have changed or if you no longer wish to be a panellist

If you have any questions or comments please contact:

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News

Following the recruitment drive that took place over the summer, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome new panellists to the City Voice! Your support has bolstered our numbers and ensures that the Panel is now even more representative of our community. Panellists will receive 3 questionnaires a year along with a newsletter, which updates them on the results of previous consultations and explains how the information you provide will be used to shape policy, improve service provision, measure performance and apply for funding.

New Look!

Regular panellists may have noticed a new look to the newsletter and questionnaire. We thought it was about time the City Voice was given a fresh new look so I hope you like it!

This newsletter is printed on uncoated paper that is cheaper and less expensive to recycle. We decided to go for full colour after receiving some very competitive printing quotes. This means the new look newsletter and questionnaire costs are virtually the same as before.

Update

The City's Community Plan was recently updated to respond to the changes taking place in the City and in our public services. The Community Plan priorities or 'themes' have been updated following consultation with the Community Planning Challenge Forums. These forums include representatives from public, private, voluntary and community organisations. The Challenge Forums were asked to identify the key challenges facing the City and then these were put presented at the Community Planning Conference where they were agreed by a democratic vote. The new priorities are:

- **Children and Young People** - Getting it Right for Every Child
- **Safety** - Violence and Disorder – Reducing anti-social behaviour, violence, domestic abuse, racist incidents and drug/ alcohol related crime.
- **Homes**
Affordable housing – increasing the levels of affordable housing in new housing developments.
Regeneration – improving the quality of life in our most deprived areas.
- **Health and Social Care** - Children – Healthy minds and bodies.
- **Transport and Connections** - Improving sustainable travel options.
- **Lifelong Learning** - Make improvements to pupil attainment and adult literacy and numeracy through family learning and promoting lifelong learning.
- **Locality Planning** - The continued development of Neighbourhood Planning to deliver quality of life improvements at a local level.
- **Environment** - Climate Change – Reducing Greenhouse gases.
- **Prosperity and Jobs** - City Centre redevelopment.

Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished with it 



All future City Voice questionnaires will be based around these themes. This timetable for the next 3 questionnaires is:

- **Questionnaire 16**
March 2009.
Health and Social care, Safety, Homes.
- **Questionnaire 17**
June 2009.
Locality Planning, Lifelong Learning,
Children & Young People.
- **Questionnaire 18**
Sept 2009.
Environment, Prosperity & Jobs, Transport & Connections.

Green Townscape Heritage Initiative

In Questionnaire 11, we asked you your views on the city centre area from Ship Row to Bridge Street. This area includes The Adelphi, the Green and Market Street. The Council wanted to make a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to tackle the problem of neglected buildings and help improve the general area. To increase the chances of a successful bid, it was important that the bid took the public views and opinions into account. I am delighted to report that the bid was successful and the project was awarded £1.4 million! The restoration and improvement projects will include the Tivoli theatre and the Victoria Buildings on Bridge Street as well as many other smaller projects across the area. Money will also be spent on repairing the granite roads and paving that are such an important feature of the area. The project is due to run for

3-4 years and update information will be available on the City Council website. A big thank you to all panellists who took the time to respond and helped make the bid a success!

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.

14th Questionnaire - Panel Response

Here are the results of the 14th questionnaire you kindly completed in June/ July 2008. The results have now been analysed and a summary is presented in this newsletter. At the time of issuing the questionnaire there were 798 of you on the panel - this gives us an overall response rate of approximately 78%. This is a strong response but slightly lower than the response rate to the previous questionnaire. 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 the things of little interest to you? What would you like us to ask you about?



Arts, Heritage and Sport

Sports and Physical Activity

In Questionnaire 11, the Council asked you questions about which sports facilities you used and your experience of these facilities. They also wanted to find out why residents were not participating in sport and physical activity. Your responses contributed to the draft Sport & Recreation Strategy 2008-15, 'Fit For the Future'. A year has past since Questionnaire 11 and the Council wanted to find out whether levels of participation and experiences of the facilities had changed.

Your results tell us that there has been a small increase in the number of people who are occasionally or regularly physically active. The chart below shows a comparison between figures in 2007 and 2008.

