

Voice!

The Environment Transport and Connections



Welcome

to the 15th citizens' panel newsletter!

This newsletter gives feedback to you, a member of Aberdeen citizens' panel, on the results of the 15th questionnaire. Topics in this questionnaire covered the Community Planning themes of the Environment and Transport & Connections.

This newsletter provides a summary of the results of the questionnaire you completed in September 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.

Please continue to get in touch if you wish to make any comments on the citizens' panel. The 16th survey, focusing mainly on the Community Planning themes of Health & Social Care, Safety and Homes 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.

Philippa Mason

City Voice Co-ordinator

Future Questionnaires

This newsletter, and the full results of the 15th 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 are available at The Point (Broad Street), and all city libraries.

Alternatively, hard copies can be posted out by contacting me on the details below.

I plan to issue Newsletter No.16, a summary of the results of the enclosed questionnaire in early summer 2009, along with the 17th Questionnaire.

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

Philippa Mason

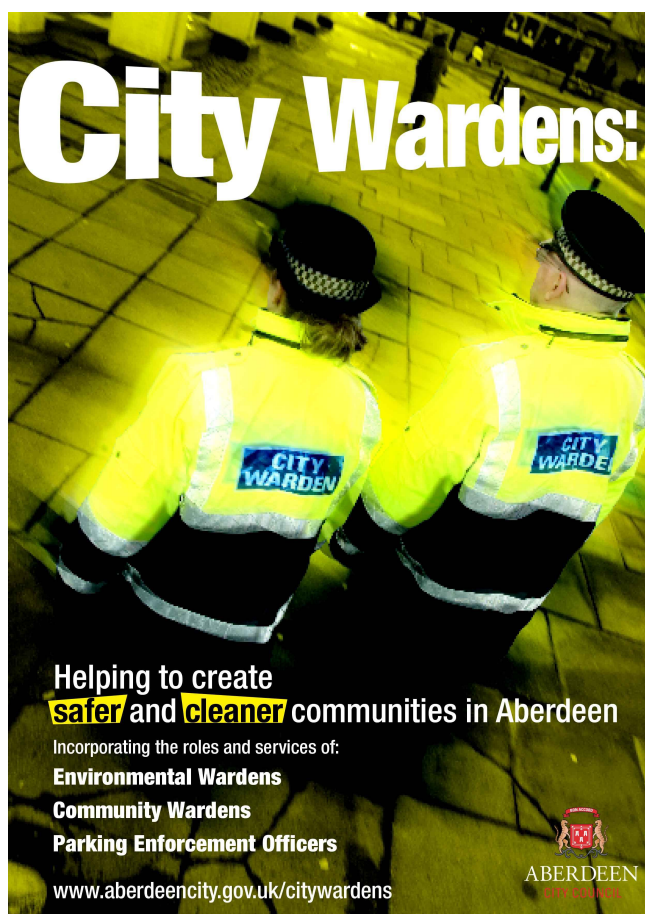
Freepost Plus RLZR-RYJT-KXJU
Aberdeen City Voice
5th Floor
St Nicholas House
Broad Street
Aberdeen AB10 1AX

Telephone (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, Scottish Enterprise, NHS Grampian, Communities Scotland and Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations.

Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished with it 



Update on Community Safety

This time last year, the City Council asked panellists questions about crime and fear of crime in the city centre and local area. The responses gave invaluable information about your experiences and concerns which has been used to develop Neighbourhood Community Action Plans and to train the new City Wardens.

The City Warden scheme went 'live' in January 2009. The scheme aims to provide 'an excellent, customer focused, visible and accessible service to help ensure safety, cleanliness and a free flow of traffic in our communities'. There are approximately 70 City wardens based across the 3 Neighbourhood Service Areas. The City Wardens will work to achieve a number of neighbourhood priorities in relation to anti-social behaviour, crime, dog fouling, litter and parking issues. It is hoped that this service will enable a more local and flexible approach for dealing with these issues.

