

**ABERDEENSHIRE CITIZENS' PANEL**  
**Sustainable Environment Survey 2005**

**Report**

**by**

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## CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
Background and Study Objectives .....	5
Methodology .....	5
Response .....	6
Profile of Respondents .....	6
Reporting .....	8
<b>2. WASTE SERVICES IN ABERDEENSHIRE</b>	<b>9</b>
Availability & Use of Facilities .....	9
Waste Awareness .....	10
Satisfaction with Services .....	13
Key Findings .....	15
<b>3. THE COUNTRYSIDE AND AVAILABLE ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>16</b>
Visiting the Countryside in Aberdeenshire .....	16
Countryside Ranger Service .....	17
National Nature Reserves .....	24
Key Findings .....	27
<b>4. HUMAN IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>29</b>
Biodiversity .....	29
Ecological Footprint .....	30
Environmental Problems .....	31
Personal Impact on the Environment .....	32
Key Findings .....	34
<b>5. TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>35</b>
Policy Options for Industry .....	35
Policy Options for Local Authority .....	36
Key Findings .....	38

## INDEX OF TABLES

Table 1: Profile of Survey Respondents, Panel Members and Aberdeenshire overall	7
Table 2: Availability and Use of Recycling Facilities .....	9
Table 3: Recycling of Household Materials.....	10
Table 4: Importance of Waste Awareness Campaign.....	11
Table 5: Effectiveness of Waste Awareness Campaign .....	11
Table 6: Awareness and Usefulness of Waste Information Sources .....	12
Table 7: Satisfaction with Waste Services in Aberdeenshire .....	13
Table 8: Frequency of Visits to Countryside Over Past Year .....	16
Table 9: Countryside Recreation/ Leisure Activities Over Past Year .....	17
Table 10: Awareness of the Countryside Ranger Service .....	18
Table 11: Importance of Countryside Ranger Service to Enjoyment of Countryside .	18
Table 12: Participation in Countryside Ranger Activities .....	19
Table 13: Reasons for Participation in Countryside Ranger Events/ Activities .....	20
Table 14: Outcomes of Participation in Countryside Ranger Events/ Activities .....	21
Table 15: Additional Information/Advice Required in Previous Participation .....	21
Table 16: Likelihood of Future Participation in Events/ Activities .....	22
Table 17: Future Information on Events/ Activities.....	23
Table 18: Awareness of National Nature Reserves in Aberdeenshire .....	24
Table 19: Whether Visited National Nature Reserves in Aberdeenshire .....	25
Table 20: Frequency of Visits to National Nature Reserves in Aberdeenshire .....	26
Table 21: Reasons for Visiting National Nature Reserves in Aberdeenshire .....	26
Table 22: Awareness of “Biodiversity” and Local Biodiversity Group.....	29
Table 23: Respondent Contact with the Local Biodiversity Group .....	30
Table 24: Awareness of “Ecological Footprint” and Council Project .....	31
Table 25: Importance of Environmental Problems For You .....	32
Table 26: Personal Impact on the Environment .....	32
Table 27: Action Taken in Past Year as Result of Environmental Concerns .....	33
Table 28: Respondent 'Net' Views on Policy Options for Industry .....	35
Table 29: Respondent 'Net' Views on Policy Options for Local Authority .....	36

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of its contract to manage the Aberdeenshire Citizen's Panel, the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership (ACPP) commissioned Craigforth in early 2005 to conduct a postal survey exercise with respondents drawn from the Citizen's Panel, on a number of aspects of sustainable environments in Aberdeenshire.

The survey was developed from discussions with the ACPP partners and was issued to all Panel members. A total of 972 questionnaires were returned, representing an overall response rate of 73%.

The survey's objective was to look at people's activities, views and attitudes on:

- Waste service provided by the Council;
- Visits to the Aberdeenshire countryside;
- Countryside activities in Aberdeenshire (including the Countryside Ranger Service and National Nature Reserves);
- Human impact on the environment; and
- Policy options to reduce the impact of transport on the environment.

We present a summary of the key findings for each section below.

### **Waste Services in Aberdeenshire**

Mini recycling points and household waste/ recycling centres were the most commonly available recycling facilities, and were also those most frequently used by respondents. While kerbside collection services were not available to many respondents, where they were available usage was fairly high. In terms of the materials which respondents recycled, glass, paper, cardboard and cans were the most commonly (and most frequently) recycled.

The great majority of respondents felt that the current waste awareness campaign in Aberdeenshire was important, but respondents were less positive about the effectiveness of the campaign; more than nine in ten thought that the campaign was important, but less than half this proportion felt that the campaign was effective.

In terms of information sources on waste, respondents were most likely to be aware of the WasteAware household guide and press/TV advertisements. Press and TV advertisements were also identified as the most useful source of information on waste. Wasteline, Council webpages on waste and the Master Composter Project were the sources least likely to have been seen, heard or used by respondents.

Respondents were generally satisfied with waste services in Aberdeenshire, although this varied to some extent by the availability of services. Satisfaction was highest for routine refuse collections (a +91% net satisfaction rating) and to a lesser extent recycling centres/ points (+67% rating). Kerbside collection services were given the lowest "net " satisfaction rating (+4%), but this is explained in part by the relatively low availability of these services.

The main areas for improvement on waste services identified by respondents were extending the coverage of kerbside collection services (particularly to rural areas), more and better mini recycling points and better advertising and information on recycling.

### **The Countryside and Available Activities**

Almost all respondents had visited the Aberdeenshire countryside at some point over the past year; half had visited the countryside at least every week, including around one in four had done so daily. Walking and hiking was by far the most common type of countryside activity which respondents had engaged in over the past year. Other common activities were sightseeing, picnics and animal/ bird watching.

Most respondents indicated that they were aware of the Countryside Ranger Service to some degree; around three in five had definitely heard of the service although fewer than one in five were “fully aware”. A little under one in five respondents indicated that they had never heard of the service. In terms of the main tasks of the Countryside Ranger Service, respondents rated “protecting wildlife and habitats”, “educating people about the environment” and “managing sites and footpaths” as the most important to people’s enjoyment of the countryside.

Participation in Countryside Ranger Service activities and events varied somewhat by the type of activity/ event, but was generally low with more than half of all respondents having never participated in any activities/ events. Amongst those who had participated, the most popular activities were guided walks and local history or wildlife talks and tours and this reflects people’s reasons for participating; an interest in learning about the countryside or environment and to have a day out or for “good exercise” were the most common reasons.

The most common outcomes of participation in Countryside Ranger Service activities/ events were greater knowledge about a specific topic and confidence in the service itself. The likelihood of future participation with the service was very much driven by previous participation; more than nine in ten of those who had already participated indicated that would do so in the future, compared to around six in ten of others. In terms of receiving future information about activities/ events, respondents tended to prefer adverts in the local media or local public places and information through the post.

The main priorities for improvement of the Countryside Ranger Service were to raise awareness of the service (in particular amongst children), extending the service to increase numbers of rangers and of activities/ events and greater control of litter and dog fouling.

Most respondents indicated that they had heard of at least one of the three National Nature Reserves in Aberdeenshire, although as many as one in four had never heard of any. Respondents were much less likely to visit the reserves; just under half had visited one or more of the reserves, but a little over half had never visited any.

Awareness and use of the reserves was fairly localised; respondents from each reserve's local area were much more likely to be aware of and/or have visited the reserve than those from elsewhere in Aberdeenshire.

By far the most common reason given for visiting the reserves was walking; this was mentioned by nearly nine in ten respondents, including more than one in five who visited the reserves to walk a dog. Other common reasons were watching wildlife and picnics. The main areas identified for improvement included (again) raising the profile of the reserves, advertising to and providing events specifically for children, families and older people. Respondents were divided with some looking for better facilities (particularly car parking) in the reserves and others wishing to focus the operation of the reserves on the preservation of wildlife and habitats.

### **Human Impact on the Environment**

More than three in five respondents had heard of the term "biodiversity", although a substantial proportion (one in three) had not heard of the term. Respondents were less likely to be aware of the local biodiversity group; fewer than one in five had heard of the group.

Respondents were significantly less likely to have heard of the "ecological footprint". Around one in three had heard of the term, just over half the proportion that had heard of "biodiversity". Just over one in ten respondents had heard of the current ecological footprint project.

Nine in ten respondents felt that environmental problems were important to them personally, and just 3% that they were unimportant. Respondent views were mixed in terms of the impact of their own lifestyle on the environment; two in five felt that their lifestyle was "non-damaging" to the environment, but a little over one in three felt that it was "damaging".

In terms of action taken by respondents as a result of environmental concerns, the most common actions were saving electricity by turning off appliances/ lights, reusing shopping bags, choosing local produce and using energy saving light bulbs. Respondents were relatively unlikely to have taken public transport rather than their car to work as a result of environmental concerns.

### **Transport and the Environment**

Respondents were asked for their views on a range of industry and local authority policy options related to transport and the environment in Aberdeenshire. Although respondents were generally positive about the options being a "good idea" and the impact each would have on the environment, they were significantly less positive about the practicality of the options.

