

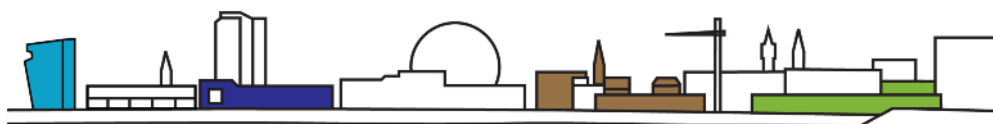
Youth Engagement in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan



Working Document

To keep track of updates and new information the table below will be completed, with recent changes highlighted in yellow.

Version Control	
Update	Date Published
1	03 July 2013



aberdeen local development plan

1. Introduction

The [Aberdeen Local Development Plan \(LDP\)](#) (2012) sets out the City Council's vision for the future development of Aberdeen. It identifies land for new development (e.g. housing, offices and leisure facilities) and sets out policies that are used to consider applications for planning permission.

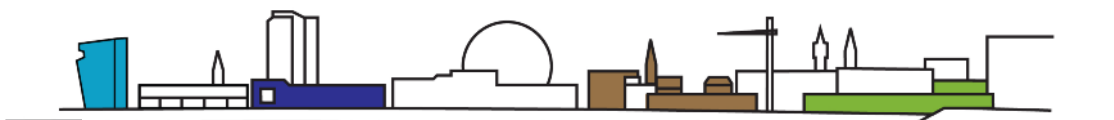
It is vital that the LDP is kept as up to date as possible so that it can respond to new issues and take into account any changes in circumstances. The Scottish Government therefore requires that Local Development Plans are reviewed every five years.

In January 2013 a [Development Plan Scheme](#) (DPS) was prepared to provide a programme for the preparation of a new Local Development Plan for Aberdeen. The DPS included a Participation Statement which explained who would be consulted on the preparation on the new Local Development Plan, when this consultation would take place, and at what points decisions would be made.

The Participation Statement highlighted the need to reach beyond organisations normally involved in planning consultations and towards a wider range of public interests. A 'Youth Engagement Programme' was subsequently developed by Officers within the LDP Team to think of ways to better engage with young people. Opportunities to specifically target greater youth engagement were identified as follows:

Stage 1 (Current Stage)	Pre-Main Issues Report	Identify the 'Main Issues' that the next Local Development Plan should address.	April – June 2013
Stage 2	Main Issues Report	Discuss the options and different ways of dealing with the 'Main Issues' identified.	From January 2014
Stage 3	Proposed Plan	Consult on a Proposed version of the next LDP, including its strategy to address the 'Main Issues' and guide the future development of the city.	From February 2015

This report discusses the findings from Stage 1 of the Youth Engagement Programme (April – June 2013) and explains how the views of the young people consulted will be considered in the preparation of a new Local Development Plan for Aberdeen.



2. Background

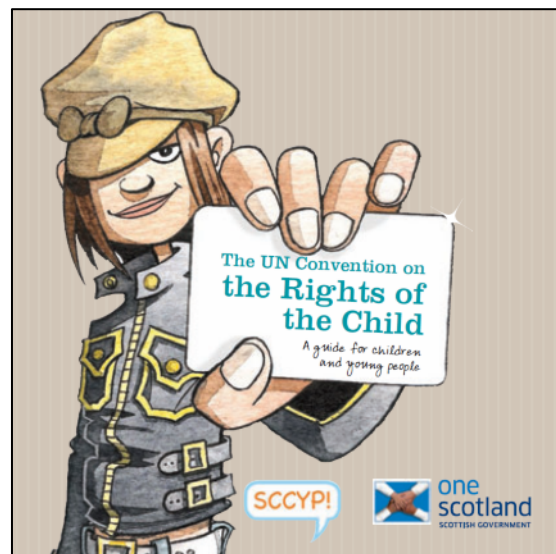
The aim of our Youth Engagement Programme has been to promote the important role young people can play in looking into the future of places and expressing how they think they should be designed and planned.