Grampian Fire and Rescue Questionnaire

Many thanks to all of you that responded to the extra questionnaire we sent to you in December 2008 on behalf of Grampian Fire and Rescue Service. We received questionnaires and additional comments from over half of the Panel and this is a good response at such a busy time of year! All responses were passed to Grampian Fire and Rescue Service for analysis as part of their wider consultation and I look forward to reporting back on what the results were, and how they will be used, later this year.

Frequently Asked Questions...

Q. Why do you number the questionnaires?

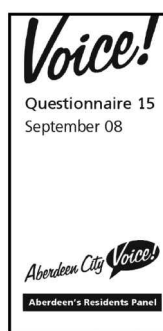
A. When we send the City Voice questionnaires out, we write the panellist number on the top corner of the document. This number is called a 'unique identifier' and tells us some information about who is completing the surveys. This information is used in several ways. Firstly, when the questionnaire results are analysed, it allows us to understand if different groups of panellists feel differently about different issues. The unique identifier tells us general information about you for example, whether you are male or female, your age group and which neighbourhood you live in. This in turn helps us to target the specific groups that require information or services for example, if the City Voice asks questions about Sport and Physical activity, this extra information will tell us if men are more active than women, or if younger panellists are more likely to visit sports centres.

Numbering the questionnaires is also a useful way for me to keep track of panellists. If a panellist moves house or wants to leave the City Voice, it allows me to access their record quickly and effectively. With 911 residents on the panel, we have some people with the same surname or live in the same street so the unique identifier means it cuts down the confusion at my end!

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.

Happy New Year!

I would just like to take this opportunity to wish all our panellists a happy and peaceful new year and thank you for your continued support of the Aberdeen City Voice!



15th Questionnaire - Panel Response

Here are the results of the 15th questionnaire you kindly completed in September 2008. The results have now been analysed and a summary is presented in this newsletter. At the time of issuing the questionnaire, there were 911 of you on the panel –we received 745 questionnaires which gives us an overall response rate of approximately 82%. This is a fantastic response rate and 5% higher than the previous questionnaire! It is important that as many of you as possible respond each time so please keep up the good work. 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?

Household Waste and Waste Management

In September 2006, Aberdeen City Council asked panellists about the waste and recycling services in the City. In Questionnaire 15, they were keen to find out if the service had improved and understand your views on new services that they hope to introduce over the next couple of years.

The results told us that 86% of you have access to kerbside recycling. Of that percentage, 92% of you use the scheme.

Figure 1: Is your property served by kerbside recycling collection?

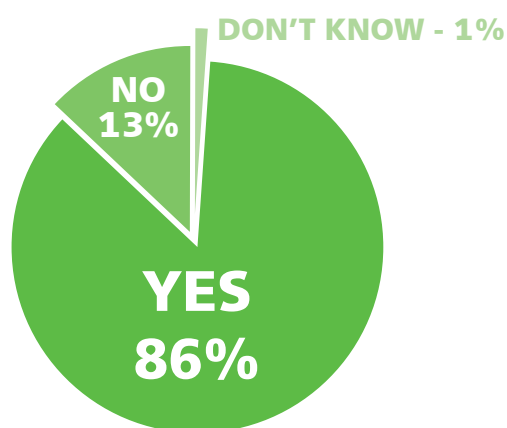
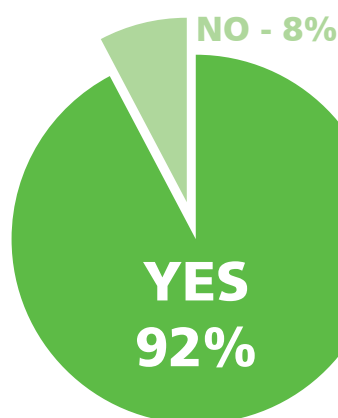


Figure 2: If 'YES', do you use this service?



