



## REVIEW OF DECISION MAKING STRUCTURES ONE YEAR ON

**BOARD MEETING: 30 APRIL 2009**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an opportunity to consider the Review of Decision Making Structures one year on and present to the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board the Local Community Planning Forums Evaluation 2008/09.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Board members will recall that as part of the four-yearly review of Community Planning in 2006/07, a review of Community Planning operating arrangements was commissioned. Members will also recall that the former Core Partners' Group, supported by the previous CPP Board, agreed to postpone the outcome of the four-yearly review until the Council's new decision making arrangements were fully established.
- 2.2 At the Council meeting of 17 May 2007, Members agreed to establish a Cabinet decision making structure with greater links to the Community Plan thematic objectives and, in principle, to the development of three Local Community Planning Forums to be fully operational from 1 April 2008, replacing the seven Local Committees established by East Ayrshire Council at its inception in 1996. This was reported to the CPP Board meeting of 21 June 2007 and Board members noted that work would be progressed to review the current operating arrangements to ensure they continued to be 'fit for purpose'.

### **3. COMMUNITY PLANNING DECISION MAKING STRUCTURES**

- 3.1 Following the review of Community Planning structures, new operating arrangements for Community Planning in East Ayrshire were endorsed by the former Core Partners' Group at its meeting of 22 August 2007.
- 3.2 It was agreed that, to comply fully with legislation, the CPP Board should act as the strategic body that assumes overall responsibility for Community Planning and that the future make up of the Board should comprise the representation from the existing Core Partners' Group.
- 3.3 As a consequence, the existing CPP Board was dissolved at its final meeting on 13 December 2007 and the new Community Planning Partnership Board convened on 6 March 2008.
- 3.4 It was further agreed that the existing Joint Officers' Group (JOG) and current arrangements in respect of delivering the actions detailed within the thematic action plans would remain in place. However, it should be noted that, subsequently, the CPP Board, at its meeting of 26 June 2008, endorsed the proposal to rationalise the previous six thematic Action Plans to four.

3.5 Actions in relation to the Review of Decision Making Structures have been taken forward through the JOG Workplan and now, one year on, there is an opportunity to reflect on the operation of the revised decision making structures and consider whether they remain 'fit for purpose'.

#### 4. LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FORUMS EVALUATION 2008/09

4.1 At its meeting of 6 December 2007, East Ayrshire Council agreed to establish four Local Community Planning Forums by 1 April 2008, linked to the new multi-member wards and comprising representation from Elected Members, community representatives through the Federations of Community Groups and the Equalities Forum, the voluntary sector and Community Planning Partners. In addition, the former Community Planning Core Partners' Group endorsed their establishment at its meeting of 13 December 2007.

4.2 To date, the Forums have met on six occasions to share good practice, and discuss and consider solutions to a range of issues, which they have identified as requiring action in their respective areas. Themes have included:

- **Sport and Leisure for Young People** (Northern Local Community Planning Forum);
- **Tourism** (Southern Local Community Planning Forum);
- **Regeneration** (Central North and Central South Local Community Planning Forums);
- **Community Safety/Anti-social Behaviour** (Joint Local Community Planning Forum involving all four Forums);
- **Drugs, Alcohol and Access to Health Services** (Central North and Central South Local Community Planning Forum); and
- **Community Regeneration** (Northern and Southern Local Community Planning Forums).

4.3 In addition, the four Forums came together on 19 February 2009 to evaluate the Forums to date; review progress against identified actions; and set the agenda for the 2009/10 meetings.

4.4 In order to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the first year of the Local Community Planning Forums, Forum members completed evaluation forms after each Forum meeting. In addition, they completed an overall evaluation questionnaire in January/February 2009. A compilation of the evaluation results from both exercises is attached at Appendix 1. Detailed below is a summary of the results.

##### **Evaluation of Individual Forum Meetings**

4.5 In total, 109 completed evaluation forms were received after Forum meetings. A summary of responses is detailed below:

- 97% of respondents stated that the event had improved their understanding of issues.
- Almost 90% of respondents stated that they were able to contribute to the Forum discussions.

- Almost all respondents (99%) rated the events as a good, very good or excellent use of their time.
- Over 80% of respondents rated the administrative arrangements, including information, reception and timing as very good or excellent.
- Almost 80% of respondents rated the facilitators and presentations as very good or excellent.
- Over 68% of respondents thought the venues were very good or excellent.

### **Overall Evaluation of the First Year of Local Community Planning Forums**

- 4.6 In January 2009, the online 'Survey Monkey' tool was utilised to gather participants' opinions of the Local Community Planning Forums to date. Questions were set in the context of the National Standards for Community Engagement, in respect of involvement; support to participate effectively; appropriateness of the format of meetings and the engagement methods used; and feedback.
- 4.7 In total, there were 46 responses from a total of 73 (63%) in respect of the overall Local Community Planning Forum evaluation. A summary of responses is detailed below:
- 95% of respondents stated that they were able to contribute to discussions.
  - 33% of respondents stated that the Forums would benefit from extending the representation.
  - 79% of respondents felt somewhat involved or more at the start of the process in identifying and defining the issues to be addressed.
  - 70% of respondents felt that they have influenced strategic planning to some degree.
  - 78% of respondents felt that they have an equal opportunity to have their knowledge and views taken into account.
  - 80% of respondents felt that feedback is regular and in a suitable format.
  - 30% of respondents stated that they would implement changes to improve Forums, with the majority of suggestions relating to practical matters in relation to the operation of the Forums.
- 4.8 Issues raised in the routine evaluations of Forum meetings are addressed on an ongoing basis by the Local Community Planning Forum Support Team, in conjunction with the Reference Group, which comprises nominated Forum members from the Federations of Community Groups and the Equalities Forum, supported by members of the Support Team.
- 4.9 The issues raised in the overall evaluation will be considered and addressed, as appropriate.
- 4.10 Again, there is an opportunity one year on for the Board to consider from their perspectives whether the Forums have been effective in engaging the members in the planning and decision making of partner agencies.