We asked you to tell us which physical activities and sports you participated in. The top three 'informal' physical activities were walking, gardening and household chores and the top formal sporting activity was swimming. The top 8 sporting activities listed by the panel were:

- 1) Swimming
- 2) Gym
- 3) Cycling
- 4) Golf
- 5) Aerobics / Exercise class
- 6) Running
- 7) Dance / Movement class
- 8) Bowling

Sports and Physical Activity - This is what we are doing

The Sports Service are currently running a number of consultation and improvement programmes which are designed to get more people involved in sport and physical activity and help create a sports service which reflects the needs and aspirations of our community. It is really encouraging to see that the number of residents taking part in sport and physical activity on a regular or occasional basis has increased. This shows that we appear to be moving in the right direction!

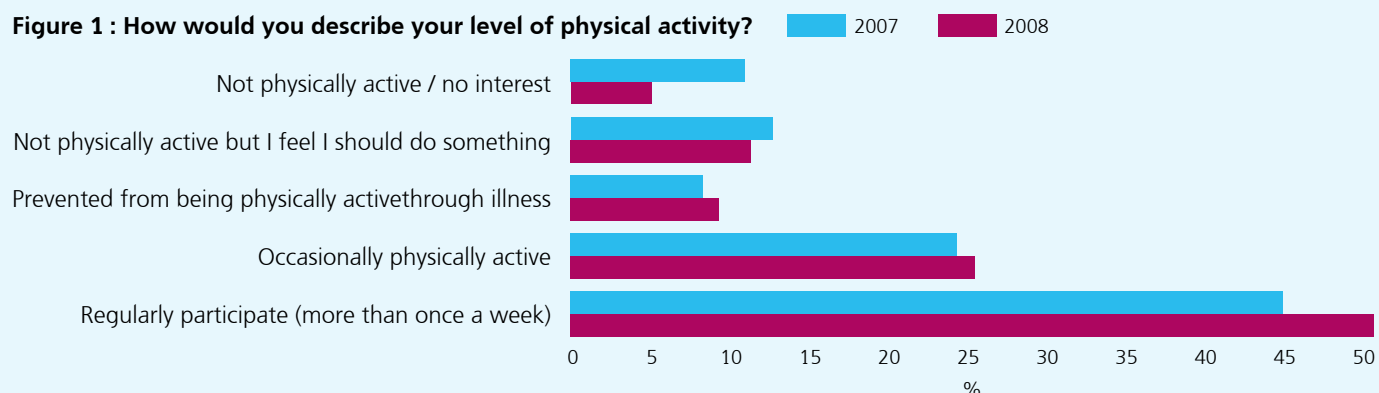
However, there is still lots of work to be done to engage with people who are prevented from taking part in sport and physical activity and those who are not physically active but feel they should be doing something. It is vital that we talk to these residents to find out what we can do to remove these barriers and help them take the next step.

The information you gave us will feed into the Sports Strategy 'Fit for the Future' and help to focus our objectives and operational direction over the coming years. If you want to find out more information on the Sports Strategy or comment on the draft strategy, please visit our website at:

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ACCL/web/site/sports/spr_fit_future.asp

Alex Paterson
Strategic Leadership
Aberdeen City Council

Figure 1 : How would you describe your level of physical activity?



Library and Information Services

Aberdeen City Council Library and Information Services operate the city centre Central Library, seventeen Branch libraries throughout the city, a Mobile Library and the Home Service to citizens who are housebound.

In the 11th questionnaire, the Council asked about your usage of the City’s libraries. Since then, there have been several changes to the provision of library services and the Council wanted to measure the impact of these changes.

Your responses tell us that overall, there has been a slight decrease in the total percentage of panellists visiting the library in the last year. When we break this information down into age groups, we can see that there has been a strong rise in the percentage of 16-24 year olds visiting (from 25% to 45%). There is little change in the over 65 age group which remains the group most likely to have visited a library in the last 12 months.

Library use varies across the City with the Central library, Airyhall and Ferryhill libraries used most often. The Library and Information Service was also interested in finding out when and how often panellists visited the library. Figure 2 tells us that just under a third of panellists visit the library once a month. The most popular time to visit the libraries is in the morning and Saturday morning sees the largest visitor numbers. These results shown in Figure 2.

In July 2007, the Council changed the library opening hours for the City’s libraries. A third of you said that you were aware of these changes and of that third, 88% said that the changes had no affected their library use.

We also asked you which services you would like to see introduced to library and information services in the future. The top 3 choices were to be able to reserve library items on-line, to be able to join the library on-line and the introduction of exhibition areas to the libraries.

