Notes from LOIP engagement event – 24 April 2025

Summary

Overall: The council has been consulting on the same issues over the years, but participants expressed little confidence that they are listening to people's concerns. They want a follow-up to explain what is being done, and if nothing is being done, then why. They also highlighted connections between issues, emphasising that solutions are interconnected: improvements in one area can have positive effects across the city.

Positive Points: Aberdeen's parks and museums, particularly Duthie Park, Seaton Park, and the Art Gallery, provide high-quality, free spaces for people to enjoy. Libraries and community resources need protection. Electric buses are good, but more are needed. Projects like the Torry heating network, Wallace Tower, and cultural activities around Union Street, along with and NESCol's courses and apprenticeships, are seen as beneficial. Overall, people consider Aberdeen a safe city, although some areas feel less safe.

Group 1: Moving Around, Public Transport, Traffic and Parking

- Public transport is facing challenges due to unreliable and overpriced bus services. Key issues included inconsistency, delays, inadequate services, poor communication, overcrowding during peak times, and antisocial behaviour on buses. Knock-on effects from these contribute to social isolation and reduced employability. People feel they need a car to avoid being stuck in one area.
- Increased roadworks, along with confusion around the LEZ and Bus Gates, have caused delays and frustration for car drivers and bus passengers alike.
- Disabled parking spaces have been moved to less convenient areas, and the taxi off Market Street has been removed. New bus stops leave too much space between them for disabled people to get where they need to go.
- Traffic lights are inconsistent, and often do not give enough time for people to cross busy roads. There is still no crossing light by Marischal College.
- Hazards for pedestrians include delivery cyclists without lights, and speeding cars.
- Electric vehicle charging is inconsistent and insufficient.

Group 2: Streets and Spaces, Natural Space, Play and Recreation

- Bins are unevenly distributed. As a result, there is rubbish in bus shelters and on the streets. There are also problems with graffiti, broken bus shelters and poor lighting.
- Spaces that people actually use are being neglected or removed, while projects like the new market and pier were considered wasteful.
- Participants stressed the need for more activities and spaces for young people, for all new developments to be accessible, and for better maintenance of existing spaces.

Group 3: Facilities and Services, Care and Maintenance

- There is a lack of free/affordable spaces for young people and community groups.
- 'Warm spaces' are stigmatising to use.
- Remote operation of police and fire services has been a negative development.
- Limited capacity in addiction services

Group 4: Work and Local Economy

- Participants felt discouraged from visiting the city centre due to the number of empty shops and a lack of evening activities that do not involve alcohol. They also felt that cafés and small shops close too early.
- Migrants face visa issues, a lack of jobs, and a lack of sponsorships for international students. Volunteering opportunities are limited and difficult to find.

Group 5: Housing and Community

- Maintenance of council housing is poor, with inadequate social housing and sheltered housing stock, long waiting times, and many empty flats.
- Solutions include investing in current housing stock, better landlord regulation, and clearer communication about RAAC housing.

Group 6: Social Interaction, Identity/Belonging, Feeling Safe, Influence/Sense of Control

- Participants highlighted a lack of spaces and occasions for people to come together, especially post-Covid, when social isolation increased. Young people in particular have limited places to go that are free or low-cost.
- A sense of safety is undermined by antisocial behavior, poor street lighting, and toxic rhetoric on social media and mainstream media.
- Participants felt that their opinions and experiences don't matter to decision-makers.
- Solutions include investing more in community spaces, youth work, and public events. Better feedback from consultation processes would also be helpful.