Looking at options for industry, respondents were most positive about using local producers rather than those from elsewhere in the UK or abroad. Respondents also generally supported using rail rather than roads for goods distribution and locating business near rail and public transport links, although there was some scepticism regarding the practicality of these options. The least supported option for industry was the use of sea rather than air for goods distribution.

The most highly rated options for the local authority were to integrate transport considerations into the planning process and to improve local travel information. Both scored highly on being a good idea and practicality, but respondents were less sure about the impact that better information on local travel would have on the environment.

Respondents were also positive about options to require developers to cover transport infrastructure costs and for public transport to offer “through-ticketing”, although again there was some scepticism about the latter’s potential impact on the environment.

The only option which received little support was the introduction of car charging to reduce congestion in cities. Both as a good/bad idea and on practicality those who did not favour this option were in the majority, although respondents were somewhat more positive regarding the impact that this option could have on the environment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Background and Study Objectives

- 1.1. The Aberdeenshire Citizens' Panel was first established by the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership (ACPP) in 2003, and the ACPP are also responsible for the ongoing management of the Panel. Current ACPP members are:
- Aberdeenshire Council;
  - Communities Scotland;
  - Grampian Fire and Rescue Service;
  - Grampian Police;
  - NHS Grampian;
  - Scottish Enterprise Grampian;
  - Scottish Natural Heritage; and
  - Scottish Water.
- 1.2. At its launch the Panel had 818 Aberdeenshire residents as members following the first round of recruitment. These numbers were supplemented by additional recruitment in Spring 2004. Since then small numbers have been added to the Panel through the ongoing internet recruitment, and the three surveys issued since the initial recruitment have resulted in a number of deletions.
- 1.3. At the time of issue of the Sustainable Environment survey in late February 2005, the total panel membership stood at 1330, spread across each of the six administrative areas:
- Banff & Buchan;
  - Buchan;
  - Formartine;
  - Garioch;
  - Kincardine & Mearns; and
  - Marr.
- 1.4. As a result of responses to this survey, current Panel membership has reduced slightly to 1317 members.

### Methodology

- 1.5. Craigforth Consultancy and Research undertook this survey on behalf of ACPP in late February 2005. The survey was issued to the full sample of panel members.
- 1.6. The aim of the survey was to seek the views of members of the Citizens' Panel on sustainable environments in Aberdeenshire. The topics covered by the questionnaire included Panel members' views on waste services provided by Aberdeenshire Council, how often members visited the Aberdeenshire countryside, their awareness and use of countryside activities and their views on biodiversity, the 'ecological footprint' and the impact of transport on the environment.

- 1.7. The measures used in the questionnaire were specifically designed for purpose. Where necessary respondents were provided with background information to help them answer some of the questions, for example in respect of the term “ecological footprint”.
- 1.8. Postal self-completion questionnaires were issued to all 1330 members of the panel on 22-24 February 2005.
- 1.9. Reminder letters/ e-mail messages were sent to all respondents in mid March 2005.

### **Response**

- 1.10. A total of 972 responses were received by late March, representing an overall survey response rate of 73%<sup>1</sup>. This level of response is slightly higher than that achieved in the previous postal survey on Consulting the Public and compares extremely favourably with other postal survey exercises in general.
- 1.11. However, it remains somewhat lower than the 81% achieved by the Community Learning survey of Autumn 2004. As was noted in the report on the Consulting the Public survey, it is possible that an element of survey fatigue has set in for a small minority of Panel members, or simply that the subject matter of this survey did not appeal to the same extent as the Community Learning survey.

### **Profile of Respondents**

- 1.12. The profile of survey respondents in terms of gender, age, socio-economic group (SEG) and administrative area is outlined in Table 1 below.
- 1.13. The achieved sample was broadly representative of the Panel as a whole in terms of the five indicators presented in Table1. However, variations between the current Panel and the broader Aberdeenshire population mean that survey respondents under/over represent Aberdeenshire as a whole:
  - there was a small (+3%) over-representation of females in the achieved sample, and corresponding under-representation of males (-3%);
  - in terms of age, there was an over-representation of those in the middle and older age groups, especially those aged 45-64 (+20%). There was an under-representation of those aged under 35 (-12%); and
  - the most significant variation was in housing tenure. The achieved sample significantly over represents owners (by +17%), and correspondingly under represents households in social rented and private rented/ other accommodation (by -12% and -6% respectively).

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis presented in this report is based on 955 analysable responses received by the survey cut-off date, representing a response rate of 72%.

- 1.14. Most survey respondents indicated that they were in the AB and C1 socio-economic groupings (65%). These cover managerial, administrative, professional, supervisory and clerical posts. The remaining 35% of respondents were skilled/semi-skilled/unskilled manual workers or unemployed/ on state benefit. Comparable data was not available for the wider Aberdeenshire population.

**Table 1: Profile of Survey Respondents, Panel Members and Aberdeenshire overall**

	Survey Respondents Total 955		Panel Members Total 1330		Aberdeenshire <sup>2</sup>
	Num	Num	Num	%	%
<b>GENDER</b>					
Female	510	53%	700	53%	50%
Male	444	47%	628	47%	50%
<b>Base</b>	<b>954</b>		<b>1328</b>		
<b>AGE</b>					
18 – 24	21	2%	56	4%	9%
25 – 34	97	10%	161	12%	16%
35 – 44	183	19%	270	21%	21%
45 – 54	290	31%	373	28%	20%
55 – 64	222	23%	277	21%	14%
65 – 74	103	11%	133	10%	10%
75+	30	3%	39	3%	8%
<b>Base</b>	<b>946</b>		<b>1309</b>		
<b>SEG<sup>3</sup></b>					
ABC1	599	65%	796	63%	- <sup>4</sup>
C2DE	321	35%	473	37%	- <sup>4</sup>
<b>Base</b>	<b>920</b>		<b>1269</b>		
<b>HOUSING TENURE</b>					
Owner occupied	837	88%	1123	86%	71%
Social rented	76	8%	120	9%	20%
Private rented/other	33	3%	66	5%	9%
<b>Base</b>	<b>946</b>		<b>1309</b>		
<b>AREA</b>					
Banff & Buchan	154	16%	233	18%	16%
Buchan	146	15%	222	17%	17%
Formartine	163	17%	219	17%	16%
Garioch	171	18%	221	17%	19%
Kincardine & Mearns	151	16%	218	16%	15%
Marr	167	18%	213	16%	17%
<b>Base</b>	<b>952</b>		<b>1326</b>		

<sup>2</sup> Based on the 2001 Census.

<sup>3</sup> These categories are defined as follows: **AB** Higher and intermediate managerial/administrative/professional; **C1** Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial/administrative/professional; **C2** Skilled manual workers; **D** Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers; and **E** on state benefit, unemployed lowest grade workers. The classification measures social grade and is the socio-economic categories used by the Market Research and Marketing industries.

<sup>4</sup> No comparable data available.

## Reporting

- 1.15. In the analysis, we have focused on the questions asked in the survey form. Overall frequency counts and percentages are presented for each question, with the exception of open-ended questions where the main issues and suggestions are highlighted in the text of the report. Where appropriate, “net” figures are given; these are produced by subtracting the percentage of “negative” responses (eg fairly/very dissatisfied) from the percentage of “positive” responses (eg fairly/very satisfied). The result is presented as a positive or negative percentage rating.
- 1.16. We also conducted crosstabulations of key questions by gender, age, SEG and the residential location of respondents (based on the six administrative areas in Aberdeenshire). These variables offer helpful ways of understanding the survey data in greater detail and where significant differences between these groups were evident these are highlighted in the report text.
- 1.17. However, we must be cautious about generalising from some of the crosstabulated data, because of the relatively low sample numbers in some of the categories being used. Overall numbers of respondents are sufficiently high to provide reliable analysis, and crosstabulations are only presented and reported on where numbers are high enough to ensure that results are reasonably robust.
- 1.18. We round percentages up or down to the nearest whole number; for some questions this means that percentages may not sum to 100%.

## 2. WASTE SERVICES IN ABERDEENSHIRE

- 2.1. First we look at Panel members' views on waste services provided in Aberdeenshire.

### Availability & Use of Facilities

- 2.2. First we asked people about the availability of various recycling facilities in their area, and how frequently they used those facilities (Table 2).