## **5. LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FORWARD PLAN 2009/10**

- 5.1 Priorities for discussion at Forum meetings in 2009/10 were identified through focused workshop activity in individual Forum groupings at the joint meeting of the four Forums on 19 February 2009.

- 5.2 The priorities which emerged from these sessions were subsequently considered by the Reference Group and a Forward Plan, attached at Appendix 2, was developed.
- 5.3 The JOG has considered and endorsed the proposed topics.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Community Planning Partnership Board is requested to:
- i) consider whether, one year on, the revised Community Planning Decision Making Structures, including the Local Community Planning Forums, remain 'fit for purpose';
  - i) note the positive outcome of the evaluation of the Local Community Planning Forums in 2008/09 and the Forward Plan for the Forums in 2009/10;
  - ii) agree to ensure the effective participation of officers from their agencies in Forum meetings, as appropriate; and
  - iii) otherwise, note the content of the report.

**Elizabeth Morton**  
**Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support**  
**East Ayrshire Council**  
**16 April 2009**



# **LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FORUMS**

## **COMPILATION OF EVALUATION RESULTS**

February 2009

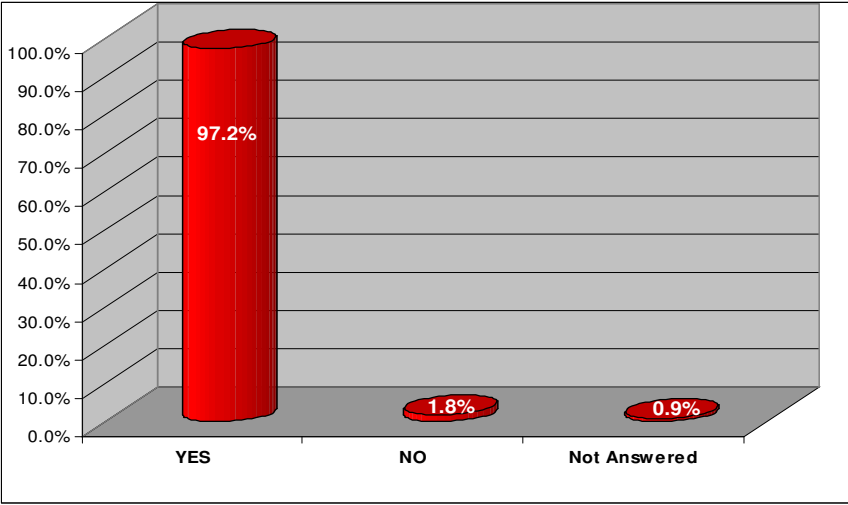
**SECTION 1**

**SURVEY RESULTS - COMPILATION OF THE EVALUATIONS COMPLETED AT ALL LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FORUMS**

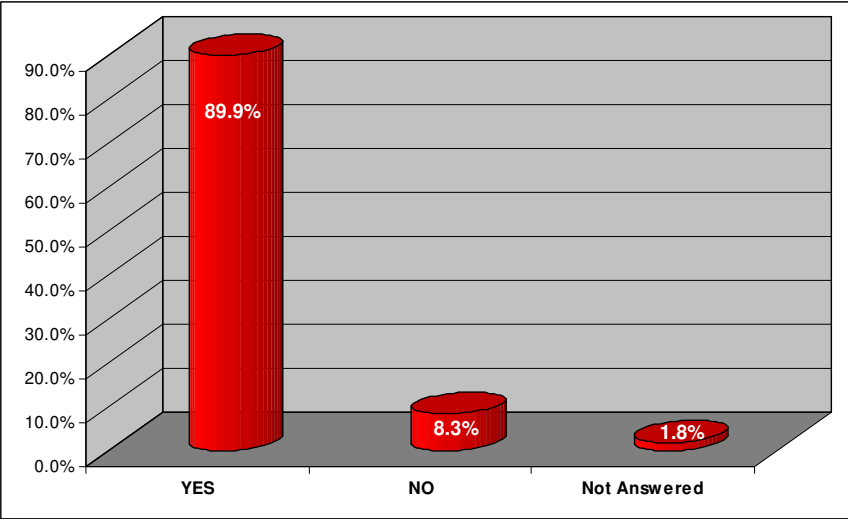
In order to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the first year of the Local Community Planning Forums, Forum members were asked to complete evaluation forms after each Forum meeting.

In total, 109 completed evaluation forms were received after Forum meetings. The responses are listed below:

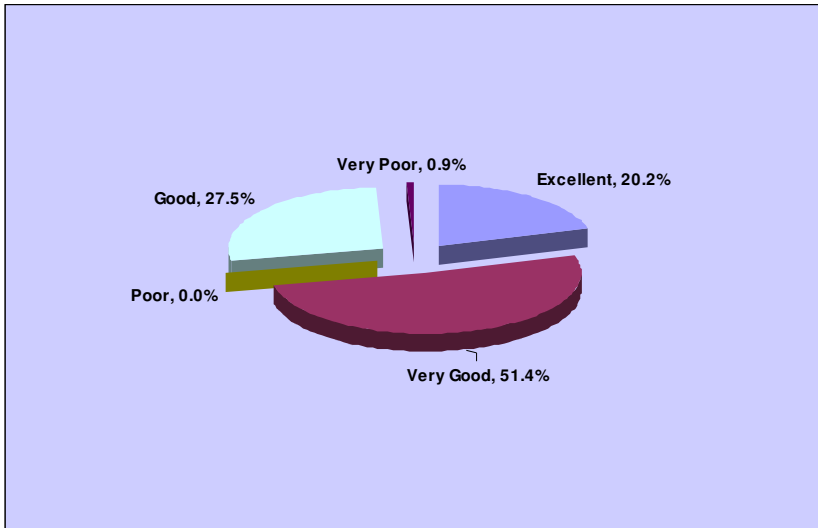
**Has this event improved your understanding of issues within your Local Community Planning Forum area?**