Library and Information Services - this is what we’re doing

Your results tell us that there has been a slight overall drop in library attendance. Although this is disappointing, further analysis of your responses show an increase in the attendance of some age groups, especially the 16-24 year olds, and a higher attendance at some of the local branch libraries including Culter, Kaimhill, Linksfield, Mastrick and Torry.

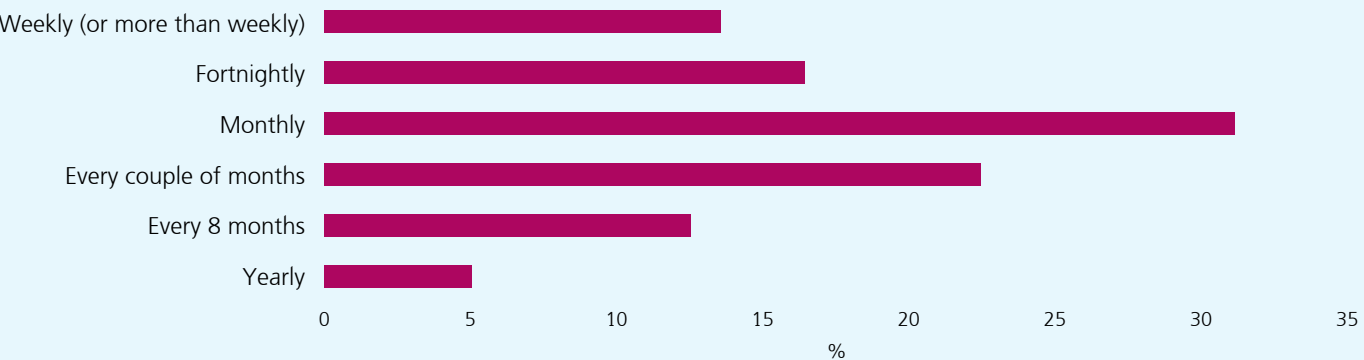
The results tells us that we need to do more to promote and market some of the services we already provide to ensure the community gets the best possible use of all the facilities including toy and art equipment lending services. As we had hoped, you also told us that you were keen for us to develop our online and WiFi services. This is a top priority in our current improvement plans and we hope to get this up and running shortly. We will update you of our progress on this in future City Voice newsletters.

The Library and Information Service are very grateful for the information you provided. Your results have given us valuable information on resident awareness and use of the Library and Information Services in Aberdeen City. Your results will be assessed in more detail by the Library and Information Continuous Improvement Group which will in turn help us to develop future services and allocate our resources more effectively.

Alex Paterson
Strategic Leadership
Aberdeen City Council



Figure 2 : On average, how often do you visit the library?





Cultural Facilities and Activities

The Council is producing a new Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen City. This strategy aims to provide more opportunities for people to attend and take part in cultural activities over the next few years. To help inform the strategy, the Council wanted to find out what you thought of the City's cultural venues, whether you currently attend or take part in cultural activities and what you think the new strategy should focus on.

The venue panellists were most likely to visit was His Majesty's Theatre (HMT). Over 90% of panellists had visited HMT in the last year. You were also asked for your views on the quality of the venues and the variety of programming. HMT scored highly here in both categories, as did the Art Gallery. The Maritime Museum scored well in the quality of venue category and the Music Hall scored well in the variety of programming.

Questionnaire 14 also asked about your cultural interests and activities. 35% of panellists go to see drama/ plays every couple of months with a further third of panellists visiting at least once a year. Just over half of you attend a music event every couple of months or more often, and 40% of panellists go to an exhibition once a year. When we asked panellists why they did not attend these activities, the main reasons given were 'not interested', 'personal/ work commitments' and 'too busy'.

The final questions in this category asked you how we could improve attendance and participation in cultural activities both at a local and citywide level. You gave us some fantastic suggestions including:

- Run taster sessions
- Bring more comedy/ opera into the city
- Cheaper tickets and '2 for 1' offers
- Street events
- Involve local schools
- Lamp post art
- Give local communities more opportunity to showcase their work
- Use the Beach Ballroom for dancing
- Provide better rehearsal venues for orchestras and practice facilities for bands
- Make better use of community centres for cultural activities

Cultural Facilities and Activities - this is what we're doing

Aberdeen City Council, in partnership with its Community Planning Partners and the Aberdeen Cultural Forum are currently developing the first stages of a new Cultural Strategy. To ensure the strategy focuses on the needs of the community, it is vital that we engage with residents at this early stage to gain views and opinions on the strategy priorities.