A number of areas of legislation and examples of best practice were considered in developing our Youth Engagement Programme. These are highlighted below:

2.1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

In 1989, world leaders officially recognised the human rights of all children and young people under 18 by signing the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). The Convention was ratified by the United Kingdom in 1991 and is legally binding international law.

Article 12 of the Convention (respect for the views of the child) states that every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

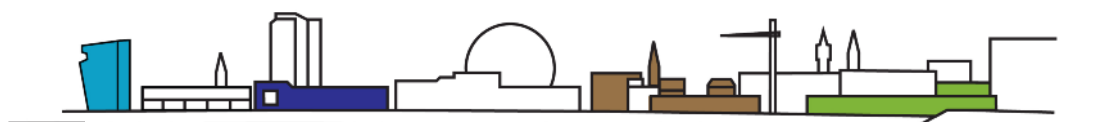


As such, when adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account. The Convention encourages adults to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making.

2.2 The Children (Scotland) Act 1995

[The Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995](#) is centred on the needs of children and their families and defines both parental responsibilities and rights in relation to children.

The right for each child to be treated as an individual, and the right for a child who can form a view on matters affecting him or her to express those views if he or she wishes are essential principles within this Act.



2.3 Planning Aid for Scotland

[Planning Aid for Scotland](#) (PAS) is an independent organisation which works across Scotland to help people shape their communities and engage more effectively with planning.

PAS have developed a range of projects that are specially designed to encourage young people to engage in the planning system. A [Young Placemakers](#) campaign was launched in May 2013 with the aim of recruiting a network of motivated young people to champion active citizenship and create a stronger voice for young people in their areas.



In March 2013 the Local Development Plan Team took part in a Scottish Government pilot workshop undertaken by PAS at Bucksburn Academy. Experience gained at this workshop was invaluable in helping the LDP Team to develop our own Youth Engagement Programme.

A report and video of the pilot workshop is expected to be available from Planning Aid Scotland / the Scottish Government sometime in Summer 2013. A link to the relevant webpage will be included within this report once it is available.



3. Methodology

3.1 Invitation to Participate

As part of the Pre-Main Issues Report consultation period, the first stage of the Youth Engagement Programme concentrated on discovering what young people thought were the 'Main Issues' either currently affecting the City, or likely to affect the City over the period of the next Local Development Plan (2016 – 2021, and onwards to 2035).

Officers wrote to all secondary schools (18.no) in the Aberdeen City area in January 2013 to invite young people to be involved in the first stage of the Programme.

We felt it was important when writing to the secondary schools to expressly identify how our proposed engagement activities would complement each of the four capabilities set by the Curriculum for Excellence (the national curriculum for Scottish Schools) in order to encourage as many schools as possible to take part.

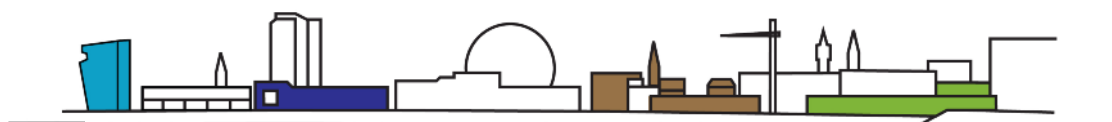
3.2 Format and Content of the Workshops

Workshops were held between April – June 2013. Members of the LDP team facilitated at all events and, to encourage wider community and intergenerational involvement, some workshops were also attended by Local Ward Members.

Of the 18.no schools invited to participate in the consultation exercise, 8.no actively took part by way of either a workshop exercise or a fieldwork exercise.

Over 400 pupils (S1 – S3) were consulted with from the following schools:

- Cults Academy
- Aberdeen Waldorf School
- Bucksburn Academy
- St Margaret's School for Girls
- Hazlehead Academy
- Aberdeen Grammar
- Camphill School
- Robert Gordon's College



Students from Bridge of Don Academy also showed an interest in the project, and a member of the LDP Team visited the school to speak to the Student Council about the consultation process.