**Table 2: Availability and Use of Recycling Facilities**

Facility	Not available	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Now and again	Never
Mini Recycling Points	10%	27%	16%	13%	30%	14%
Household Waste and Recycling Centres	12%	21%	15%	20%	37%	8%
Kerbside Paper Collections	64%	5%	18%	34%	10%	33%
Kerbside box & bag recycle collections	77%	7%	30%	3%	6%	54%

Note: base for frequency of use %s excludes those who state facility is not available

- 2.3. Mini recycling points and household waste/ recycling centres were the most commonly available facilities, each with around nine in ten respondents indicating that such services were present in their local area (90% and 88% respectively). By contrast, only a little over one in three respondents indicated that kerbside paper collections were available in their local area (36%), and fewer than one in four respondents that kerbside box/ bag recycle collections were available (23%).
- 2.4. Where facilities were available, mini recycling points were the most frequently used with more than one in four respondents using these every week (27%), rising to more than half using them at least once a month (56%). Household waste and recycling centres were also frequently used; more than one in five used these weekly (21%) and again more than half used them at least once a month (56%). It is interesting to note that older respondents (aged 65+) were more likely to use these two facilities than others; around two in three older respondents indicated that they made use of these facilities regularly (ie monthly or more often), compared to just under half of those aged under 35.
- 2.5. Unsurprisingly given the relatively low availability of these facilities, overall numbers of respondents using kerbside paper and box/bag collections were not high. However, survey data suggests that where such facilities are available they are used reasonably frequently, particularly in the case of kerbside paper collections. Almost three in five of those who indicated that the service was available used kerbside paper collections (57%), and two in five kerbside bag/box facilities (40%) at least once a month.

- 2.6. We also asked whether, and how frequently, respondents recycled a range of common household materials (Table 3).

**Table 3: Recycling of Household Materials**

Material	Never	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Now and again
Cans	35%	30%	25%	17%	28%
Cardboard	26%	26%	18%	22%	34%
Glass	11%	30%	25%	25%	20%
Paper	18%	34%	25%	25%	16%
Plastic bottles	41%	29%	29%	20%	22%
Textiles	45%	2%	2%	9%	87%
Books	69%	6%	3%	7%	84%
Car batteries	78%	1%	1%	0%	98%
Electrical appliances	47%	1%	0%	0%	99%
Garden waste	49%	8%	5%	14%	73%
Scrap metal	64%	1%	1%	2%	97%
Used engine oil	78%	0%	1%	1%	98%
Wood	70%	3%	1%	3%	93%

Note: base for frequency of recycling %s excludes those who never recycle material

- 2.7. Looking first at the materials which respondents had **ever** recycled, the most common were:

- glass (89% having recycled);
- paper (82%); and
- cardboard (74%).

- 2.8. Respondents were least likely to have recycled:

- car batteries (22% having recycled);
- used engine oil (22%);
- wood (30%); and
- books (31%).

- 2.9. Amongst those respondents who had recycled materials, paper, glass and cans were recycled most frequently - each with more than three in ten recycling each week rising to at least seven in ten doing so every month. Cardboard and plastic bottles were also frequently recycled, with at least one in four recycling each week.

### Waste Awareness

- 2.10. Panel members were asked about the Waste Awareness Campaign currently underway in Aberdeenshire, indicating the extent to which they thought it was **important** (Table 4) and **effective** (Table 5).

- 2.11. The great majority of respondents thought that the campaign was important; more than nine in ten indicated this (93%), including more than three in five who felt that it was “very” important (63%). Just 2% of respondents felt that the campaign was unimportant. A “net” of +91% of respondents thought that the campaign was important.

**Table 4: Importance of Waste Awareness Campaign**

<b>Importance</b>	<b>Num</b>	<b>%</b>
Very important	595	63%
Fairly important	282	30%
Neither/ nor	36	4%
Fairly unimportant	10	1%
Not important at all	6	1%
Don't know/ can't say	16	2%
<b>BASE</b>	<b>945</b>	

- 2.12. Respondents across all six administrative areas felt that the Waste Awareness Campaign was important with “net” ratings ranging from +87% in the Buchan area to +94% in Marr.
- 2.13. Respondents were significantly less positive about the effectiveness of the campaign than they were about the importance. A little over two in five felt that the campaign was effective (45%), less than half the proportion that felt the campaign was important. Nearly one in four respondents felt that the campaign was “fairly” or “wholly” ineffective (23%), a “net” rating of +22%.

**Table 5: Effectiveness of Waste Awareness Campaign**

<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Num</b>	<b>%</b>
Very effective	42	4%
Fairly effective	389	41%
Neither/ nor	173	18%
Fairly ineffective	179	19%
Wholly ineffective	42	4%
Don't know/ can't say	118	13%
<b>BASE</b>	<b>943</b>	

- 2.14. There was more significant variation by administrative area in the perceived effectiveness of the campaign than in perceived importance. Respondents in the Garioch, Marr and Formartine areas tended to feel that the campaign was least effective with net ratings of +14%, +16% and +19% respectively. By contrast Kincardine & Mearns and, to a lesser extent, Banff & Buchan respondents were more positive with net ratings of +36% and +30% respectively.
- 2.15. People were next asked to indicate which sources of information on waste they were aware of (eg had seen, heard or used) and to what extent they had found them useful (Table 6).

- 2.16. Responses suggest that the sources that generated the greatest awareness were the WasteAware household guide and press/TV advertisements; for each of these fewer than three in ten respondents (28%) had not seen, heard or used this source. Respondents were most likely to be unaware of Wasteline (74% never seen, heard or used), the Council website pages on waste (68%), the Master Composter Project (65%) and educational presentations (65%).
- 2.17. There were no significant variations in the awareness of waste information sources by administrative area. However, survey data indicates that younger respondents were more aware than older respondents of some sources, in particular press articles, displays at events/ notice boards and educational presentations.

**Table 6: Awareness and Usefulness of Waste Information Sources**

Information Source	Not seen, heard or used	Very useful	Fairly useful	Neither/ nor	Not very useful	Not at all useful
WasteAware Household Guide (Red Binder)	28%	26%	46%	12%	11%	5%
Council website pages on waste	68%	10%	35%	34%	8%	13%
TV advertisements	28%	23%	52%	16%	7%	3%
Radio advertisements	53%	17%	43%	27%	7%	5%
Press advertisements	28%	23%	52%	18%	6%	2%
Press articles	28%	24%	51%	18%	4%	2%
Displays at events/ community notice-boards	47%	18%	49%	22%	8%	3%
Educational presentations	65%	28%	34%	27%	6%	5%
Master Composter Project	65%	27%	29%	29%	8%	7%
Wasteline - 0845 600 3 900	74%	16%	21%	42%	10%	12%

Note: base for frequency of recycling %s excludes those who never recycle material

- 2.18. Where respondents had seen, heard or used these information sources they were asked to indicate the extent to which they had found those sources useful: percentages are based only on those respondents who had seen, heard or used the source.
- 2.19. As was found when looking at the awareness of waste information sources, the press and television were the most useful source of information on waste. Based on overall “net” perceived usefulness the most useful information sources were:
- Press articles (+69%);
  - Press advertisements (+67%); and
  - TV advertisements (+65%).
- 2.20. The WasteAware Household Guide – also given a high awareness rating – and event displays/ community notice-boards were also identified as useful information sources, both with a “net” rating of +56%.

- 2.21. By contrast, Wasteline and the Council website pages on waste were by some margin the least useful information sources, with “net” usefulness ratings of just +15% and +24% respectively.

### Satisfaction with Services

- 2.22. Finally on waste, respondents were asked about their satisfaction with waste services in Aberdeenshire (Table 7).
- 2.23. Respondents were generally satisfied with Aberdeenshire waste services, although the degree of satisfaction reported was dependent to some extent on awareness and use of services, particularly in relation to kerbside paper/recyclate collections.
- 2.24. Routine refuse collections were given the highest satisfaction rating; well over nine in ten of respondents were satisfied with the service (94%) and fewer than one in twenty were dissatisfied (3%), a “net” rating of +91%. Respondents also gave recycling centres/ points a high satisfaction rating: more than three in four were satisfied with these services (76%) and fewer than one in ten dissatisfied (9%), a net rating of +67%.
- 2.25. Respondent satisfaction rating of kerbside paper/ recyclate collection services was affected by relatively low awareness and use of these services; between two in three and three in four respondents indicated that these services were not available in their area (Table 2), and almost half felt that they could not give a satisfaction rating. In total, around one in four respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the service (24%), and one in five that they were dissatisfied (20%); a “net” rating of +4%.
- 2.26. Although a smaller proportion of respondents were satisfied with the road/ pavement cleaning service (54%) and waste awareness campaign (40%), both were given relatively good “net” ratings of +29% and +25% respectively.

**Table 7: Satisfaction with Waste Services in Aberdeenshire**

Service	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither / Nor	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know/ Can't say
Routine refuse collection	62%	32%	3%	2%	1%	0%
Kerbside paper and recyclate collections	12%	12%	9%	6%	14%	47%
Recycling centres/ points	30%	46%	9%	6%	3%	5%
Waste awareness campaign	7%	33%	31%	10%	5%	14%
Road & pavement cleaning	10%	44%	15%	15%	10%	6%

- 2.27. Whilst satisfaction with routine refuse collection services was uniformly high across all areas, there were some significant variations in satisfaction with other waste services by administrative area.