The results tell us that panellists in the South of the City are slightly more likely to use the service at 95% compared with 93% in the North and 87% in Central area. This area pattern is also reflected in green waste collection where approximately 96% of panellists in the South use the service compared with 90% in the North and 88% in the central areas. The results told us that panellists in the 25-34 year old age group were more likely to use the kerbside service (98%) but older panellists were more likely to use the green waste recycling service with 95% of 55-64 years olds using it.

Panellists who were offered the recycling service but didn't use it, were asked why. The top three reasons were

- 1 I use recycling centres / points instead
- 2 Not enough room to store materials
- 3 I don't have a black box / white sack or it's been lost or stolen

The Council also wanted to find out your views on some new waste initiatives. The questionnaire asked you what steps you think they should take to handle your non-recyclable waste in the future. 90% of panellists said that they thought the Council should develop a facility in Aberdeen which uses non-recyclable waste to generate heat and power for local residents.

The final set of questions in this section concentrated on plans to introduce fortnightly non-recyclable waste collection in the City. 62% of panellists who currently use an individual wheeled bin for the collection of their rubbish said they had concerns about this change in service. When asked what the main concerns were, the top two responses were;

- 1 The waste will smell if not collected weekly
- 2 The waste will attract flies and vermin if not collected every week

This is what we are doing

The Waste Aware team is delighted that 92% of panellists who are offered the kerbside recycling collection scheme use this facility to recycle their waste. This figure has risen from the 84% when we asked the same question in August 2006. The number of panellists using the green waste recycling service has also increased from 77% in 2006 to 92% in 2008. The City Council has worked hard over the last few years to introduce communal recycling services to residents in flats and tenements so we are particularly pleased to see that over 72% of residents with access to these services, use them. It is also really encouraging to see that 81% of residents who do not use the kerbside recycling service use Recycling Centres or points instead. Some of you also told us that you were unable to use recycling services because you didn't have a black box or white paper sack. If this is the case, please contact the **Waste Aware helpline on 0845 608 0919** and we will be happy to arrange delivery of new, free containers.

Approximately 90% of respondents support the concept of developing a facility in Aberdeen which uses non-recyclable waste to generate heat and power for local residents to avoid future reliance on landfill. The challenge for the Council is now to determine where such a site should be sited. Another waste management initiative mentioned in the questionnaire was to charge households that create additional waste. 59% of you agreed with this concept with the majority indicating that this charge should be between £2-2.50 per week. This scheme will be introduced over the coming year and we will update you on its progress.

Finally, we asked you questions about the planned change from weekly to fortnightly non-recyclable rubbish collection. We appreciate that many residents have concerns about this initiative, the top concerns for the panel being that uncollected waste will smell and attract flies and vermin. This information has been extremely helpful as it will allow us to ensure we can provide information in the run up to the start of the new service which targets these concerns effectively.

Clare Neeley – Waste Minimisation Officer
Strategic Leadership, Aberdeen City Council



A Clean City

A clean city is a challenge for all cities. In October 2007, panellists were asked about their views and perceptions of the City's cleanliness. The Council wanted to repeat these questions to find out if you thought the city's cleanliness had improved.

In October 2007, the City Voice asked you to rate the City's cleanliness on a scale of 1-10 (where 1 = very unclean and 10 = very clean). When this question was repeated, the results tell us that panellists think the city is cleaner than it was last year with the majority of panellists rating the City at 7 out of 10 compared with 5 out of 10 in 2007.

The Council was also interested in finding out how you thought the cleanliness of Aberdeen City compared with other Scottish cities. 53% of panellists said they thought it was 'cleaner or the same' as other cities but a quarter of you thought it was dirtier.

The City Council also wanted to know your views on which issues they should be prioritising in order to clean up the city. Figure 3 shows us your top three priorities have not changed since last year. They are to clean up litter (including gum removal), take action on flytipping and take action on dog fouling.

