



Report of the Open Drop-in Consultation contributing to the Scottish Government's Local Governance Review held 3 November, at Out Of The Blue, Leith, Edinburgh

Transition Edinburgh is a community-led network supporting individuals and groups promote practical projects for a greener, fairer, healthier, more resilient Edinburgh. We aim to:

- Raise awareness about Climate Disruption, and cutting Fossil Fuels
- Support actions that reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions
- Increase understanding of how sustainable practices can be better for people and planet
- Promote a Carbon Neutral Edinburgh by 2040.

We recognise the importance of Scottish Government's Local Governance Review launched summer 2018 and responded by running two targeted engagement events.

Invitations to the first on one – held on 19 September at the University of Edinburgh – were sent to the 1,000+ supporters who have signed up for our monthly newsletter. They have generally previously expressed concern about Climate Disruption and / or attended one of the many events we have run for citizens in Edinburgh. See separate report.

The second event – subject of this report – was run during an annual Eco Fair run by others, that attracted several hundred diverse people from especially north Edinburgh.

Over 60 of those attending the Fair were moved to sit at tables with the four Questions and pen their responses. These have been recorded on the following pages.

The responses clearly display a strong desire for greater civic engagement in deciding priorities more locally and a desire for a longer-term integrated approach to decision-making which engages more people currently excluded from much of the regular process of deciding priorities for local developments / allocations of resources to tackle problems. Several urged a substantial re-purposing of Community Councils - maybe along the lines advocated by Common Weal in their paper on Development Councils published just before the consultation event.

We gratefully acknowledge support from Voluntary Action Scotland, which enabled us to organise this whole consultation event. The Respondent Information form is appended.

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Individuals made their contributions through out the day with little discussion or facilitation.

Q1. Tell us about your experiences of getting involved in decision-making processes that affect your local community or community of interest.

Conditions for good decisions

- Vision of change by individual or small group
- Clear purpose
- Representing the whole community
- Support of experienced change makers like DTAS / CARES
- Successful communication
- Acting in interests of all rather than the few.
- The continued bettering of our living conditions and attitude to our environment both locally and globally- taking account of our impact and owning it
- Protest can bring people together and spark change

General comments

- Environmental care / compassionate policy
 - Prosperity for all and equality for all
 - Empowerment + cohesion of communities
 - Progress
 - Peace
 - Listening – responding appropriately
 - Honesty
 - Integrity of governments
 - Positivity and unity
 - Inclusivity
 - Local democracy and engagement
 - Responsive people
 - More progress/less development
 - Transparency / consulting community
 - If courage structure and empathy of a group align
 - People and environment friendly consumption and production
 - Clean air
 - A compassionate society
 - Kindness and compassion
 - Good decisions
 - Socialism
 - Move away from consumerism
 - Responsive people
- responsive governments ↔ actions

Community level success

- Greater equality, looking at both community connections and outward to other communities and countries.
- A source of collaboration rather than competition: how to foster this?
- Effective decision making – increasing accessibility for all community groups
- Finding a compromise that you can live with
- Responsive local government- one with resources enough to be able to meaningfully consult
- Early conversation between community and developers brokered by local authority
- Looking at bigger picture and taking the needs of the full community into account

- A project in place examples provided to stimulate discussion
 - Action Party <https://www.bellfield.scot>
 - Harlaw Hydro <http://www.harlawhydro.org.uk>
 - Solar Coop www.edinburghsolar.coop
 - Leith Crops in Pots <http://leith-community-crops-in-pots.org/>
 - North Edinburgh Arts <https://northedinburgharts.co.uk/>
- More opportunities to get involved
- Trying to involve people who maybe don't want to be involved in community things
- Micro local projects which engage local people
- More projects like Edinburgh Solar

Personal / family success

- Family and Friends
- Aims for family friends and self
- Properly resourced and inclusive schools
- Happiness and safety in a sustainable clean environment respecting all life
- Ensuring the BEST quality of life for all Scotland's animals
- Elimination of intensive animal agriculture

Q2. Would you like your local community or community of interest to have more control over some decisions?

If yes, what sorts of issues would those decisions cover?

“New leadership needed in Edinburgh Council plus more local democracy where real issues are tackled and not swept under the carpet.”