- 2.28. Satisfaction with kerbside paper/ recycle collections was low across all areas with the exception of Kincardine & Mearns which gave the service a +37% net satisfaction rating. This is largely explained by the greater service availability reported in the area (Table 2):
- Kincardine & Mearns +37%
  - Garioch +7%
  - Buchan +1%
  - Marr -5%
  - Banff & Buchan -7%
  - Formartine -7%
- 2.29. While satisfaction with recycling centres/ points was high across all areas, it was lower in the Kincardine & Mearns and Buchan areas, and highest in the Garioch area:
- Garioch +80%
  - Banff & Buchan +76%
  - Formartine +76%
  - Marr +71%
  - Buchan +53%
  - Kincardine & Mearns +47%
- 2.30. Area variations in satisfaction with the waste awareness campaign were driven in part by variations in awareness of the campaign (reflected in varying proportions of respondents who felt unable to give a rating). Marr and Buchan respondents reported the lowest net ratings and ratings were highest in the Banff and Buchan area:
- Banff & Buchan +31%
  - Kincardine & Mearns +30%
  - Garioch +28%
  - Formartine +27%
  - Buchan +19%
  - Marr +18%
- 2.31. There was also some significant variation in satisfaction with road/pavement cleaning by area, with net ratings ranging from just +11% in Buchan to +45% in Banff and Buchan:
- Banff & Buchan +45%
  - Marr +34%
  - Formartine +33%
  - Garioch +30%
  - Kincardine & Mearns +25%
  - Buchan +11%

- 2.32. Respondents were also asked for any suggestions on how waste services in Aberdeenshire could be **improved**. The main priorities identified were:
- The extension of the kerbside collection service to all areas, in particular to enable recycling of paper/cardboard, plastics, cans and glass. Collection services were identified as a particular priority for those in rural areas;
  - More and better mini recycling points and other facilities. This includes the provision of new facilities, and increasing the capacity of existing facilities; and
  - Better advertising and information on recycling, to increase awareness of the materials which can be recycled and give better information on existing facilities.

### Key Findings

- 2.33. The main points relating to waste services in Aberdeenshire were:
- Mini recycling points and household waste/ recycling centres were the most commonly available recycling facilities, and were also those most frequently used by respondents. While kerbside collection services were not available to many respondents, where they were available usage was fairly high. In terms of the materials which respondents recycled, glass, paper, cardboard and cans were the most commonly (and most frequently) recycled;
  - The great majority of respondents felt that the current waste awareness campaign in Aberdeenshire was important, but respondents were less positive about the effectiveness of the campaign; more than nine in ten thought that the campaign was important, but less than half this proportion felt that the campaign was effective;
  - In terms of information sources on waste, respondents were most likely to be aware of the WasteAware household guide and press/TV advertisements. Press and TV advertisements were also identified as the most useful source of information on waste. Wasteline, Council webpages on waste and the Master Composter Project were the sources least likely to have been seen, heard or used by respondents;
  - Respondents were generally satisfied with waste services in Aberdeenshire, although this varied to some extent by the availability of services. Satisfaction was highest for routine refuse collections (a +91% net satisfaction rating) and to a lesser extent recycling centres/ points (+67% rating). Kerbside collection services were given the lowest "net " satisfaction rating (+4%), but this is explained in part by the relatively low availability of these services; and
  - The main areas for improvement on waste services identified by respondents were extending the coverage of kerbside collection services (particularly to rural areas), more and better mini recycling points and better advertising and information on recycling.

### 3. THE COUNTRYSIDE AND AVAILABLE ACTIVITIES

- 3.1. Next Panel members were asked about how often they visited the countryside in Aberdeenshire, and about their awareness and use of a range of countryside recreation and leisure activities. This included awareness and use of the Countryside Ranger Service and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) in Aberdeenshire.

#### Visiting the Countryside in Aberdeenshire

- 3.2. First we asked about how often Panel members had visited the countryside in Aberdeenshire over the past twelve months (Table 8).
- 3.3. Almost all respondents indicated that they had visited the countryside at some point over the past year: just 4% had not done so. In terms of frequency of visits, half of all respondents had visited the countryside weekly over the past year (50%), including nearly one in four who had done so daily (23%).
- 3.4. Two in three respondents had visited the countryside every month over the past year (66%) and a further three in ten did so "now and again" (29%). It is interesting to note that most of those visiting the countryside regularly (ie monthly or more often) did so at least every week: half of all respondents and more than three in four of those visiting monthly or more.

**Table 8: Frequency of Visits to Countryside Over Past Year**

Frequency	Num	%
Daily	214	23%
Weekly	249	27%
Fortnightly	75	8%
Monthly	71	8%
Now and again	267	29%
Never/ not at all	40	4%
Don't know/ can't remember	16	2%
BASE	932	

- 3.5. There were some significant variations in the frequency with which respondents visited the countryside by administrative area:
- Buchan and Kincardine & Mearns respondents tended to visit the countryside least often, with 39% and 43% respectively doing so every week; and
  - Marr respondents were far more likely to visit the countryside every week than other areas: 71% did so weekly, including 46% doing so every day (twice the proportion found across any other area). This could be analysed further in future surveys.
- 3.6. Panel members were also asked about any recreation or leisure activities that they had taken part in when visiting the countryside over the past twelve months (Table 9).

- 3.7. Walking and hiking was by a significant margin the most common type of activity, with more than four in five respondents having engaged in this over the past year (82%).
- 3.8. Sightseeing was also a popular activity, reported by nearly three in five respondents (57%), while picnics, bird/ animal watching and cycling were each reported by between one in four and one in three (35%, 31% and 26% respectively). Bird/ animal watching was especially commonly mentioned by older respondents; almost half of these respondents mentioned the activity.
- 3.9. Skiing/ snowboarding, fishing and canoeing/ kayaking were the least commonly mentioned specific activities (7%, 6% and 1% respectively).
- 3.10. There were no significant variations in take up of activities by administrative area.

**Table 9: Countryside Recreation/ Leisure Activities Over Past Year**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Num</b>	<b>%</b>
Walking/ hiking	724	82%
Sightseeing	506	57%
Picnics	311	35%
Bird/ animal watching	269	31%
Cycling	227	26%
Camping/ caravan	102	12%
Skiing/ snowboarding	60	7%
Fishing	54	6%
Canoeing/ kayaking	13	1%
Other	195	22%
BASE	880	

### **Countryside Ranger Service**

- 3.11. The Aberdeenshire Countryside Ranger Service is run by Aberdeenshire Council and aims to increase knowledge and use of the Aberdeenshire countryside. The service runs a range of free events and activities for individuals and local adult/ children's clubs across the Council area.
- 3.12. Panel members were asked a series of questions regarding their awareness of, participation in and general views on the Countryside Ranger Service in Aberdeenshire.

#### ***Awareness of Service***

- 3.13. First we asked about awareness of the Countryside Ranger Service in Aberdeenshire, and responses are presented in Table 10 below.
- 3.14. Most respondents indicated that they were aware of the service to some degree; nearly one in five reporting that they were fully aware of the service (18%) and a further two in five indicated that they had heard of the service but were not sure where it operated (40%). One in five indicated that they may have heard of the service but knew little about it (20%) and a similar proportion had never heard of the service (18%).

**Table 10: Awareness of the Countryside Ranger Service**

Level of awareness	Num	%
Fully aware of Ranger Service & where it operates	173	18%
Heard of Ranger Service but not sure where it operates	376	40%
Probably heard of Ranger Service but know little about it	192	20%
Not sure/ can't say	39	4%
Never heard of Ranger Service	157	17%
BASE	937	

- 3.15. There was some variation in respondent awareness of the service by administrative area. Marr and Formartine area respondents were most likely to be aware of or definitely have heard of the service (69% and 67% respectively falling into the top two awareness categories). Respondents from the Banff & Buchan and Buchan areas were least aware of the service, with 24% and 26% respectively having never heard of the service (compared to just 7% of Marr respondents).
- 3.16. It is also notable that younger respondents (those aged under 35) were least likely to be aware of the Countryside Ranger Service; nearly one in three of these respondents had never heard of the service.

#### ***Importance of Service***

- 3.17. Where Panel members had heard of the Countryside Ranger Service, they were asked how ***important*** they thought each of the service's key tasks were to people's enjoyment of the countryside in Aberdeenshire (Table 11).

**Table 11: Importance of Countryside Ranger Service to Enjoyment of Countryside**

Task	Very important	Fairly important	Neither / Nor	Fairly unimportant	Not at all important	Don't know/ can't say
Educating people about the environment	67%	28%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Protecting wildlife and their habitats	79%	18%	1%	1%	-	2%
Ensuring public safety in the countryside	51%	35%	8%	3%	2%	2%
Policing vandalism and breach of byelaws	61%	28%	6%	2%	1%	2%
Management of sites and footpaths	56%	38%	3%	1%	-	2%
Landscaping	32%	39%	19%	5%	2%	3%

- 3.18. Respondents generally felt that the service's tasks were very important to people's enjoyment of the countryside. All tasks were given positive "net" ratings, with respondents most positive about "protecting wildlife and habitats" (+96% net rating), "educating people about the environment" (+93%) and "managing sites and footpaths" (+93%). Indeed between three and four in five respondents felt that these tasks were "very important" to people's enjoyment of the countryside.
- 3.19. It is interesting to note that respondents generally felt that these tasks were more important to their enjoyment of the countryside than public safety related tasks; "policing vandalism/ breach of byelaws" and "ensuring public safety in the countryside" were both given slightly lower net ratings of +86% and +81% respectively.
- 3.20. The only task which was given a significantly lower importance rating was "landscaping" with a net of +64%. However, even here only 7% of respondents felt that the task was *unimportant*.
- 3.21. There were no significant variations in respondent importance ratings by administrative area, although it is worth noting that Formartine respondents generally gave higher ratings than others, particularly in relation to public safety/ policing, management of sites/ footpaths and landscaping.