It was very positive to note that the quality of facilities in many venues including His Majesty's Theatre (HMT), The Art Gallery and the Maritime Museum were rated as excellent by a significant proportion of panellists. However, it is also apparent that we need to work hard to raise the profile of many of the smaller venues in order to meet community expectations. In terms of panel involvement in cultural activities, our biggest challenge is to raise awareness of what's currently available.

As well as the 'tick box' questions, you gave us lots of detailed suggestions on how we could improve our service. In particular, your comments on the wider use of 'non-arts' venues, improved marketing through local networks and greater community outreach were really helpful. This detailed data will be analysed more closely over the coming months and fed into the early stages of designing a Cultural Strategy.

Alex Paterson
Strategic Leadership
Aberdeen City Council



Jobs and Prosperity

Economic Development

The Scottish Government has launched a new economic strategy. This strategy aims to focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth. The Council has responded to this by agreeing 6 economic priorities for the City. These priorities are:

- 1 **Economic Advocacy** – to ensure that all Council activity takes account of the new Scottish Government economic strategy
- 2 **Grow the workforce** – to encourage population growth and develop the skills of our residents.
- 3 **Market Aberdeen** – to increase the marketing and promotion of Aberdeen as a place to visit, live and work.
- 4 **Accommodate growth** – to increase the amount of housing, development land and opportunity for new and existing businesses and their employees.
- 5 **Economic Diversification** – to ensure the City’s economy is diverse and not over reliant on any one sector
- 6 **Improve Quality of Life** – to attract and retain people and business

The Council wanted to find out your views on future economic prosperity in Aberdeen City and how you think we should promote the 6 economic priorities.

The Council runs services that aim to grow the economy in Aberdeen City. The panel was asked which of these services they thought would have the greatest positive impact on securing future prosperity for the City. The top three were:

- Provision of transport systems
- Promotion and marketing of the City
- Support for business

Questionnaire 14 also asked for your views on which job sectors would provide the most growth opportunities in the next 10 years. Figure 3 tells us that you think the sectors that may provide the strongest job opportunities are Renewable Energy, Tourism and Oil and Gas.

Economic Development - this is what we’re doing

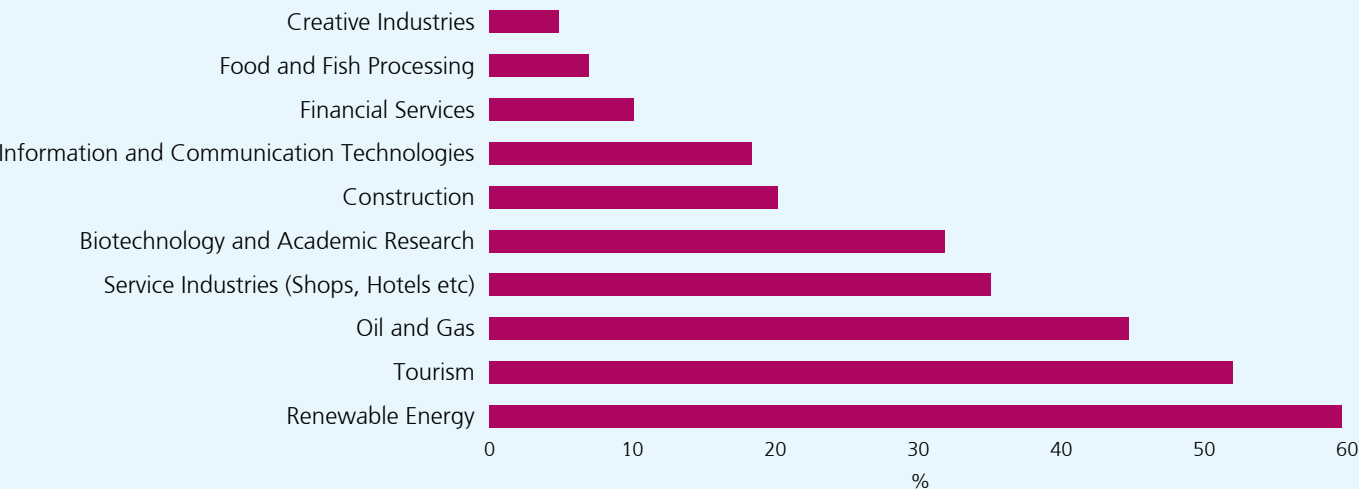
It is really encouraging to note that 93% of panellists agree or strongly agree that the Council should play an active role in securing future jobs and prosperity in Aberdeen City. We agree, and the Council will continue to play a strong role in supporting development and diversity in the local economy.