Format and Content

Consultation exercises for each school differed depending on the time available with the class and the number of participants within each session. A general introduction was given at the beginning of each session to ensure that participants understood the reasons why the consultation was being undertaken and how their views would be considered in the preparation of the next Local Development Plan.

Descriptions of workshop and fieldwork activities are set out below:

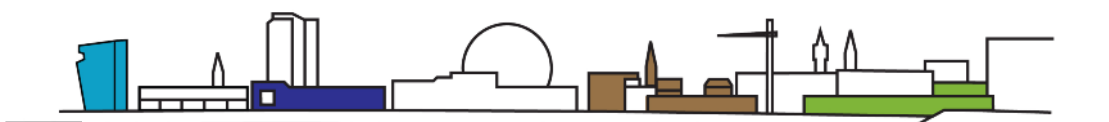
- *Planning Hierarchy*
This exercise explored the hierarchy of planning documents (national, regional and local). Participants were introduced to the Local Development Plan and the 'plan led' system. This exercise also explored the topic areas covered in the LDP and how it is used to consider applications for planning permission.
- *What Do Planners Do?*
This exercise encouraged participants to think about how planning works in practice. Volunteers were asked to play the role of different buildings and uses (e.g. a house in the countryside). They were asked to imagine would they would they hear, smell and see and how this could change as other development (e.g. other houses, factories played by other participants) developed around them. Participants were also asked to make their own assessments about where new development should be located.
- *Landmarks*
This exercise gave participants the opportunity to orientate themselves around their local area:
 - Map Based: Participants were given a list of local landmarks and asked to identify each on an aerial photograph.
 - Role Play: Participants were split into groups and asked to 'build' a local landmark out of their bodies.
- *Map Exercise 1: What do you like and dislike about your local area?*
This exercise got participants thinking about the environment around them. Participants were asked what they liked and disliked about their local areas and to mark their thoughts on the maps and on paper provided. It was explained that responses to this exercise would help



determine what 'Issues' the next Local Development Plan should try and address.

- ***Perception Busting***
Participants gathered at a central point and were presented with a number of 'facts' from the facilitator. Participants were asked to move to different sides of the room depending on whether they 'agreed', 'disagreed' or 'weren't sure' if the 'fact' was true or not. This exercise introduced forward thinking, e.g. if the population of Aberdeen City and Shire is projected to rise by 23% by 2035 then what implications could this have on your local area?
- ***Map Exercise 2: What should your area be like in the future?***
Participants were asked to think about their answers from Map Exercise 1 and the facts from the Perception Busting exercise to suggest what their local areas should be like in the future (2035). Groups were asked to feedback their ideas to the wider group. Responses from this exercise would also help inform the next Local Development Plan.
- ***Public Meeting***
Participants were each given a role to play in a mock committee hearing on a planning application. Roles included developers, members of a community council, local residents, as well as Elected Councillors. Each participant was given the chance to put across their own thoughts on various items under debate. This exercise encouraged participants to listen to the viewpoints of others and come to their own conclusions on a proposed development.
- ***Placecheck: City Centre Character Areas***
A ['Placecheck'](#) exercise was undertaken by S1 pupils from Robert Gordon's College as part of their 'Big Week' in June. Placecheck is a widely used tool to help look at places and think how to make them better. Participants were split into 10 groups, with each group studying a different area of the city centre:
 - Union Street East
 - Union Street West
 - Crown Street
 - The Civic Quarter
 - The Castlegate
 - The West End
 - The Merchant Quarter and The Green
 - The Cultural Quarter
 - Bon Accord
 - Riverside

Responses to the Placecheck exercise would also help inform the preparation of the next Local Development Plan.



4. Results: Likes and Dislikes

This section outlines the results from Map Exercise 1 and the Placecheck Exercise. It provides a summary of what participants said they liked and disliked about their local area, the city centre, and Aberdeen generally.

Responses have been split into the following broad categories:

- **Natural Environment**
- **Housing, Business and Local Facilities**
- **Architecture, Design and the Historic Environment**
- **Transport and Accessibility**

Data used to compile this summary will be published on the Local Development Plan website in Summer 2013. A link to the relevant page will be provided within this report once available.