### **Participation**

- 3.22. Next Panel members were asked about their participation in Countryside Ranger Service events or activities in Aberdeenshire. Respondents were asked to indicate which, if any, of the events/ activities they had taken part in and when this was (Table 12).

**Table 12: Participation in Countryside Ranger Activities**

<b>Event/ Activity</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Never/ not at all</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Guided walks	31%	67%	2%
Conservation	17%	79%	4%
Environmental Education	25%	72%	3%
Local history talks/ tours	24%	73%	3%
Local wildlife talks/ tours	27%	69%	3%
Local plant life talks/ tours	17%	79%	3%
Theatre	16%	81%	3%
Crafts	21%	76%	3%

- 3.23. Participation levels varied somewhat by activity/ event, but were generally low relative to the overall level of respondent awareness of the services and the importance assigned to the service's tasks; more than half of all respondents had never participated in any events or activities (51%). This is likely to reflect the fact that while most respondents indicated that they had heard of the service (68%), only 18% were "fully aware" of the service and its activities.

- 3.24. Guided walks were the most common event/ activity with more than three in ten having taken part in such activities (31%). Participation in local talks or tours was also relatively common, in particular local wildlife or history talks/ tours with around one in four respondents having taken part in these (27% and 24% respectively). A similar proportion (25%) had participated in environmental education events or activities.
- 3.25. Looking at those who **had** taken part, relatively few had done so over the past few years. With the exception of theatre and crafts, between two and three in five of those who had participated in each specific task had done so three or more years ago. There were no significant or consistent variations in levels of participation in Countryside Ranger Service events or activities by administrative area.
- 3.26. Those who had taken part in Countryside Ranger Service events or activities were asked about their **reasons** for having done so (Table 13), and the **outcomes** of their participation (Table 14).
- 3.27. The most common reason for participation was “interested in learning about the countryside”, mentioned by more than three in five respondents (62%). Other common reasons were “to have a day out” (45%), “good exercise” (44%) and “interested in learning more about protecting the environment” (43%). “To meet people” was mentioned as a motivation for participation by substantially fewer respondents (15%).

**Table 13: Reasons for Participation in Countryside Ranger Events/ Activities**

Reason	Num	%
Interested in learning about the countryside	206	62%
To have a day out	148	45%
Good exercise	145	44%
Interested in learning more about protecting the environment	143	43%
To meet people	50	15%
Other	63	19%
BASE	330	

- 3.28. Respondents were also asked about how their participation in events or activities had affected their perception of or interest in the countryside/ environment in general and the Countryside Ranger Service specifically.
- 3.29. The most common outcomes were “more knowledge about a specific topic” (52%) and “confidence in the Countryside Ranger Service” (50%). The former is likely to reflect the fact that talks/ tours and educational events were amongst the most common forms of respondent participation (see Table 12).
- 3.30. A substantial proportion of respondents felt that their participation had given them “motivation to take part in future events/ activities” (39%) or “enthusiasm to find out more about a specific topic” (37%). However, fewer indicated that the event/ activity had given them “motivation to **take action** on an environmental issue” (27%).

- 3.31. Numbers were insufficient for meaningful analysis of reasons for or outcomes of participation in Countryside Ranger Service events/ activities by administrative area or any other key indicators.

**Table 14: Outcomes of Participation in Countryside Ranger Events/ Activities**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Num</b>	<b>%</b>
More knowledge about a specific topic	150	52%
Confidence in the Countryside Ranger Service	142	50%
Motivation to take part in future events/ activities	112	39%
Enough information about a specific topic	110	38%
Enthusiasm to find out more about a specific topic	106	37%
Motivation to take action on an environmental issue	77	27%
BASE	286	

- 3.32. Finally in terms of past participation in Countryside Ranger Service events and activities, respondents were asked about any additional information and advice they would have liked to receive after the event/ activity (Table 15).
- 3.33. Most respondents indicated that they received sufficient information at the event or activity (53%). Amongst the others who would have liked additional information or advice, the most common was details on other events on similar or related topics, mentioned by more than one in three. Handouts, leaflets or references on a specific topic was also commonly reported with almost three in ten respondents indicating that they would have liked to receive this.
- 3.34. Numbers were insufficient for meaningful analysis of demand for additional information and advice by administrative area or any other key indicators.

**Table 15: Additional Information/Advice Required in Previous Participation**

<b>Information/ Advice</b>	<b>Num</b>	<b>%</b>
Details on events on similar or related topics	111	35%
Handouts/ leaflets/ references etc on a specific topic	87	28%
More advanced events	47	15%
Further talks and discussion events	44	14%
More personal contact with the ranger	29	9%
The information I received at the event or activity was sufficient	165	53%
BASE	314	

### **The Future**

- 3.35. Finally on the Countryside Ranger Service, we asked Panel members about the likelihood of their participation in future events or activities in Aberdeenshire, their preferences for receiving information on future events/ activities and any ways in which the service could improve the events/ activities on offer.
- 3.36. The extent to which respondents felt it likely that they would participate in future Countryside Ranger Service events/ activities appears to correlate closely with the extent to which they had previously taken part in events or activities (Table 16). Indeed, more than nine in ten of those who had participated in one or more events/ activities suggested that they were likely to participate in the future (93%). This drops to a little over six in ten amongst those who had not participated (62%).
- 3.37. Looking at the likelihood of future participation in specific events/ activities, the events/ activities with the greatest likelihood were those which respondents were most likely to have already participated in:
- Local wildlife talks/ tours (34% likely to participate in future);
  - Local history talks/ tours (32%); and
  - Guided walks (32%).
- 3.38. Respondents indicated that they were least likely to take part in crafts (20%) and theatre (17%) events and activities in the future.

**Table 16: Likelihood of Future Participation in Events/ Activities**

<b>Event/ Activity</b>	<b>Very likely</b>	<b>Fairly likely</b>	<b>Neither/ nor</b>	<b>Fairly unlikely</b>	<b>Very unlikely</b>
Guided Walks	7%	25%	20%	28%	20%
Conservation	4%	20%	28%	28%	19%
Environmental Education	4%	19%	27%	29%	21%
Local history talks/ tours	5%	27%	22%	26%	20%
Local wildlife talks/ tours	5%	29%	21%	26%	19%
Local plant life talks/ tours	5%	20%	23%	31%	21%
Theatre	5%	12%	22%	34%	27%
Crafts	5%	15%	22%	33%	24%

- 3.39. Next respondents were asked about how they would like to hear about future Countryside Ranger Service events or activities (Table 17).
- 3.40. The most popular means of communication was adverts in the local media, mentioned by almost two in three respondents (63%). Posters in local shops/post offices/notice boards and receiving information by post were also popular options, each mentioned by more than half of all respondents (56% and 51% respectively).

- 3.41. By contrast, receiving information through handouts from schools or by email/ SMS text message were less popular options, with just over one in three (34%) and one in five (22%) respectively mentioning. The former was more popular amongst those aged under 65 than older respondents, while the latter was not surprisingly more popular amongst under 35s than those aged 65 and over. Email/ SMS information was also more popular in the Kincardine & Mearns area than elsewhere with 31% mentioning (compared to 17% of Banff & Buchan respondents).

**Table 17: Future Information on Events/ Activities**

Method of communication	Num	%
Adverts in local media - papers local radio and TV	441	63%
Posters in local shops, post offices, notice boards	397	56%
By post to interested households, including event calendars	359	51%
Handouts from schools	236	34%
By email or text to interested households	152	22%
Other	28	4%
BASE	704	

- 3.42. Finally, respondents were asked about how the Countryside Ranger Service could **improve** future events and activities in Aberdeenshire. The main priorities for improvement identified by respondents were:
- Raising awareness of the Countryside Ranger Service through more and better information on the service, to improve wider awareness of the service's existence and more detailed understanding of what the service has to offer. More specifically, respondents were looking for more information on activities and events in their **local area**;
  - Greater contact between the service and both school-age children through school visits and pre-school children through other groups and activities. Respondents also identified a need for more activities and events for families (both in terms of the content/format of events and their timing);
  - Extending the Countryside Ranger Service, both in terms of the number of rangers employed and the number and range of activities/ events on offer. Some indicated that recent cutbacks in the service should be addressed through increased funding;
  - Greater control of litter, dog fouling and fly-tipping, and this reflects the high priority which respondents gave to the service's work in protecting wildlife and habitats (see Table 11); and
  - Better access to information and activities/ events for people with disabilities or mobility problems.