This is what we are doing

Aberdeen City Council currently focuses on the presentation of its streets and collecting waste to ensure the city remains clean, but we recognise that future service provision needs to be both cost effective and efficient.

It is interesting to see that the questionnaire results closely echo the results of the 12th City Voice Questionnaire, where panellists ranked the issues of street cleanliness, fly tipping and dog fouling as the main issues. This information is really useful and will be used to help us plan future priorities and service delivery.

We were interested in finding out how you thought we could encourage the public to keep the city clean.

Your top 2 responses were:

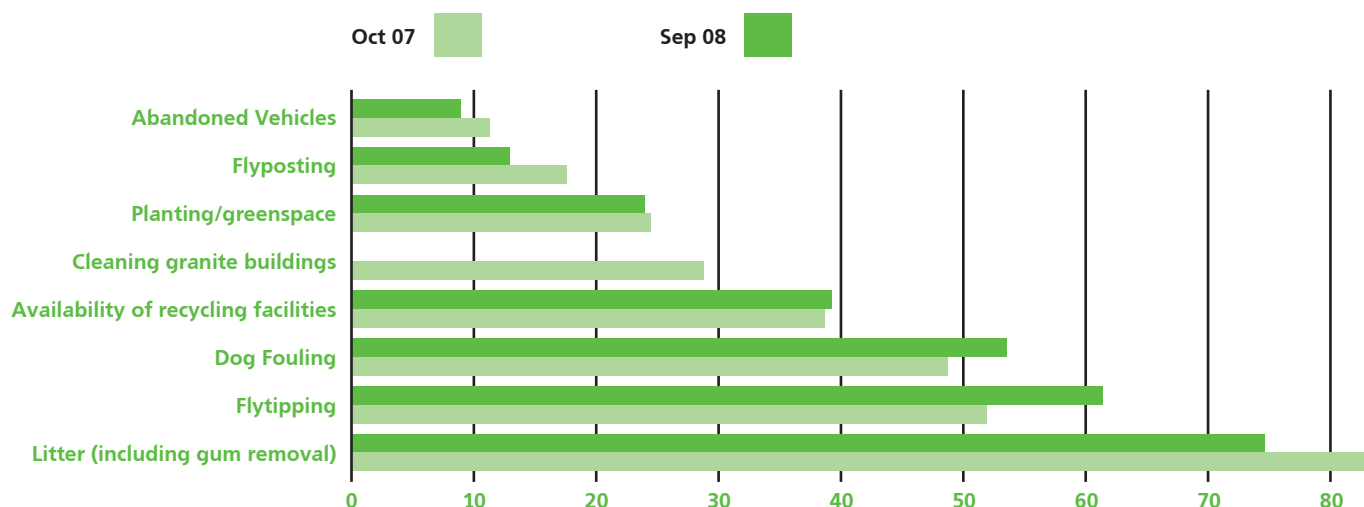
- 1 Raise awareness with children (76%)
- 2 Issue on the spot fines for people who break the law (68%)

We were also interested in finding out the level of local support for the Councils' policy of issuing Fixed Penalty Notices or fines to any adult who's caught littering or allowing their dog to foul on the footpath. The Scottish Executive sets the Fixed Penalty cost of £50.00 and the City Council operates a 'zero tolerance' approach to this policy. It is greatly encouraging to discover that 81% of respondents strongly agree and a further 16% agree with the approach we have taken.

Amy Smith

Strategic Leadership, Aberdeen City Council

Figure 3: Of the list below, where should the Council be prioritising their efforts to make the City clean? (tick up to 3 boxes)





'Aberdeen in Bloom' is an initiative that aims to improve the environmental quality of the City for residents, communities and visitors. The City has been involved with the 'Britain in Bloom' competition for over 40 years and has been very successful. As well as this competition, we also compete in Nations in Bloom, World in Bloom and Communities in Bloom.