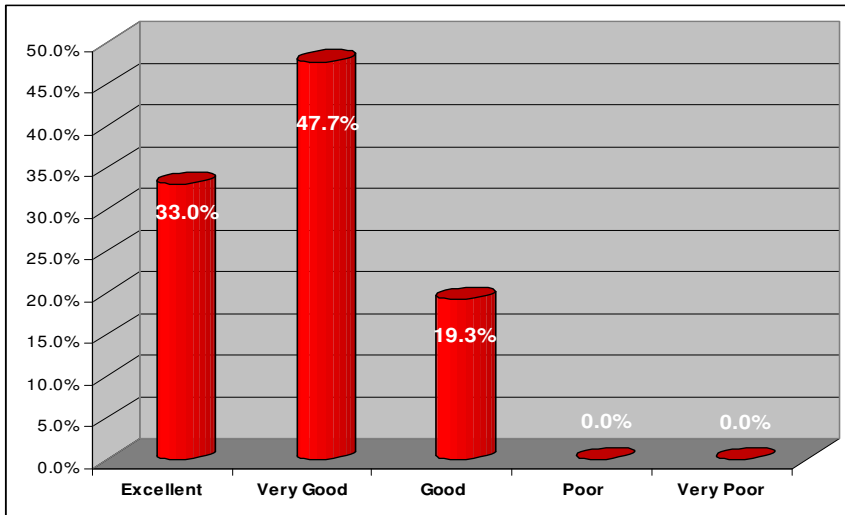
**Do you feel that you were able to contribute to the discussion?**



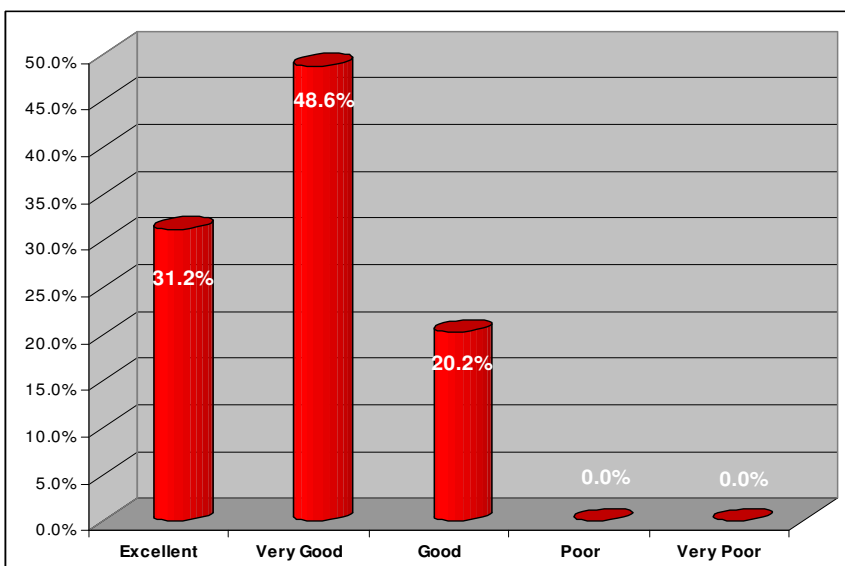
Overall, how would you rate this event as a good use of your time?



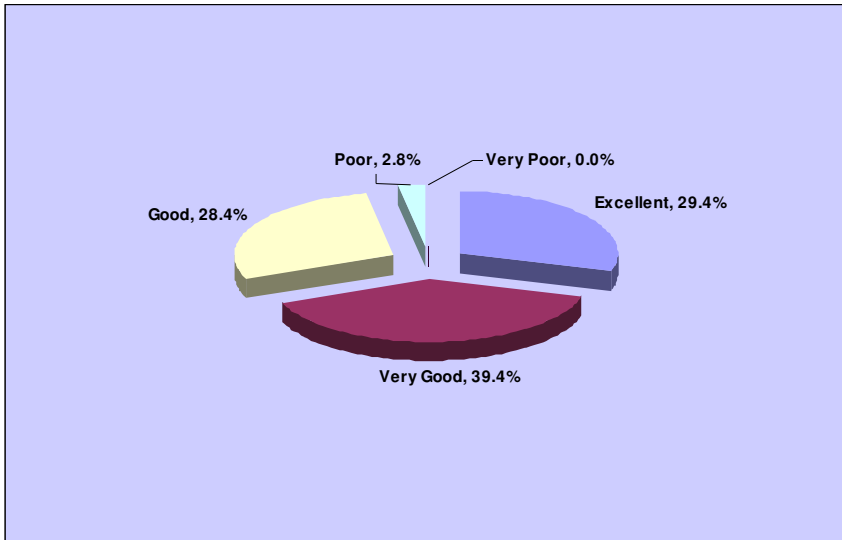
How would you rate the administrative arrangements, including information, reception and timing?



How would you rate the facilitators and table presentations?



Please comment on the suitability of this venue.



### Summary of Survey Results

- Over 95% of respondents stated they have an improved understanding of issues within their Local Community Planning Forum area
- Almost 90% of respondents stated that they were able to contribute to the Forum discussions
- Almost all respondents (99%) rated the events as a good, very good or excellent use of their time

### Additional Comments

- Impressed at the range of support (Sport and leisure for young people, Northern)
- Got a lot of interesting information (Community Regeneration, Central South)
- Update from Police was very good (Community Safety/Anti-social Behaviour, Joint Forum)
- The variety of opportunities available for young people is wider than I knew. It is a pity more teenagers are not involved (Community Safety/Anti-social Behaviour, Joint Forum)
- Expanded understanding of the linkages between agencies (Community Safety/Anti-social Behaviour, Joint Forum)
- I felt that each of the facilitators had their own agenda set in stone, because they are the “professionals” they have an “I know best attitude” (Alcohol, Drugs and Access to Health Services, Central North and Central South)
- Perhaps too much general discussion and not enough direction and forward thinking (Alcohol, Drugs and Access to Health Services, Central North and Central South)
- The venue was good and it was more easily accessed (Alcohol, Drugs and Access to Health Services, Central North and Central South)
- The topics were well explained (Community Regeneration, Northern and Southern)
- Excellent opportunities to participate (Community Regeneration, Northern and Southern)
- There was no new relevant information raised at meeting. Similar comments come forward at every planning forum. (Community Regeneration, Northern and Southern)
- The workshop was good value, informative and constructive (Community Regeneration, Northern and Southern)