### National Nature Reserves

3.43. National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are nature sites created to protect - whilst allowing public access to - rare, internationally important wildlife species and habitats. There are around 50 NNRs across Scotland, and three of these are in Aberdeenshire:

- **Muir of Dinnet nature reserve**, located by Aboyne in the Marr area;
- **Forvie nature reserve**, located north of Newburgh in the Formartine area; and
- **St Cyrus** nature reserve, located to the south of the Kincardine & Mearns area.

3.44. Respondents were asked about their awareness of the three NNRs in Aberdeenshire, whether, how often and why they had visited them, and about how the reserves could be improved.

### Awareness of National Nature Reserves

3.45. First respondents were asked about their awareness of NNRs in Aberdeenshire (Table 18).

3.46. Overall, more than seven in ten respondents had heard of at least one of the three NNRs in Aberdeenshire (71%) and half had heard of all three (50%)<sup>5</sup>. One in four respondents indicated that they had never heard of any of the reserves (25%).

3.47. Awareness of each individual reserve varied, ranging from more than half who had heard of the Forvie nature reserve (54%) to just over two in five having heard of the Muir of Dinnet reserve (42%). The proportion who had never heard of each individual reserve was fairly high, ranging from 36% for Forvie, to 40 % for St Cyrus and 46% for Muir of Dinnet.

**Table 18: Awareness of National Nature Reserves in Aberdeenshire**

National Nature Reserve	Definitely heard of	Probably heard of	Not sure/ can't say	Never heard of
Muir of Dinnet Nature Reserve	29%	13%	12%	46%
Forvie Nature Reserve	42%	12%	10%	36%
St Cyrus Nature Reserve	35%	14%	11%	40%

3.48. Awareness of each of the National Nature Reserves tended to be fairly localised, and was significantly higher within their respective administrative areas:

- Muir of Dinnet reserve was the most localised with awareness at 70% of respondents from within its administrative area (Marr), compared to just 36% of other respondents;

<sup>5</sup> Percentages aggregated from "definitely heard of" and "probably heard of" responses across all three reserves.

- Awareness of St Cyrus reserve was also localised with 76% of respondents from the local area (Kincardine & Mearns) aware of its existence, compared to 44% of other respondents; and
  - Awareness of Forvie reserve was more widely spread: 66% of Formartine area respondents had heard of the reserve, as had 51% of other respondents.
- 3.49. Awareness was also significantly higher amongst those aged 65 and over than younger respondents, particularly those aged under 35. Seven in ten of those aged 65 and over had heard of all three reserves, more than twice the proportion of those aged under 35.

### ***Visiting National Nature Reserves***

- 3.50. Panel members were next asked about whether they had visited each of the NNRs, and if so how often (Tables 19 and 20).
- 3.51. Overall, just under half of respondents indicated that they had visited one or more of the National Nature Reserves (48%), while a little over half had never visited any (51%). Fewer than one in ten respondents had visited all three (7%). Older respondents were more likely to have visited the reserves than others; more than one in five of those aged 65+ had visited all three compared to just one in twenty under 35s.
- 3.52. In terms of the specific reserves, the proportion of respondents who had visited them ranged from 24% for Muir of Dinnet and St Cyrus to 31% for Forvie. However, the proportion of respondents who had visited the reserves varied considerably by administrative area and suggests that, as was found with awareness, the “catchment area” for each reserve is fairly local:
- St Cyrus was the most localised with 65% of local Kincardine & Mearns area respondents having visited compared to 16% of others;
  - 51% of local area respondents (Marr) had visited Muir of Dinnet reserve, compared to just 19% across other areas; and
  - As with awareness, Forvie had the most even spread of visitors with 43% of local area respondents (Formartine) and 28% of others having visited.

**Table 19: Whether Visited National Nature Reserves in Aberdeenshire**

<b>National Nature Reserve</b>	<b>Have Visited</b>	<b>Never Visited</b>	<b>BASE</b>
Muir of Dinnet	24%	76%	898
Forvie	31%	69%	915
St Cyrus	24%	76%	905

- 3.53. Amongst those who had visited the reserves, most indicated that they had done so more than a year ago (between 57% and 59% for each reserve). Few respondents indicated that they visited the NNRs frequently; between 4% and 7% did so at least once a month rising to between 13% and 22% doing so at least every six months. St Cyrus reserve was the most likely to be visited frequently with more than one in five (22%) doing so at least every six months.
- 3.54. Respondents from each reserve's local administrative area were more likely to visit frequently than others, particularly in the case of St Cyrus reserve; here nearly three in ten respondents from the local area had visited at least every 6 months (28%) compared to just 1% of other respondents.

**Table 20: Frequency of Visits to National Nature Reserves in Aberdeenshire**

National Nature Reserve	At least once a week	At least once a month	At least every 6 months	At least once in past year	More than 1 year ago
Muir of Dinnet	0%	4%	9%	28%	59%
Forvie	1%	5%	10%	25%	59%
St Cyrus	2%	5%	15%	21%	57%

- 3.55. By far the most common reason for visiting NNRs in Aberdeenshire was walking, mentioned by four in five respondents (80%) (Table 21). This rises to nearly nine in ten respondents when "walking a dog" is included (89%).
- 3.56. Watching wildlife was also a common reason for visiting the reserves, mentioned by almost half (46%), although wildlife photography was only mentioned by fewer than one in ten respondents (8%). Around one in three visited the reserves in order to picnic (31%).
- 3.57. Numbers were insufficient for meaningful analysis of reasons for visiting NNRs by administrative area or any other key indicators.

**Table 21: Reasons for Visiting National Nature Reserves in Aberdeenshire**

Reason	Num	%
Walking	376	80%
Watching wildlife	214	46%
Picnics	145	31%
Walking a dog	120	26%
Wildlife photography	39	8%
Other	70	15%
BASE	470	

- 3.58. Finally on National Nature Reserves, respondents were asked if there were any ways in which the reserves could be **improved**. The main priorities identified were:
- Raising the profile of the reserves, both in terms of what and where the reserves were, and what activities and facilities they had to offer. As with the Countryside Ranger Service, the local press and media were identified as useful ways of doing this;

- Advertising and providing more events and activities specifically for young children/ families and older people;
- Better information facilities, signage, and (particularly) parking provided within the reserves were priorities for improvement. However, others felt that the reserves should focus on protecting wildlife and habitats from the impact of traffic and leisure activities, and on raising awareness of local and wider environmental issues. Respondents appear to feel there is some tension between the attraction of more visitors through better advertising and facilities, and the protection of wildlife and habitats within the reserves.

### Key Findings

3.59. On the countryside and available activities, the main points were:

- Almost all respondents had visited the Aberdeenshire countryside at some point over the past year; half had visited the countryside at least every week, including around one in four who had done so daily. Walking and hiking was by far the most common type of countryside activity which respondents had engaged in over the past year;
- Most respondents indicated that they were aware of the Countryside Ranger Service to some degree; around three in five had definitely heard of the service, although fewer than one in five were “fully aware” and a little under one in five indicated that they had never heard of the service. In terms of the main tasks of the Countryside Ranger Service, respondents rated “protecting wildlife and habitats”, “educating people about the environment” and “managing sites and footpaths” as the most important to people’s enjoyment of the countryside;
- Participation in Countryside Ranger Service activities and events varied somewhat by the type of activity/ event, but was generally low with more than half of all respondents having never participated in any activities/ events. Amongst those who had participated, the most popular activities were guided walks and local history or wildlife talks and tours and this reflects people’s reasons for participating; an interest in learning about the countryside or environment and to have a day out or for “good exercise” were the most common reasons;
- The most common outcomes of participation in Countryside Ranger Service activities/ events were greater knowledge about a specific topic and confidence in the service itself. The likelihood of future participation with the service was very much driven by previous participation; more than nine in ten of those who had already participated indicated that they would do so in the future, compared to around six in ten of others. In terms of receiving future information about activities/ events, respondents tended to prefer adverts in the local media or local public places and information through the post;
- The main priorities for improvement of the Countryside Ranger Service were to raise awareness of the service (in particular amongst children), extending the service to increase numbers of rangers and of activities/ events and greater control of litter and dog fouling;

- Most respondents indicated that they had heard of at least one of the three National Nature Reserves in Aberdeenshire, although as many as one in four had never heard of any. Respondents were much less likely to visit the reserves; more than half had never visited any;
- Awareness and use of the reserves was fairly localised: respondents from each reserve's local area were much more likely to be aware of and/or have visited the reserve than those from elsewhere in Aberdeenshire; and
- By far the most common reason given for visiting the reserves was walking: this was mentioned by nearly nine in ten respondents. Other common reasons were watching wildlife and picnics. The main areas identified for improvement included (again) raising the profile of the reserves, advertising to and providing events specifically for children, families and older people. Respondents were divided with some looking for better facilities (particularly car parking) in the reserves and others wishing to focus the operation of the reserves on the preservation of wildlife and habitats.