What do participants like and dislike about their local area / Aberdeen?

Natural Environment

Participants from across the city all generally liked areas of formal and informal green and open space. Some noted examples were: Seaton Park, Rubislaw and Queens Terrace Gardens, Duthie Park, Johnson Gardens, Beacon and Bankhead fields and Hazlehead Park.

Proximity, and easy access, to the countryside were noted as positives by a number of participants, particularly those from Deeside, Kingswells and Bucksburn. It was felt that an appropriate balance between being close to the countryside and being close to the city centre facilities was important.

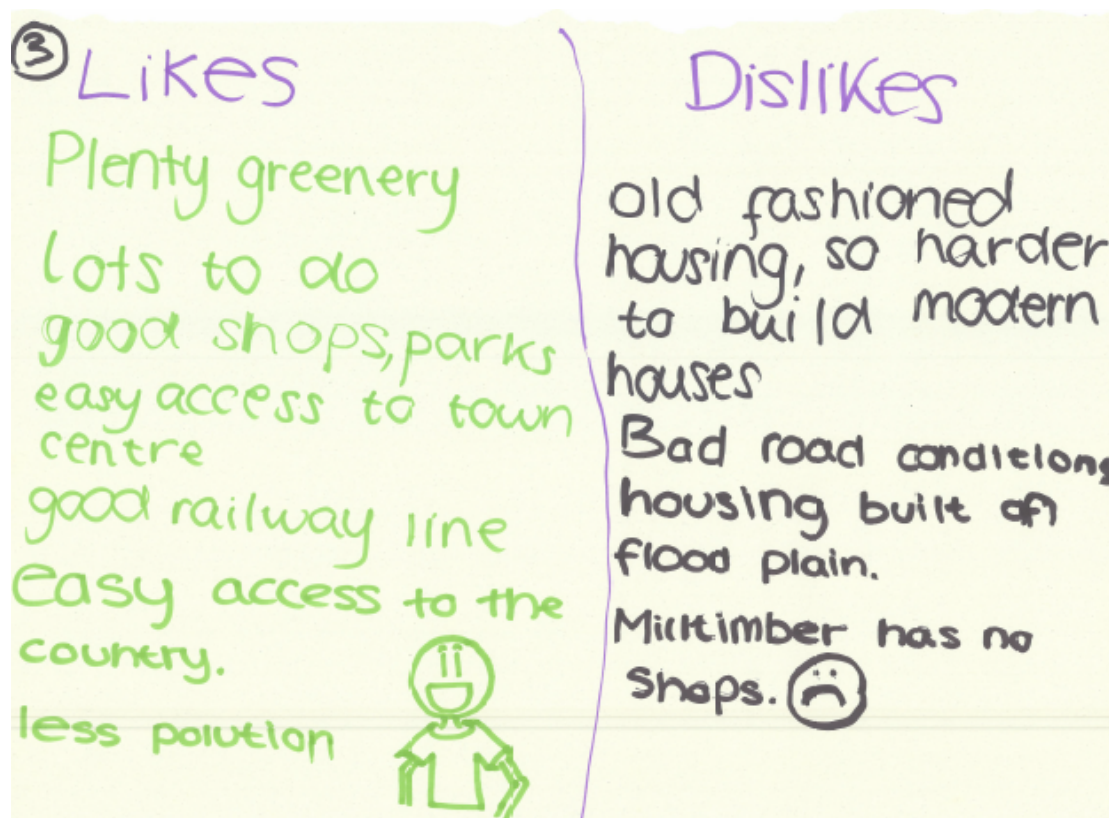
Participants from Deeside identified the lack of a Green Belt / Green Wedge between Cults and Bielside as a dislike, as well as a lack of easy access to South Deeside across the River Dee. Participants from Bucksburn liked the places they had to play football, however the lack of a football pitch in Kingswells was noted as a dislike.