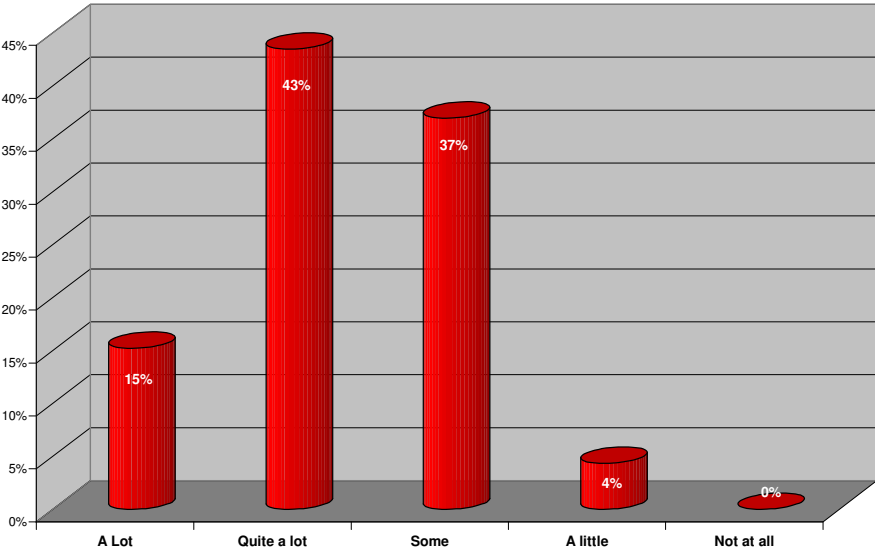
**SECTION 2**

**COMPILATION OF THE OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE FIRST YEAR OF LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FORUMS**

Community Planning Partners agreed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Local Community Planning Forums. In order to assist in this process, in respect of the first year, Forum members were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire in January/February 2009.

In total, there were 46 (63%) responses to the Local Community Planning Forum evaluation questionnaires. The responses are listed below:

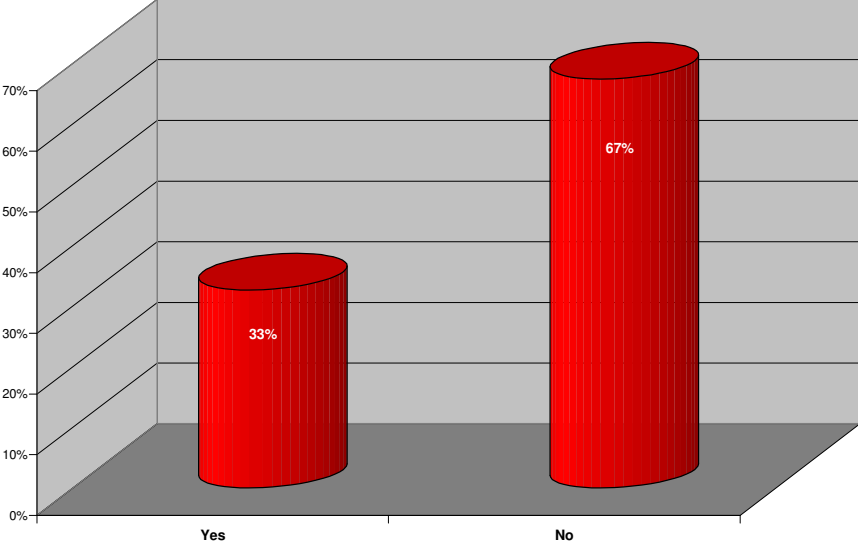
**Do you feel that you have been able to contribute to the Local Community Planning Forum event discussions?**



**If not, why not?**

- I have not been able to attend meetings

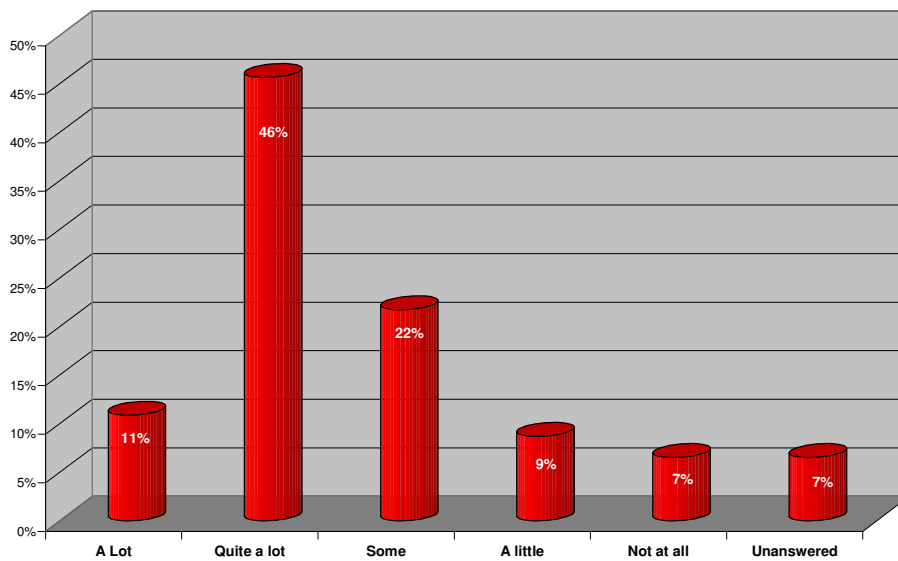
**Membership of the Local Community Planning Forums comprises community representatives, Elected Members, Partner agencies and voluntary sector representatives, as appropriate. Is there anyone else who should attend?**



**If so, who?**

- A random group of residents selected for each meeting.
- A random selection invited from the voters roll.
- Churches.
- Council Department Heads.
- I believe there should be someone representing each Community Council as I believe some areas are over represented and others not represented at all.
- I think that attendance can be further expanded by tailoring each group to the topic under discussion for example, local housing associations for housing topics, residents groups for anti-social behaviour, retailers for regeneration. The present attendance is broad, but not entirely complete.
- Interested members of the public.
- Local Business people, small business representatives.
- More involvement by Equalities Officer, due to the fact some members on the planning forums have no clue about equality issues and what it would mean to EAC if not taken on board.
- MSPs if possible to gain information on community issues first hand.
- Representatives from the Community who perhaps have a greater understanding and knowledge of their area and its real problems.
- Representatives of Crime Panels.
- Young People.