We asked you which job sectors you thought might provide the most growth opportunities in the coming decade. 60% of panellists said that the renewable energy sector would provide strong opportunities and this indicates that residents of Aberdeen City understand the need for economic diversification and see the potential for development of this industry in the North-East. 52% of panellists said that tourism held strong future opportunities. It will be interesting to explore this further to see whether residents see this potential in ‘traditional’ tourism or whether this relates to business, golf and green tourism opportunities.

The information you gave us gives us an important insight into your views on the future economic prosperity of Aberdeen City. It tells us what you think is important and gives us an understanding on which messages we need to promote more strongly.

Belinda Miller
Head of Economic & Environment Sustainability
Aberdeen City Council

Figure 3: Which 3 of the following job sectors do you think might provide most growth opportunities in the next ten years?





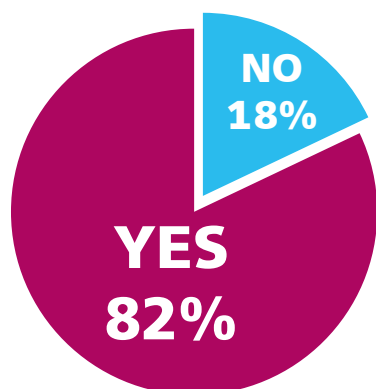
Neighbourhood Action - Locality Planning

Neighbourhood Planning

In June 2005 and 2007, we asked panellists to tell us how much they knew about their Neighbourhood. Aberdeen City has 37 Neighbourhoods across the City based on what is deemed to be 'natural local communities'. These questions were repeated in the 14th City Voice questionnaire to find out whether knowledge and understanding of Neighbourhoods and Neighbourhood Planning had changed.

Awareness that Aberdeen City is divided into Neighbourhoods has increased over the last year from 78% to 82%. This year's results are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Did you know that Aberdeen is divided into Neighbourhoods?



Awareness is still highest in the 35-54 age group but there has been an increase in awareness of the younger age groups. In the 16-24 year old age group, awareness has risen 22% in the last year. Panellists reporting that they know the name of their Neighbourhood has also increased from 59% last year to 64% this year.

Panellists were also asked, apart from the City Voice, have they been asked for their views on local issues in the last year. 86% reported that they had not been asked. This is much lower than last year.

In addition to the questions repeated in Questionnaire 14, panellists were also asked a couple of new questions. Question 9 asked whether panellists felt they could influence what happens in their Neighbourhood. 27% reported that they did feel they could influence decisions in their Neighbourhood. This result varied across the 3 Neighbourhood Service Areas with panellists in the South more likely to feel they can influence (33%) compared with 20% of panellists in the North Area.

Neighbourhood Action, Locality Planning - this is what we're doing

Your results tell us that although there has been an increase in awareness of Neighbourhoods generally, there has been little change in awareness of Neighbourhood Community Action Plans. There has also been a sharp fall in panellists who recall being asked for their views and opinions over the last year. This is not entirely surprising, as much of the recent consultation focus has been with staff, community planning partners and community representatives rather than residents more generally. It has also been a while since the original flagship 'Planning for Real' events held in communities between 2003-2005.

We also asked the panel whether they felt they could influence what happened in their Neighbourhood. Although only 27% of panellists felt they could, this exceeds the targets we originally set for 2010.

Overall, your results tell us that we need to take steps to reach more people when we are asking for views and reporting progress. We should also consider setting more ambitious targets for people feeling they can influence what happens in their Neighbourhood. Improving communication is one of our main priorities. We will be publishing 2 monthly Neighbourhood Bulletins (starting later this year) for community groups and local staff so they can help spread information about what is being done in each Neighbourhood. This information will also be available in libraries, community centres and public offices and at www.communityplanning.org.uk/internet/neighbourhoodinformation/neighbourhoodbulletins.asp

Consultation events will take place in the autumn with community representatives to decide on the main priorities for the next year in each Neighbourhood. We also want to encourage more contact between service managers and local people to exchange views and get feedback on how services are working. We will continue to update progress on Neighbourhood Planning in future City Voice newsletters.

Dave Valentine

Strategist
Community Planning and Regeneration
Aberdeen City Council