Along with Hazlehead Park, participants from Hazlehead noted that they liked the nearby woodlands, fields for grazing animals, routes to walk dogs and the number of areas to run around in. They noted a dislike for the Hazlehead Park Zoo, toilets and maze, all of which they thought should be improved.



Housing, Business and Local Facilities

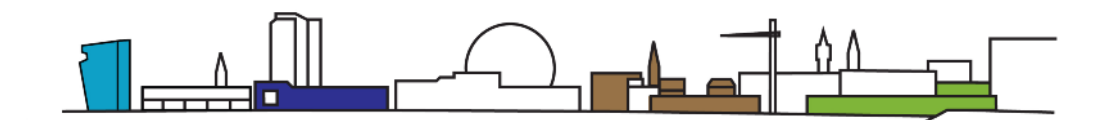
Only participants from Deeside touched in any great detail about housing in their local area. They noted that they liked the existing balance of housing around Deeside, particularly the balance between old and new housing styles for people to choose from. Participants did however dislike housing built on flood plains, the number of flats in Peterculter and when new housing is built which blocks views.



In terms of business, some participants liked that Aberdeen is the oil capital of Europe and that this status brings many jobs to the area. The Harbour was mentioned as something that some participants disliked, generally due to reasons of amenity, congestion and lack of access.

Sports facilities and activities around the city were mentioned as positives, particularly boating at the River Dee and facilities at the Sports Village. Some participants also noted that they liked the diversity of restaurants the city offers, as well as the AECC, Satrosphere and local shops. Good libraries and a large hospital were also noted as likes.

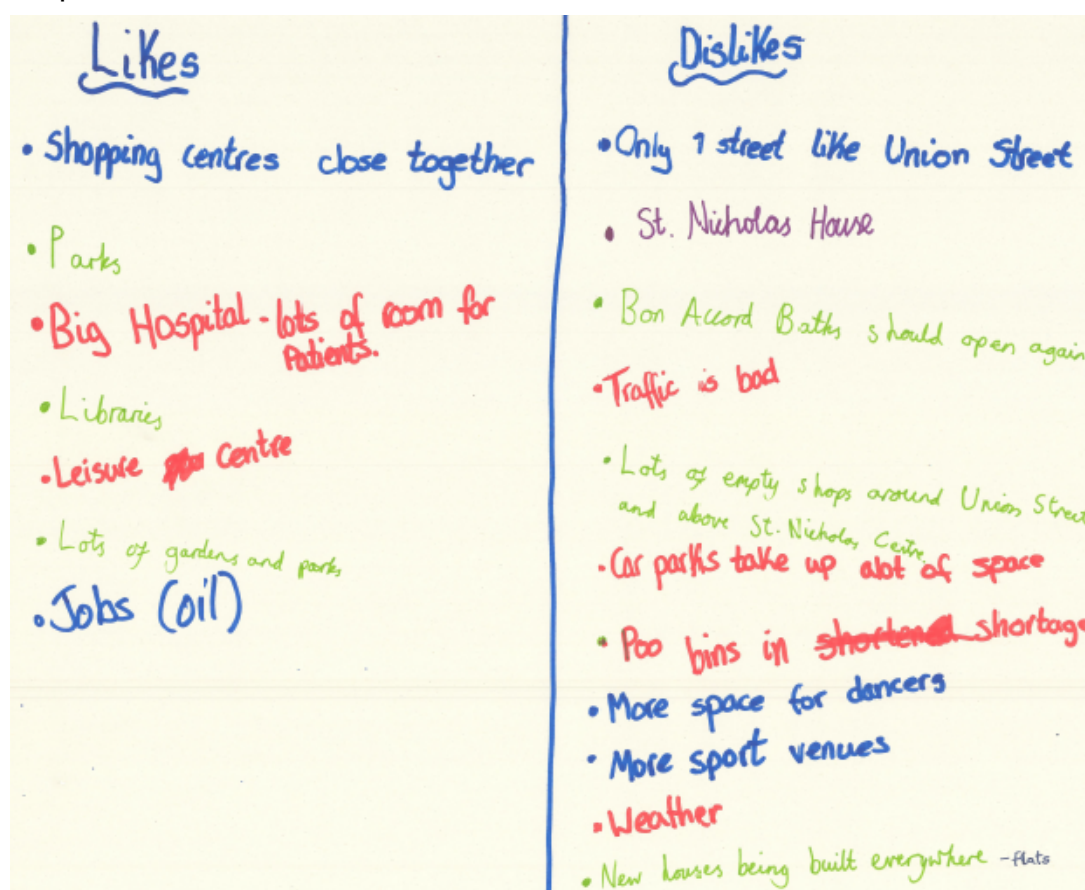
Other participants didn't think attractions and facilities generally within Aberdeen were very good, and thought there wasn't enough to attract tourists.