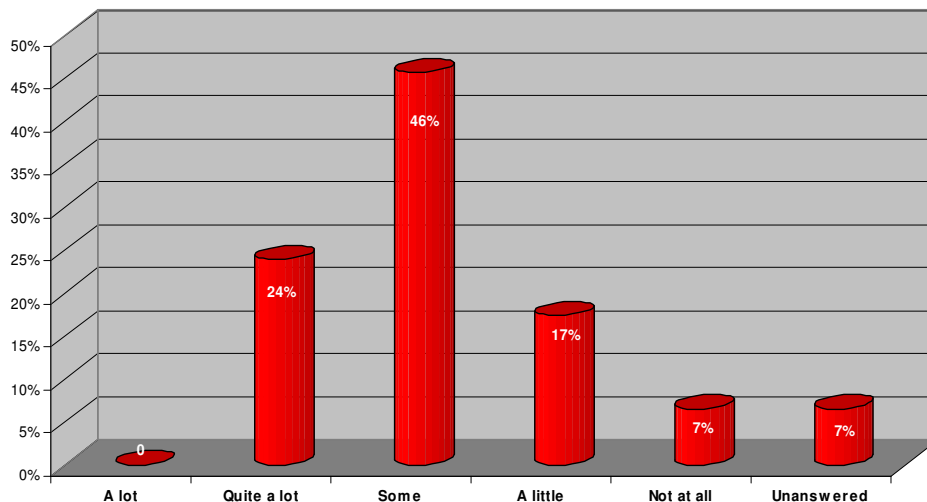
**How involved did you feel at the start of the process in identifying and defining the issues to be addressed?**



**If you have any issues, please give details:**

- I am a new member of the forum and was not involved in the set up.
- I don't recall being part of any discussions on the thematic approach the forum would take.
- I have only been involved from August 08, I missed the beginning of the forums.
- It would be beneficial to people who have any disability if this could be identified by the people who experience these issues daily

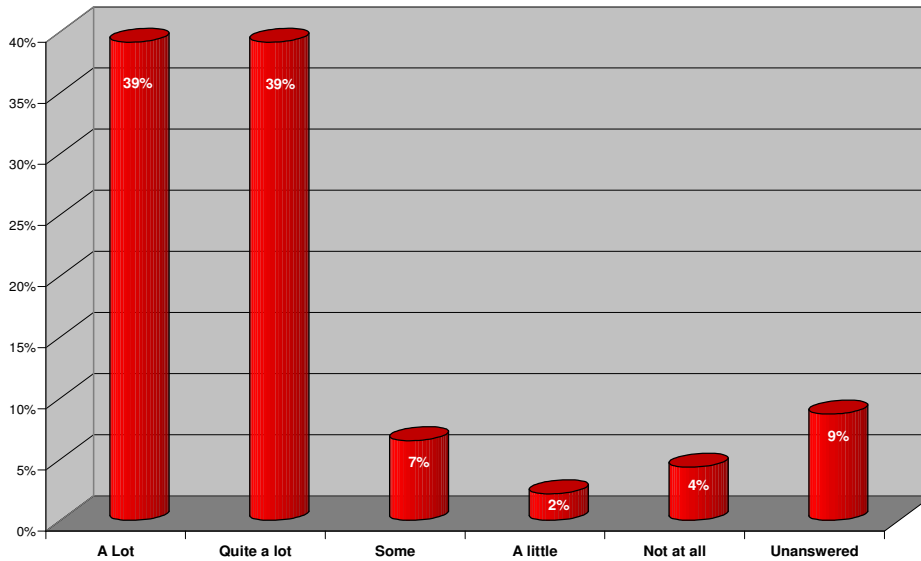
**To what extent do you feel the Local Community Planning Forums have allowed you to influence the strategic planning of Community Planning Partners?**



**If you have issues, please give details:**

- At several meetings it appeared that decisions had all ready been taken i.e the Tourism Strategy had already been written. At the regeneration meeting it didn't feel as though we were influencing anything.
- Difficult to gauge as I believe the issues are taken forward but the strategies discussed in tackling the issues I am not sure if they have an influence on the Planning Partners.
- I feel that the world cafe discussions that have been introduced have influenced this as during discussions I think that the partners listen to what views are being expressed.
- I feel that this is very much already pre-determined before the meeting.
- I felt, at least the one on regeneration of Kilmarnock and Cumnock, officers had already made up their minds before hand.
- So far, we have been consulted on plans that are already written and, sometimes, approved and in progress. We have yet to be consulted on draft plans.
- Still to see the results of our input to determine the extent of influence.

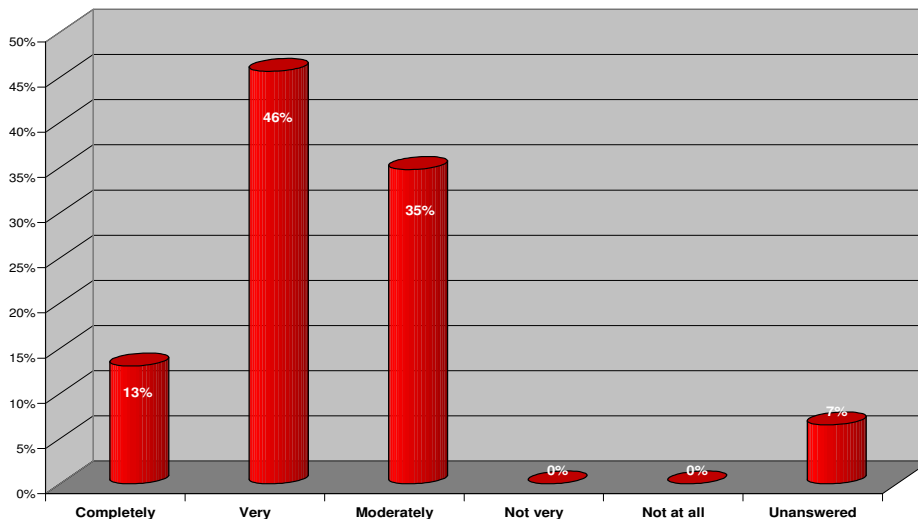
**What level of suitable support do you feel is provided to allow you to participate effectively? Examples of support available to Local Community Planning Forum Members include: out of pocket expenses, loss of earnings, suitable transport, communication aids, timing of meetings, accessible venue and childcare.**