#### 4. HUMAN IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1. Panel members were asked a series of questions relating to their, and the wider population's, impact on the environment including awareness of and views on **biodiversity** and the **ecological footprint**.
- 4.2. Biodiversity refers to the variety of animal and plant species, and of ecosystems, occupying a specific area. We asked about both awareness of the term "biodiversity" and awareness of the Local Biodiversity Group.
- 4.3. The Ecological Footprint is a way of estimating the level of use of natural resources by a specific population; an individual's or population's footprint is a measure of how much land and sea is required to provide the water, energy and food required to sustain current consumption. The Ecological Footprint project was launched in 2003 and is a collaboration between WWF Scotland and North Lanarkshire, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Councils to measure each Council's ecological footprint.
- 4.4. We asked respondents about their awareness of the term "ecological footprint" and Aberdeenshire Council's current ecological footprint project. We also asked respondents how important they felt environmental problems were for them personally, how damaging their lifestyles were for the environment and about any action they may have taken as a result of their concerns for the environment.

##### **Biodiversity**

- 4.5. First we asked respondents about their awareness of the term "biodiversity" and the work of the Local Biodiversity Group (Table 22).
- 4.6. The majority of respondents indicated that they had heard of the term "biodiversity" (61%), including nearly half of all respondents who had "definitely" heard of the term (49%). However, there remained a substantial minority who had never heard of "biodiversity" (33%).
- 4.7. Awareness of the Local Biodiversity Group was substantially lower than of the term itself; fewer than one in five respondents had heard of the group (18%) and nearly two in three had never heard of it (65%).

**Table 22: Awareness of "Biodiversity" and Local Biodiversity Group**

<b>Term/ Group</b>	<b>Definitely heard of</b>	<b>Probably heard of</b>	<b>Not sure/ can't say</b>	<b>Never heard of</b>
The term "biodiversity"	49%	12%	6%	33%
The Local Biodiversity Group working to protect and enhance Aberdeenshire wildlife	7%	11%	17%	65%

- 4.8. Younger respondents, particularly under 35s, were somewhat less likely to have heard of the term “biodiversity” and the group. There were also some significant variations in awareness of “biodiversity” and the Local Biodiversity Group by administrative area, and these suggest that awareness of the group may be linked to awareness of the term:
- Marr area respondents were the most likely to have heard of the term “biodiversity” (76% aware) and were also the most likely to be aware of the local group, although the proportion that had heard of the group remained small (23%); and
  - Buchan area respondents were least likely to be aware of the term and this was the only area where those who had heard of the term were in the minority (47%). Respondents from this area were also the least likely to have heard of the Local Biodiversity Group with just 11% aware.
- 4.9. We also asked respondents about whether they had ever received correspondence from the Local Biodiversity Group, or attended any of their events (Table 23).

**Table 23: Respondent Contact with the Local Biodiversity Group**

Contact	Yes	No	Not sure/ can't say	BASE
Local Biodiversity Action Plan Year Planner	2%	87%	10%	601
Local Biodiversity Action Plans for habitats and species - red squirrel, wet woodland, etc	5%	84%	11%	600
Attended one or more of the Local Biodiversity Group's events	2%	91%	7%	597

- 4.10. Very few respondents indicated that they had received any publications/ leaflets from the Local Biodiversity Group or attended any of the groups' events - just 37 respondents (6%). The most common contact with the group was through Action Plans for habitats and species, mentioned by 5% of all respondents. Action Plan year planners and attending events were each mentioned by 2% of respondents.
- 4.11. Numbers were insufficient for meaningful analysis of contact with the Local Biodiversity Group by administrative area or any other key indicators.

### Ecological Footprint

- 4.12. We asked Panel members a series of questions related to the concept of the ecological footprint, including awareness of the term and the current project, how important they felt environmental problems were for them personally, how damaging they felt their lifestyle was to the environment and any action they had taken as a result of their concerns for the environment.

- 4.13. Respondents were generally significantly more aware of the term “ecological footprint” than of the current ecological footprint project (Table 24): around one in three respondents had heard of the term (32%), almost three times the proportion that had heard of the current project (11%). Nevertheless, the majority of respondents indicated that they had never heard of the term “ecological footprint” (62%) or the current project (80%), with 32% having never heard of either the term or the project.

**Table 24: Awareness of “Ecological Footprint” and Council Project**

Term/ Project	Definitely heard of	Probably heard of	Not sure/ can't say	Never heard of
The term "ecological footprint"	22%	10%	6%	62%
The fact that Aberdeenshire Council is running an ecological footprint project	5%	6%	9%	80%

- 4.14. It is clear that respondents were significantly less familiar with the more recent and specific term “ecological footprint” than with the term “biodiversity”: the proportion of respondents who had heard of the latter (61%) was almost twice that of the former (32%).
- 4.15. As with “biodiversity”, younger respondents were again less likely to have heard of the term “ecological footprint” and the current project; those aged 65 and over were almost twice as likely to have heard of the current project than the under 35s.
- 4.16. There was significantly less variation in awareness of the term “ecological footprint” by administrative area than was found for “biodiversity”, although the areas most and least likely to be aware were the same for the two terms. Marr area respondents were most likely to have heard of the “ecological footprint” and Buchan respondents the least likely with 36% and 27% aware respectively: this represents a difference of 9%, significantly smaller than the differential between the areas on “biodiversity” (29%).

### **Environmental Problems**

- 4.17. Next we asked Panel members about how important environmental problems were for them personally (Table 25).
- 4.18. The great majority of respondents indicated that environmental problems were important to them personally; nine in ten felt that environment problems were important (90%), including nearly half who thought they were “very” important (46%). Just 3% of respondents felt that they were unimportant, giving an overall net importance rating of +87%.

**Table 25: Importance of Environmental Problems For You**

<b>Importance</b>	<b>Num</b>	<b>%</b>
Very important	433	46%
Fairly important	419	44%
Neither/ nor	61	6%
Fairly unimportant	15	2%
Not important at all	8	1%
Don't know/ can't say	14	1%
BASE	950	

- 4.19. While the great majority of respondents across all administrative areas felt that environmental problems were important to them personally, there were some significant variations in “net” ratings:
- Garioch and Marr area respondents gave the highest net ratings of +95% and +92% respectively;
  - Formartine and Kincardine & Mearns respondents also felt that environment problems were important to them, each with a net rating of +88%; and
  - Respondents from the Buchan and, to a lesser extent, Banff & Buchan areas gave the lowest net ratings with +78% and +82% respectively.

#### **Personal Impact on the Environment**

- 4.20. We also asked Panel members to rate the impact of their own lifestyles on the environment (Table 26).
- 4.21. Views were mixed with two in five respondents suggesting that their lifestyle was non-damaging to the environment (40%) and around one in three that it was damaging (34%). Most respondents fell into the moderate “fairly damaging” and “fairly non-damaging” categories; just 8% felt that their lifestyle was “not at all damaging” to the environment and 3% that it was “very damaging”.

**Table 26: Personal Impact on the Environment**

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Num</b>	<b>%</b>
Very damaging	27	3%
Fairly damaging	292	31%
Neither/ nor	209	22%
Fairly non-damaging	299	32%
Not at all damaging	75	8%
Don't know/ can't say	39	4%
BASE	941	

- 4.22. There was a marked difference in how younger and older respondents assessed the impact of their lifestyles on the environment. Amongst younger respondents (under 35s) those who felt that their lifestyle was damaging (42%) outnumbered those who felt that it was not damaging (28%). For older respondents (aged 65+) the opposite is true: just 17% felt that their lifestyle was damaging and as many as 61% that it was not damaging.
- 4.23. There were also significant variations by administrative area in how respondents rated their lifestyles in terms of damaging the environment, although across all areas the “positive” (non damaging) responses outweighed the “negative” (damaging).
- Banff & Buchan and Buchan respondents were most positive, with “non-damaging” outnumbering “damaging” responses by 17% and 16% respectively; and
  - Kincardine & Mearns and Marr respondents were least positive – in each area the positive responses outnumbered the negative by just 1%.
- 4.24. We also asked about what people had done over the past twelve months as a result of their environmental concerns (Table 27). The most common action taken was to save electricity/ fuel by switching off appliances<sup>6</sup> or lights when not in use; nearly nine in ten respondents had done this over the past year (89%). Other common things mentioned by respondents were:
- Reusing shopping bags (81%);
  - Choosing local produce (72%); and
  - Used energy saving light bulbs in the home (71%).
- 4.25. More than half of respondents had walked or cycled instead of using their cars (51%), although only around one in seven had taken public transport rather than using their car (14%). It is also notable that respondents were more than twice as likely to have bought local produce than organic produce in the past year; 72% compared to 32%.

**Table 27: Action Taken in Past Year as Result of Environmental Concerns**

Action taken	Num	%
Saved electricity or fuels in your house, e.g. switched off appliances/lights when not needed	838	89%
Reused shopping bags/ bought reusable bags	765	81%
Chosen local produce	677	72%
Used energy saving light bulbs at home	674	71%
Walked or used bicycle instead of the car	479	51%
Composed kitchen waste	346	37%
Chosen organic produce	305	32%
Took public transport to work instead of the car	132	14%
Bought reusable nappies	18	2%
Other	136	14%
BASE	946	

<sup>6</sup> For example, TV, radio, computer equipment.