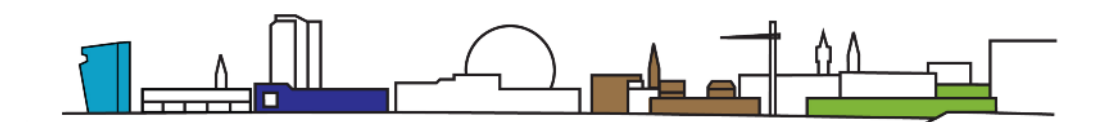
Cleanliness was touched on a number of times, with many participants disliking areas with lots of chewing gum, litter, cigarette butts and graffiti.

A number of participants discussed the facilities available at Aberdeen Beach, with some liking the cinema and restaurants, but other noting that it was rundown, dirty and needed more activities.

The main area in the City Centre disliked by participants was Union Street due to its empty shops, dull, rundown and dirty appearance as well as the lack of things to do there. The majority of participants preferred Union Square and liked that it has shops, restaurants, cinema, and bus and train stations all in one place. Other areas which participants disliked within the city centre included St. Nicholas House, Aberdeen Market, Castlegate, the Denburn Carpark and Bon Accord Baths.



There were many things that participants liked about local facilities within the Deeside area, for example the parks and sport facilities (golf courses, astroturf pitch, sport centres, tennis club, swimming pool, football pitches and Culter Football Club ground). They also liked the local shops and food places, the library, schools and community centres. Many participants did however note



that there is very little for young people to do within Deeside. The lack of shops in Milltimber was also seen to be a problem.

Participants from Bucksburn liked the schools in their area, as well the library and swimming pool (Beacon Centre). The number of local shops was seen as a positive. Participants from Kingswells noted a general lack of shops and local facilities as something they disliked about their area.

Participants from Hazlehead liked the new Tesco on the Lang Stracht however would like more shops and places to eat near their school. They don't like that there is nothing for them to do within their local area, and they need to travel into the city centre for entertainment. They did however note that they liked the local swimming pool and other sports facilities they have in the area.

Architecture, Design and the Historic Environment

Many participants disagreed about granite buildings in the city with some participants liking the granite architecture, especially when it has been cleaned (like at Marichal College). Others however think the city is too grey and needs more colourful modern buildings.

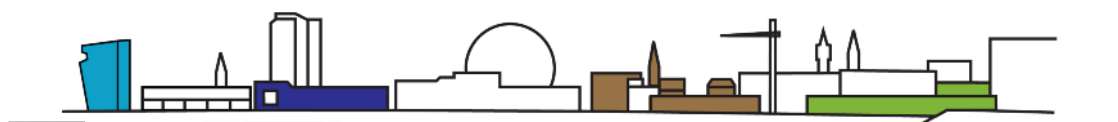
Transport and Accessibility

Road conditions were a dislike for participants from across the city, and noise, the amount of traffic, potholes and air pollution were mentioned frequently. Parking was also a point of contention, with participants disliking areas of on-street parking and the lack of parking controls.

While some participants liked the bus service in Aberdeen, and thought there was a good service, other participants thought the buses were irregular, expensive and unreliable. The lack of trains into the city was mentioned.