**If you have issues, please give details. Please include support which is not provided but would enable you to participate more effectively:**

- As an agency partner, I do not incur any out of pocket expenses etc, but thoroughly enjoy the buffet.
- Does Not Apply.
- I have a car so I have no issue, the timings could be varied to suit people who work, and the venue should be in the locality not at London Road.
- I must give Council praise on the way all my needs were taken into account from transport, my communication aids and especially officers who helped me at Auchinleck House/Dumfries House as they went a few days before to get advice.
- this is down to myself, as I have to find out information as I work for EAC I haven't claimed any expenses or loss or earnings and I have been using annual leave for this and I will have to find out about expenses etc.

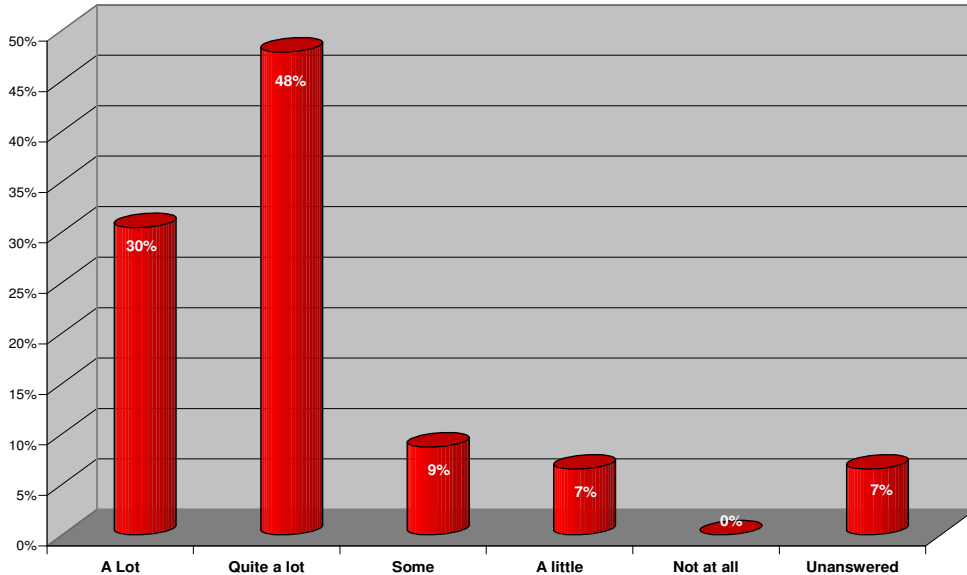
**How appropriate do you feel that the formats of the Local Community Planning Forum events and the methods used have been?**



**Comment:**

- It never feels as though events are tied up at the end and feedback has been poor. There does not seem to be a way of influencing the timescales attached to ideas generated and by the time there is an update its all been agreed.
- Rather short in duration to adequately discuss topics.
- The workshops have worked best. The larger assemblies with everybody in the same room have been less effective.
- They are very informative but I feel that it is already a "fait accompli" as far as decisions go.
- They have been most enjoyable - not time wasting.

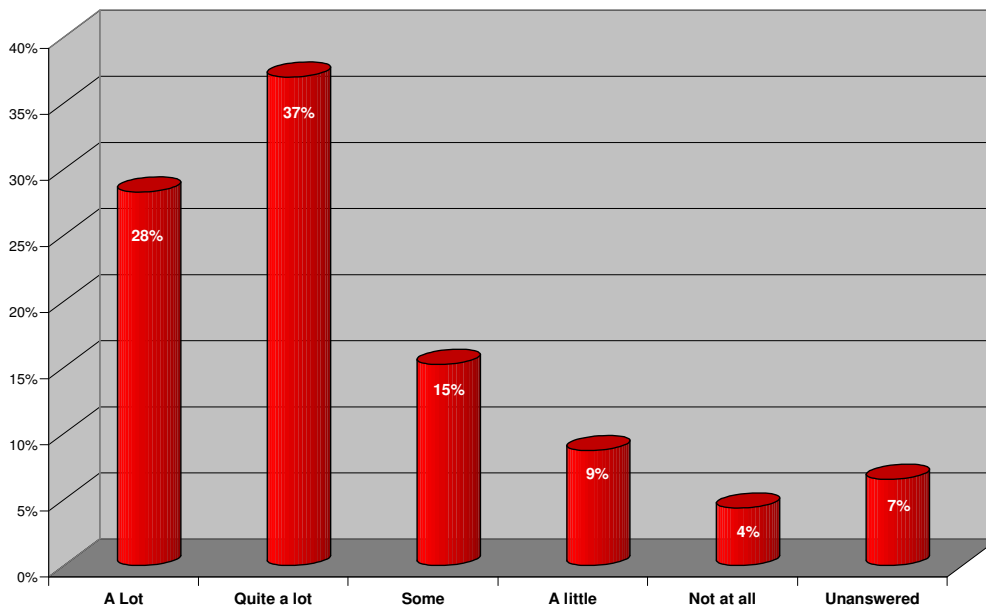
**To what extent do you feel that all participants are given an equal opportunity to have their knowledge and views taken into account?**



**If you have any issues, please give details:**

- As before, some people have not let people with disability have a proper say.
- I feel that we are all encouraged to express our opinions at the forums.
- I have noticed that some (usually partner agencies etc) who are used to speaking at public venues and forums, express themselves more freely than the majority of community representatives. Perhaps there may be some mileage in actively seeking their views.
- It depends on whether individuals are prepared to share their knowledge and experience.
- Some individuals find very large groups intimidating.