Planning

- Planning rules – higher advantage to applicant over people
- Planning – need equal right of appeal
- Planning should be more flexible to new ideas, practical approach
- Integrated land planning
- Lack of transparency
- City planning√
 - Greening the city
 - Urban decay
 - Short term vision – just money
- Local planning and development √
- Importance of community spaces like Out of The Blue and St Mags. North Edinburgh Arts that support community development
- Building√
- Too much property development
 - Regulations too general – should reflect local heritage and protect it e.g. Leith Links Colonies
 - flat roofed dormer windows still given planning permission
- Cycle and walking routes

Housing √√

- Affordability
- Homelessness
- Lack of affordable housing √
- Too many hotels and AirBnB
- Too much student housing
- Compulsory purchase of empty shops/flats/houses for homeless

Health care

- Care of elderly
- Quality of mental health care
- Link social care and hospital beds√√
- Vitamin D
- Loneliness

Waste / recycling

- Wasteful lifestyles
- Plastic waste √
 - Can council give incentives for business / industries to use alternatives
- Throw away culture

Education and lifestyles

- Loss of curiosity and critical mind
- Consumption habits are the worst
- Consumerism
- Consumer culture
- Materialism a desire for continual growth and stuff
- Lack of education about how our minds work
- Schools too full
- Conditions for teachers and support for children in schools

Inclusiveness

- Accessibility and inclusiveness of sustainable choices for food, waste, clothing and awareness promoting
- Fair distribution of resources
- Shifting our thoughts from the individual to the collective ✓
- Commercial corporation culture
- Wages
- Resources for community consensus building and consultation
- Lack of community spirit
- Conversations about our 'spiritual' health as a community
- Local volunteers seen by organisations as 'disposable / easily replaced'
- Agree to disagree on issues like beliefs?
- Social inequality

Transport and traffic

- Enforcement of traffic rules e.g. 20mph
- Cycling/walking routes

Community amenities / community values

- Survival of local businesses - high rents and business rates
- Withdrawal of banking facilities
- More credit unions for the people
- Community banks and ethical banking
- Lack of community ownership by young people
- Lack of community -> egotism

Climate change

- Inability to empathise with problems bigger than ourselves
- Detachment from temporally or geographically distant problems such as climate change

Energy

- Fuel poverty

Q3. What does 'local' mean to you and your community?

Defining

- Depends on context / depends on issue
- A radical Scotland
- What ever you are part of and can influence in a real way ✓
- Local is the immediate surroundings and area of influence in relation to the global and multifaceted system
- (a) your immediate neighbourhood (b) arguably the whole of Edinburgh (+Lothians)
- Sense of community in a region
- Where people feel connected beyond and deeper than day to day tasks of living

Examples

- Scotland, Lothian, my city, Leith, my street
- Scotland v. whole of UK
- My suburb / neighbourhood by name or EH number ✓
- Green space
- (Food) grown and produced near me
- For food, the closest possibility to grow produce from own home ✓
- Place of worship
- My river e.g. Water of Leith Conservation Trust
- School catchment area
- Community council area
- The community around us
- Local shops
- Things & people we live around
- Same climate zone as home

Local issues

- Local bus services being cut back in rural areas
- Local community transport services
- Car park spaces allocated for electric cars sends a strong signal encouraging them
- Help those on low income / jobless get funding for solar in non-jargon way

Q4. Are there existing forms of local level decision-making, which could play a part in exercising new local powers? Are there new forms of local decision-making that could work well? What kinds of changes might be needed for this to work in practice?

Structures / questions / context

- WHO makes the big decisions?
- We need sectoral input; ideas from business, citizens, third sector and so on
- Local, democratic, independent
- Democracy; people taking decisions not politicians
- Locally grown ideas adopted by councils
- Community opinion sought and acted on
- Those that don't involve BIG business or have lobbying groups
- Sociocracy
- Providing accurate information to all involved in the decision making process
- Taking **longer term** into account, not just short term expediency
- Being given the correct facts
- How to democratise important local decisions for true long term visions / empowerment NOT selling land and power resources to highest bidder
- Unfairness of planning rules
- Transparency about vested interests
- Free of vested interests / personal gain by those in positions of power
- Planning giving weight to small groups as well as big developers

Sharing opinions

- emailing MP / MSP

Consultations/ questionnaires

- consultation needs to be more publicised e.g. social media, shopping centres, cafes
- online questionnaires, social media

Meetings

- Centralised meetings publicised in the media
- Facts, views, discussions that encourage the inclusion of everyone

Leafleting / Petitions

New ideas

- Local Development Councils – with funding and powers instead of Community Councils (see Common Weal report) – supported by several participants
- Better developed and better resourced organisation level below City Council

DEMOCRACY MATTERS



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Respondent Information for the Open Drop-in Consultation at Edinburgh Eco Fair 3 November, in Out Of The Blue, Leith, Edinburgh

1. In which town, village, or neighbourhood did your conversation take place?

Leith, north Edinburgh

2. How many people were involved in your discussion?

Over 60 people visited the exhibition and contributed comments

3. Please indicate which category best describes you (tick one only).

Community group



4. If you are an individual, organisation, or community group

Transition Edinburgh

Event organiser: Katharina Bouchaar, 07594 286 860

Event website: <https://dm3nov.eventbrite.org.uk>

www.transitionedinburgh.org.uk / Edinburgh@transition.scot

c/o Peace and Justice, 5 Upper Bow, Edinburgh EH1 2JN

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response.

Please indicate your publishing preference:



Publish response with name



Publish response only (without name)

Information for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to the Democracy Matters consultation exercise?



Yes