Participants from Bucksburn noted good connections to both Aberdeen International Airport and the city centre from their local area. Participants from both Bucksburn and Kingswells disliked the fact that there is no bus service connecting the two communities. Participants from Hazlehead liked the good connections they have to other areas in the city. Participants from

Deeside liked the walking and cycling facilities in their local area, particularly the North Deeside Railway Line. A group of participants from disliking the plans for the new Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) and the impact it would have on their local area.



5. Results: Aberdeen 2035

This section outlines the results from Map Exercise 2 and the Placecheck Exercise. It provides a summary of what participants said they would like their local areas, and Aberdeen generally, to be like in the future (2035).

Responses have been split into the following broad categories:

- **Natural Environment**
- **Housing, Business and Local Facilities**
- **Architecture, Design and the Historic Environment**
- **Transport and Accessibility**

Data used to compile this summary will be published on the Local Development Plan website in Summer 2013. A link to the relevant page will be provided within this report once available.

What do young people want Aberdeen to be like in 2035?

Natural Environment

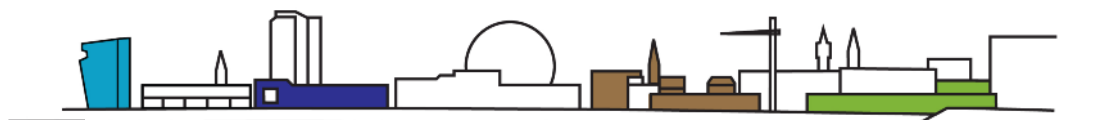
By 2035 participants want to see the end of global warming, less pollution and people to have more consideration for the environment. More open spaces, roof gardens, community gardens, play areas, trees, and flowers were all popular suggestions for measures to improve the natural environment of the city and to encourage biodiversity.

There was a general concern about the scale of new development the city could accommodate, and the pressures on green fields and areas prone to flooding.

It was suggested that Aberdeen will need to produce and use more renewable energy by 2035. A hydrogen plant was suggested by one group. Other suggestions were solar panels on shopping centres, wave power, wind turbines on top of / within buildings and offshore wind farms. Some participants weren't keen on larger wind farms on land.

Other participants suggested that cars should be run on vegetable oil, as well as more electric cars and charging points and hydrogen transport.

It was recognised that we will need to increase our levels of recycling and therefore provide more recycling facilities throughout the city by 2035. Less plastic packaging should be used, recycling should be uplifted more often, and recycling facilities should be introduced in flats. A number of participants did not want to see nuclear power / waste.



Housing, Business and Local Facilities

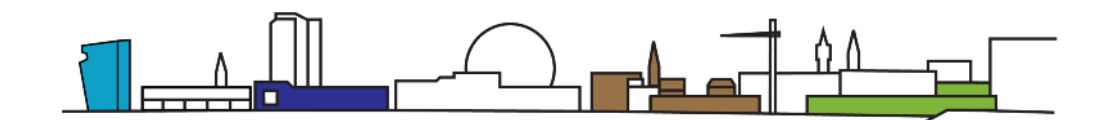
A number of participants think that in the future housing should be concentrated on the outskirts of the city, and suggested a new community on the Energetica corridor, and new communities along the line of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. Some participants also wanted to see development on the south side of the River Dee.

Other participants disagreed with this approach and instead thought that land in the city should be more efficiently used by, for example, building taller buildings which use less land, with surrounding fields kept clear of houses.



A number of participants suggested that the city will also need more facilities like care homes and nursing homes in the future. Health care was also discussed and some participants thought a new hospital would be required by 2035, along with more local NHS facilities.

It was recognised that in the future the city will need more jobs for the growing population, and suggested that there should be more offices and business



parks. It was also suggested that by 2035 there may be an industry shift in the city away from oil and gas and that we should start to plan for this now.