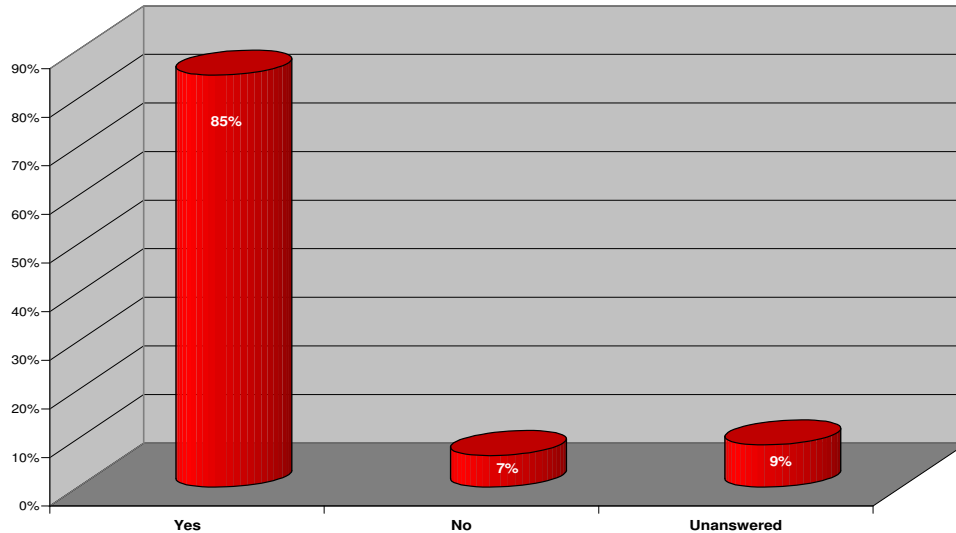
**How much do you feel that the Forums allow you to establish and maintain effective relationships and links with Community Planning organisations, Elected Members, other community representatives and voluntary sector organisations?**



**Comment:**

- Could be better in terms of better links between community councils and those members being more active to establish and maintain those links.
- Good way to get to know Elected Members and other organisations and their reps.
- Short duration of meetings which doesn't allow much time to network.
- The Community Planning Forums are an extension of the contact that my own organisation frequently makes with many Forum members.
- The forums do not allow or encourage mingling with others that are not known to the individual. I keep up my relationships because they have been established for a long time, prior to the forums.

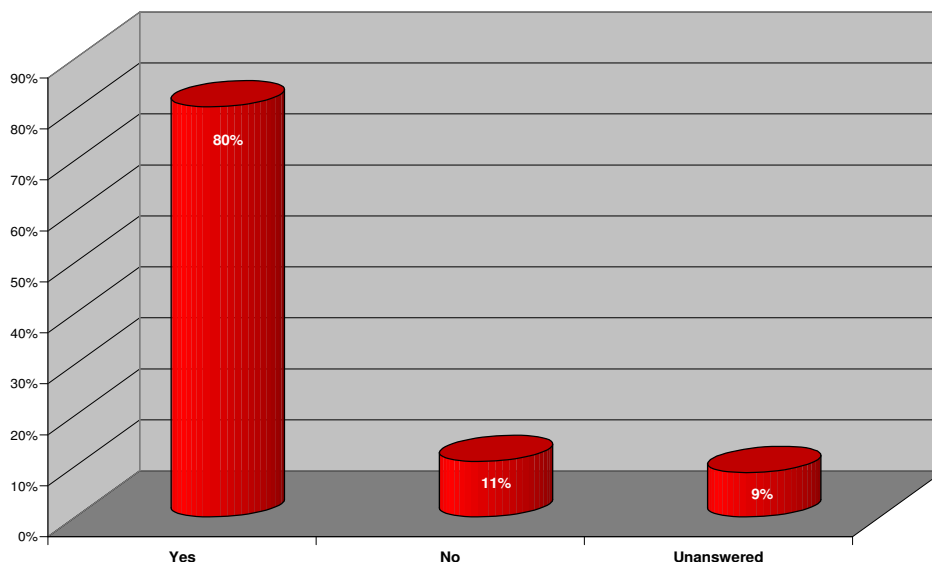
**Is sufficient information provided to enable you to fully take part?**



**If not, what else do you need?**

- It would be beneficial to have information / background details provided prior to workshops to enable you to be prepared rather than spending a great deal of time at the forums getting participants up to speed.
- An Agenda and the update on actions does not inform enough. It would be useful for background papers on agenda items, strategy papers where they have been written so that a round table consultation and discussion can take place.
- More communication would be a good idea and then people can try to correct issues if required.

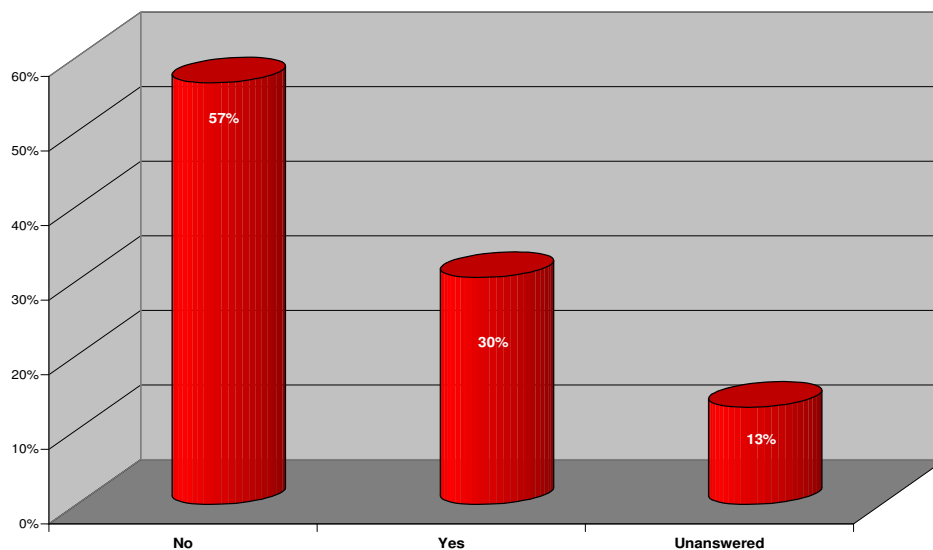
**Is feedback on the actions from the Forums provided regularly and in a suitable format?**



**If you have issues, please give details:**

- Feedback not provided early enough.
- 2 have been produced in this year. Is this considered to be providing regular information? The format is fine.
- I feel that more information should be given on the progress of the action points from the lead named person. This would allow us to see if the action points are being met and also allow us to be part of the ongoing process.
- It is unrealistic to expect the reference group to consider feedback within a few weeks of the relevant forum. More time for consultation and consolidation of opinions is required.