Your results told us that 98% of panellists are aware of Aberdeen City's participation in annual 'In Bloom' competitions. The Council were also interested in finding out how important you thought competing in 'In Bloom' competitions was to the reputation and promotion of the City. This was measured on a scale of 1-10 where 1 was 'very important' and 10 was 'not at all important'. The results are shown in Figure 4.

These results tell us that 54% of panellists rate the importance of competing between 1-3 on the scale (very important) and this compares to approximately 14% who rated it between 8-10 (not very important).

The Council also wanted to find out if you thought it was beneficial for them to continue investing in 'In Bloom' competitions. Approximately 76% of you thought that it was. When this was broken down into age groups, we found that panellists in older age groups were more likely to think it was beneficial.

This is what we are doing

It was interesting to see the level of awareness and support panellists have for the 'In Bloom' competitions. Some panellists told us that it would have been useful to incorporate the average associated cost to this question so we will include this next time we ask. It was also interesting to see that 76% of people want the Council to continue to invest its resources into competing in 'In Bloom' competitions.

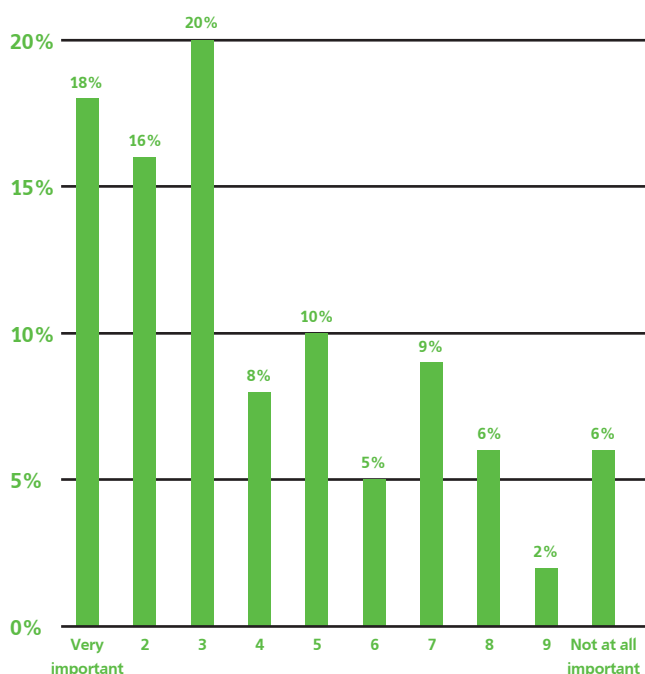
Aberdeen City continues to succeed in 'In Bloom' competitions. Achievements in 2008 include Aberdeen and Dyce gaining Britain in Bloom Silver Gilt Awards and 5 Bloom awards in the Communities in Bloom competition. Four communities also participated in the non-competitive Neighbourhood Awards.

Ruthrieston Residents' Association and Residents' of Greenburn Drive gained a Certificate of Merit and Cove and Altens Community Council and 'Bucksburn in Bloom' gained a Certificate of Improvement. If you would like to find out more about getting involved in 'In Bloom' projects in your area, please contact the Council's 'Aberdeen in Bloom' Officer on stmitchell@aberdeencity.gov.uk

The City Voice responses have provided a very useful insight into public opinion and this will be taken into account when reviewing the level of participation in future years.

**Amy Smith – Sustainability Assistant &
Steven Mitchell – Aberdeen in Bloom Officer**
Aberdeen City Council

Figure 4: On a scale of 1-10, how important do you think competing in 'In Bloom' competitions is to the reputation and promotion of our City?



Grassland Action Plan



The City Council has recently introduced semi natural areas of native flowers and grasses around the City to help improve the diversity of our grasslands and encourage native plants and wildlife. They were interested in finding out whether you were aware of this new policy and how it could be improved as it's rolled out across the City.