- 4.26. There were some limited variations by area in the action taken by respondents in response to their environmental concerns:
- Marr respondents were the most likely to compost their kitchen waste (52%), twice as likely to do this as Garioch respondents (26%); and
  - Respondents from the Buchan area were least likely to walk or cycle rather than use their car (38%).

### **Key Findings**

- 4.27. The main points relating to human impact on the environment were:
- More than three in five respondents had heard of the term “biodiversity”, although a substantial proportion (one in three) had not heard of the term. Respondents were less likely to be aware of the local biodiversity group; fewer than one in five had heard of the group;
  - Respondents were significantly less likely to have heard of the “ecological footprint”. Around one in three had heard of the term, just over half the proportion that had heard of “biodiversity”. Just over one in ten respondents had heard of the current ecological footprint project;
  - Nine in ten respondents felt that environmental problems were important to them personally, and just 3% that they were unimportant. Respondent views were mixed in terms of the impact of their own lifestyle on the environment; two in five felt that their lifestyle was “non-damaging” to the environment, but a little over one in three felt that it was “damaging”; and
  - In terms of action taken by respondents as a result of environmental concerns, the most common actions were saving electricity by turning off appliances/ lights, reusing shopping bags, choosing local produce and using energy saving light bulbs. Respondents were relatively unlikely to have taken public transport rather than their car to work as a result of environmental concerns.

## 5. TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

5.1. Finally, we asked Panel members about the effect that potential transport policy changes may have on creating a sustainable environment in Aberdeenshire. In relation to policy options for industry and the local authority, we asked for views on:

- How **good or bad** an idea each option was;
- How **practical** each was, both in terms of strict practicality and the likelihood of the policies being changed; and
- How great an **impact** each option would have on the environment.

5.2. In order to present responses in a clearer and more digestible way, we have calculated “net” good/bad, practical/impractical and impact ratings<sup>7</sup> and these are presented in the tables below.

### Policy Options for Industry

5.3. Looking first at options for industry, respondents tended to be much more positive about whether options were a good idea (and to a lesser extent the impact they would have) than about their practicality (Table 28).

**Table 28: Respondent 'Net' Views on Policy Options for Industry**

Policy Change	NET Good/Bad Idea	NET Practical/ Impractical	NET Impact
Use rail rather than road for goods distribution	+90%	+53%	+86%
Use sea rather than air for goods distribution	+65%	+28%	+68%
Use local producers instead of those in other parts of UK or abroad	+94%	+75%	+82%
Locate business near rail & public transport	+83%	+49%	+74%

5.4. Respondents were most positive about using local producers instead of those from elsewhere in the UK or abroad, giving it a +94% “good/bad idea” rating with almost three in four respondents suggesting that this was a “very good” idea. The “impact” rating was also high at +82%: almost half of respondents (49%) indicating that this option would have a “great impact” on the environment.

5.5. Although respondents were less positive about the practicality of this option, the +75% rating is significantly higher than was given to other policy options for industry. Support for this policy option for industry is also consistent with respondent’s views on their **own** impact on the environment; choosing local produce was one of the most common actions taken by respondents as a result of environmental concerns (Table 27).

<sup>7</sup> These ratings are the difference between the sum of the percentage of “positive” responses (very/fairly good idea, entirely/fairly practical, great/some impact) and the sum of the percentage of “negative” responses (fairly/very bad idea, fairly/entirely impractical, little/no impact).

- 5.6. Respondents were also very positive about using rail rather than roads for goods distribution. This option was given a +90% rating as a good idea - around two in three suggesting it was a “very good” idea - and +86% rating for impact. However, respondents were less positive about the practicality of this option with a +53% rating, and around one in five indicated that the option was fairly or entirely impractical (19%).
- 5.7. Support for the use of rail for goods distribution may explain in part respondents’ support for locating business near rail and public transport links; the option was given a +83% rating as a good idea and +74% for impact on the environment. However, respondents were significantly less positive about the practicality of this option; a rating of +49% with almost one in five suggesting that this option was fairly or entirely impractical (17%).
- 5.8. Finally for industry, respondents were least positive about the use of sea rather than air for goods distribution, although “good idea” and “impact” ratings remained fairly high at +65% and +68% respectively. Respondents’ main concern with this option seems to relate to practicality; a practicality rating of +28%, with around one in four (24%) suggesting that the option was fairly or entirely impractical.
- 5.9. There were some limited variations in the rating of the policy options by administrative area. On the use of rail rather than roads for goods distribution, Kincardine & Mearns respondents were most positive, both in “good idea” and “practicality” ratings. Buchan and Banff & Buchan respondents were least positive about the practicality of this option.
- 5.10. However, these variations are not reflected in respondents’ views on the option to locate business near rail and public transport links. There was no significant area variation in the rating of this option as a good idea, but Marr respondents were most positive on practicality. Formartine respondents were the only group significantly less positive than others about the practicality of this option.

**Policy Options for Local Authority**

- 5.11. Looking at policy options for the local authority, respondents were again positive about most of the options presented (Table 29).

**Table 29: Respondent 'Net' Views on Policy Options for Local Authority**

<b>Policy Change</b>	<b>NET Good/Bad Idea</b>	<b>NET Practical/ Impractical</b>	<b>NET Impact</b>
Integrate transport considerations into the planning process	+94%	+89%	+84%
Require developers to meet costs of transport infrastructure	+76%	+66%	+62%
Require public transport to offer “through-ticketing”	+78%	+72%	+50%
Improve local travel information	+93%	+91%	+65%
Car charging to reduce congestion in cities	-8%	-7%	+25%

- 5.12. Overall, the most highly rated options were to integrate transport considerations into the planning process and to improve local travel information. Both were given high “good idea” ratings (+94% and +93% respectively) and up to seven in ten respondents felt that these options were “very good” ideas. Both options were also given especially high practicality ratings of +89% and +91% respectively, and around three in five felt that the options would be “entirely” practical.
- 5.13. While respondents gave the former option (integrating transport considerations into the planning process) a high “impact” rating (+84%), they were less enthusiastic about the impact that improvements to local travel information would have on the environment. The latter option was given an impact rating of +65%, but one in ten (10%) felt that it would have little or no impact on the environment.
- 5.14. Respondents were less positive about requirements for developers to meet the costs of transport infrastructure and for public transport to offer “through-ticketing”, although ratings remained fairly high:
- Requiring developers to meet transport infrastructure costs was given a +76% rating as a good idea, and was also given relatively high ratings on impact (+62%) and practicality (+66%); and
  - Requirements for public transport to offer “through-ticketing” was given a similarly high “good idea” rating (+78%), and was also given a high rating on practicality (+72%). However, respondents were less positive about this option’s impact on the environment (+50% rating).
- 5.15. The option to introduce car charging to reduce congestion in cities was given, by some margin, the lowest ratings on all three indicators: good/bad idea, practicality and impact on the environment. This was the only policy option to be given a negative rating as a good/bad idea (-8%) and on practicality (-7%). Indeed, around a quarter of respondents felt that this option was a “very bad” idea, and a similar proportion suggested that it was “entirely” impractical.
- 5.16. However, respondents were somewhat more positive about the impact that this change could have on the environment. The option was given an overall impact rating of +25% and more than half felt that it would have a “great” or “some” impact. While relatively few suggested that car charging was a good idea overall or that it would be practical, most seem to appreciate that it could have a positive impact on the environment.

- 5.17. Again there was some area variation in respondent rating of policy options for the local authority:
- Kincardine & Mearns respondents were especially positive about requirements for developers to meet transport infrastructure costs, both in terms of this being a good/bad idea (+88%) and the practicality of the option (+77%). Banff & Buchan respondents were the least positive about this option on all three measures; and
  - Views on car charging varied somewhat across the areas. Buchan, Formartine and Kincardine & Mearns respondents were least positive about the option, giving ratings between -16% and -24% as a good/bad idea and between -10% and -17% on practicality. Banff & Buchan and Garioch respondents were most positive and were the only groups to give the option positive ratings as a good/bad idea, albeit by small margins (+7% and +5% respectively).

### Key Findings

- 5.18. On the impact of transport on the environment, the main points were:
- Generally, although respondents were positive about the options being a “good idea” and the impact each would have on the environment, they were significantly less positive about the practicality of the options;
  - Respondents were most positive about using local producers rather than those from elsewhere in the UK or abroad. Respondents also generally supported using rail rather than roads for goods distribution and locating business near rail and public transport links, although there was some scepticism regarding the practicality of these options. The least supported option for industry was the use of sea rather than air for goods distribution;
  - The most highly rated options for the local authority were to integrate transport considerations into the planning process and to improve local travel information. Both scored highly on being a good idea and practicality, but respondents were less sure about the impact that better information on local travel would have on the environment;
  - Respondents were also positive about options to require developers to cover transport infrastructure costs and for public transport to offer “through-ticketing”, although again there was some scepticism about the latter’s potential impact on the environment; and
  - The only option which received little support was the introduction of car charging to reduce congestion in cities. Both as a good/bad idea and on practicality those who did not favour this option were in the majority, although respondents were somewhat more positive regarding the impact that this option could have on the environment.

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