## Are there changes you would implement to improve Local Community Planning Forums?



### Please identify any changes you would implement

- Although possibly more time consuming, I would have smaller groups, four instead of two. I think it would give people more chance to have a say.
- Ensure the right people from the communities attend
- For some topics it would be worth experimenting with community-led facilitation and/or discussions: This might help eliminate any 'them and us' perceptions of invariably having EAC personnel in these roles.
- Longer Provide update on previous forum(s) at subsequent forum.
- Maybe learn more on Equality issues.
- More feedback information from lead named persons, as this would inform us if the action points are being met.
- More freedom to develop ideas.
- More information about other partners to try to establish relationships. Even presentations (short) about what people do and what's important to them as representatives and individuals. Copies of Council reports, strategies etc prior to discussion.
- Needs more thought.
- No format is good and time needed to let things bed in. If change is identified as being necessary, then address it.
- No I feel that the two forums that I have been to have been informative and well planned. The venues have been good as well.
- The age profile of participant is probably older than a representative demographic sample would be, consideration should be given to taking action to tackle this.
- To avoid repetition, officers may like to suggest some important topical issues delegates might like to discuss.
- To ensure we are involved at the planning stage and not discussing things already in the implementation stage regardless of the topic under consideration.
- Too early in process to start changing.
- Try and not have as many joint forums and keep them in the locality and vary times to try and encourage new people with new ideas.

### If you have any further comments to make, please detail below:

- As a member of old committee style meetings, I prefer the way Community Planning meetings go, especially World Café type due to being able to understand the way Partner organisations work.
- At the moment there seems to be a good balance of representation. Perhaps if this was extended there would be too many views and not enough consensus.
- I am very pleased to be involved and thank you all for the opportunity.
- I find that everyone has been very helpful and easy to talk to!
- I have still to be convinced as to long term value of this process. The same issues and comments are presented by the same people at every meeting. Progress therefore, must be questioned.
- I think it is important to set realistic and achievable goals. To this end, the Forum meets its purpose.
- Keep up the good work for the community.
- Keep up the good work, EAC must be the lead authority on this initiative and I'm very impressed by all concerned.
- The agenda for the review day only sets aside 10 minutes for the evaluation results. This could suggest you place no value on what's been said in a similar way to not feeling we're influencing at forum meetings.
- We have made a good start. It is not important that lessons learned are carried forward into the 2009 programme of work - and that community reps see some credible outcomes from the 2008 programme.



**LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FORUMS**

**PROPOSED ANNUAL PLAN 2009/10**

It is proposed that a range of methods will be used to ensure that Forum members will feel confident and able to contribute their views on the topics identified. Detailed below are some outline proposals in respect of how the meetings might be structured. At all joint meetings, there will be sessions where members break into their individual Forum groupings.

Local Community Planning Forum	Proposed Topic	Date
<b>MAY 2009 MEETINGS</b>		
Northern Local Community Planning Forum	Community Pride and Responsibility	Wednesday 20 May 2009 Venue to be confirmed 2 pm – 5 pm
Southern Local Community Planning Forum		Wednesday 20 May 2009 Venue to be confirmed 2 pm – 5 pm
<b>Central North and Central South Local Community Planning Forums - Joint Meeting</b>	Health and Wellbeing – services available to communities in respect of issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of teenage pregnancy</li> <li>• Coronary Heart Disease</li> <li>• Smoking</li> <li>• Obesity</li> <li>• Healthy activities for communities</li> </ul>	Thursday 21 May 2009 Venue to be confirmed 2 pm – 5 pm

Local Community Planning Forum	Proposed Topic	Date
<b>SEPTEMBER 2009 MEETINGS</b>		
Northern, Southern and Central South and Central South Local Community Planning Forums - <b>Joint Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential joint event with the Children and Young People's Forum</li> </ul>	Friday 11 September 2009 Venue and time to be confirmed
<b>NOVEMBER 2009 MEETINGS</b>		
Northern Local Community Planning Forum	Town/Village Regeneration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on Regeneration Forum from November 2008</li> <li>• Focus on issues including Planning, Vacant Properties and Cleansing</li> </ul>	Tuesday 17 November 2009 Venue to be confirmed 2 pm – 5 pm
Southern Local Community Planning Forum	Infrastructure to support tourism, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads (state of repair)</li> <li>• Small businesses</li> <li>• Accommodation</li> </ul>	Thursday 19 November 2009 Venue to be confirmed 2 pm – 5 pm
Central South Local Community Planning Forum	Road Safety – wide range of issues , including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level Crossings</li> <li>• Education - parking</li> <li>• Health linkage walk to school</li> <li>• Work with schools</li> <li>• Fast food near schools.</li> <li>• Speeding</li> </ul>	Tuesday 24 November 2009 Venue to be confirmed 2 pm – 5 pm
Central North Local Community Planning Forum	Future jobs/employment	Wednesday 25 November 2009 Venue to be confirmed 2 pm – 5 pm

Local Community Planning Forum	Proposed Topic	Date
<b>FEBRUARY 2010 MEETINGS</b>		
All four Forums - <b>Joint Meeting</b>	Review of Local Community Planning Forums, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review and evaluation of the 2009/10 Local Community Planning Forums; and</li> <li>• setting the agenda for 2010/11.</li> </ul>	February 2010 Venue to be confirmed 1 pm – 5 pm