Your results told us that overall, awareness of this policy is split right down the middle, but when we analyse this by age group, we can see that awareness is significantly higher in older age groups with 58% of 55-64 year olds aware, compared with only 7% of 16-24 year olds and 37% of 25-24 year olds.

Approximately 60% of panellists felt positive or very positive about the new grassland policy and 17% said they felt negative or very negative. When asked why this was, the main reasons given were that the sites were unattractive, they may encourage littering and they looked messy.

Finally, the Sustainability Team wanted to find out how you thought this policy could be promoted better to the wider community. The two most popular suggestions were to encourage community and school participation in managing the sites and to have public events and planting days.

This is what we are doing

It came as no surprise to us that the awareness level of the Council's Grassland policy was rather low. However, it was encouraging to find that the majority of panellists are supportive of introducing more natural grasslands within the City.

Looking at the responses to the awareness question and the concerns the panelists have about grassland areas will help us to improve delivery and prioritise our efforts. For example, from the results we conclude that we must undertake a better campaign to market and promote the grassland areas, as well as publicise when new areas are developed.

The City Voice has helped us gain a strategic, citywide understanding of resident's views on this issue and this will help us ensure that our approach to the implementation of the Council's Grassland Biodiversity Policy is more effective and consistent in the future.

Amy Smith – Sustainability Team

Strategic Leadership, Aberdeen City Council

Local Transport Strategy – Annual Questions

Aberdeen City has a Local Transport Strategy (LTS) which sets out the Council's transport policies and actions until 2012. The LTS vision is to develop 'a sustainable transport system that is fit for the 21st Century, accessible to all, supports a vibrant economy and minimises the impact on the environment'.

One of the main objectives of the LTS is to encourage more walking, cycling and use of public transport. To find out what impact this policy is having, the Council wanted to find out about your travel patterns so they could measure current patterns against the baseline data they collected from you last year and monitor the progress.

Your results told us that your travel behaviour is largely unchanged from last year but this was not wholly unexpected as the policy was only officially adopted in March 2008. Panellists who travelled to work by car were asked what their main reason was for doing this. The top reasons remain the same with

- 1 16% of panellists saying that their car was essential to perform their job
- 2 15% saying that public transport was not frequent enough and
- 3 15% saying that public transport was not quick enough

Perceptions of safety on trains and buses were also unchanged with approximately 70% of panellists stating that they felt 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' when using public transport in the evenings. There were a few interesting changes in the answers given to the set of questions on performance of trains and buses. When panellists were asked about the train service, there was a positive rise of between 3-10% to each of the questions. This tells us that overall, panellists appear to be happier with the train service

than they were last year. Performance of the bus service was less clear cut. The biggest decrease was seen when panellists were asked 'do you agree or disagree that the bus service is stable and isn't regularly changing?'. There was a 17% drop in panellists agreeing with this statement.

This is what we are doing

Once again, City Voice panellists have been invaluable in helping with the development and monitoring of the Local Transport Strategy. As the LTS was only officially approved in March 2008, major changes were not expected at this point, but it is still really useful to reaffirm the results from last years questionnaire and measure any changes, however small. This year's results will form a core part of the Transport Annual Progress Reports. These reports will be published on the Council website and will be available to view from April 2009.

Since March, several actions and projects have progressed well. These include night time taxi ranks, a new shuttle bus service from Dyce to Aberdeen airport, a draft Core Paths Plan, submission of Haudagain roundabout plans to Transport Scotland, bus lane decriminalisation and permission to allow taxis and private hire cars into bus lanes. We are hopeful that next year will see greater improvements in perceptions and provision of transport as the LTS starts to move forward and completes a full year of being established.

If you would like to find out more information on the Local Transport Strategy, please visit Aberdeen City Council website on www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/sl_pla/pla_transportstrategy.asp

Louise Napier – Senior Planner
Aberdeen City Council