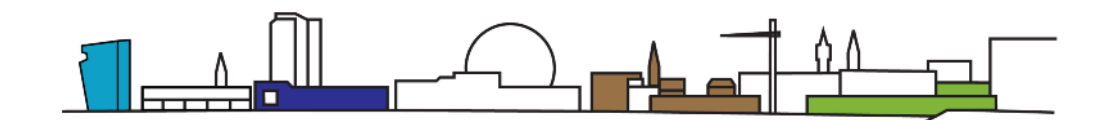
Generally participants wanted to see more things for young people to do in Aberdeen by 2035. Cleanliness was also big issue with participants wanting to see less graffiti, littering, chewing gum and vandalism by 2035.



Participants thought that there should be more to attract tourists to the city, and some suggestions included: a dolphin park, Chinatown, a skydiving school, safari park, different museums, a paintball arena, an indoor ski slope, a rugby stadium, a football academy, a theme park, a zoo and an aquarium.

Participants also wanted to see improvements to the Football Stadium at Pittodrie, and for the AECC to be bigger to attract bigger artists. Participants in Deeside also want to see better use of the river for recreation, more shops in Milltimber and another convenience shop in Peterculter.

A key area where participants wanted to see dramatic change by 2035 was Union Street. Participants wanted to see better shops, less pound shops and for shop fronts to be improved. They also suggested that there needs to be less traffic, with strategies like pedestrianisation and the reintroduction of trams. Other suggestions for Union Street were the installation of travelators



and for fast and slow walking lanes to be established. Greenery was also discussed with some participants suggesting blossom trees should be planted down Union Street.

Elsewhere in the city centre, participants generally agreed that Union Terrace Garden should be made more accessible in the future; however opinion was divided about whether or not the Gardens should be redeveloped.

The Beach was also discussed and generally participants wanted the beach area to be cleaner and more user-friendly. Many participants want to see more happening at the beach such as more cafes, events and attractions and water sport attractions. It was said that linkages to and from the City Centre must be improved, trams being a suggestion.

Architecture, Design and the Historic Environment

Some participants wanted to see granite buildings and streets in the city cleaned up, whereas others wanted less granite and more modern buildings made of materials like glass and timber. Almost all participants wanted to see more colour in the city and more green spaces. Others want to see more done about derelict buildings and older buildings brought back into use rather than being demolished.

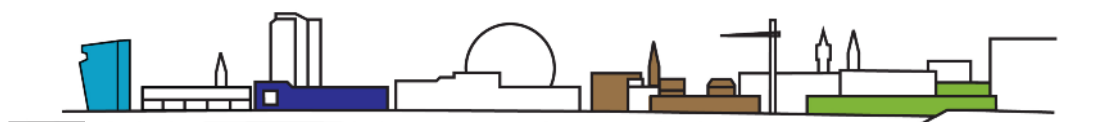
Transport and Accessibility

Sustainable transport opportunities and roads issues were also discussed by participants. Many participants think there will be more cyclists on the roads and that there should be separate roads for cyclists in the future. There should also be more cycle facilities including a bike hire service similar to the 'Boris Bikes' in London.

Many participants want to see more trains, trams or an underground system established in the city. Cheaper bus fares were also mentioned an Oyster Card scheme to pay for public transport suggested.

Participants suggested that the Harbour should be bigger and cleaner and the airport extended with more international flights. More radical ways to get about were also suggested such as rollercoasters, flying cars, hovercrafts and teleportation!

Participants from Hazlehead suggested walking and cycling routes to Sheddocksley and Dobbies Garden Centre, as well as a bus route in and around Airyhall. Some Deeside participants would like to see a new bridge across the River Dee at Cults, and trains re-established from Deeside into the City Centre.



6. Conclusions

Young people can often be marginalised from the planning process, however it is only right that they should be actively involved in important decisions affecting the city, and take a more active role in shaping their local communities.

Information gathered during the first stage of the Youth Engagement Project will be used by Officers to prepare a 'Main Issues Report' which will discuss the 'Main Issues' the next Local Development Plan for the City should consider.

The Main Issues Report will be presented to the Aberdeen City Council Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee in November 2013 and be released for public consultation early 2014. We hope to begin Stage 2 of the Youth Engagement Programme at this time.

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