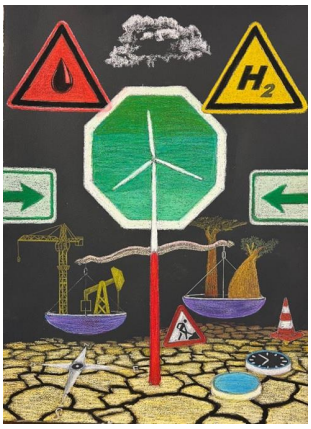


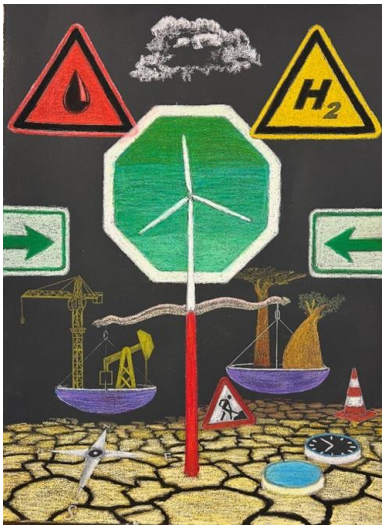
North East Scotland Climate Action Network

What does a 'Just Transition' mean to those living in North East Scotland, a region economically dependent on oil and gas production?



Draft Report
4th November 2021

North East Scotland Climate Action Network



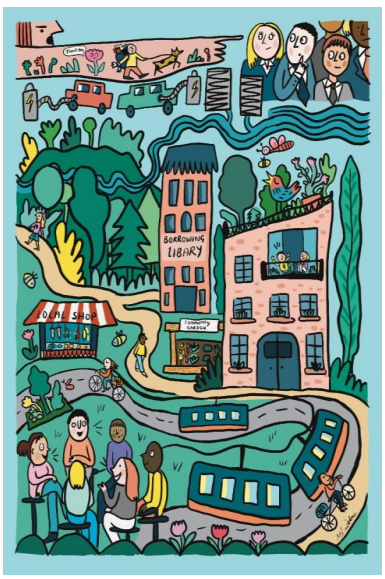
Draft report* of campaign of NESCAN for COP26 focusing on the local vision of 2030 based on workshops, a questionnaire, a school art competition and commissioned art.



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* Full report targeting December 2021

Summary - Local empowerment for a Just Transition

Visions of life in 2030 are positive, but change is difficult, and people need; i) help to engage with transition; ii) more information and; iii) improved ability to act positively.

Big business and Government need to lead the way, but their vested interests are seen as major obstacles.

There is little trust that the transition will be just.

People want the chance to talk about climate change and do something to help solve it.

The City and Shire have different priorities for change.

Although we know the areas that need to be tackled to get us to net zero (transport, buildings, energy, land use etc), we need solutions to be locally-created, led and delivered.

However, there are commonalities for both urban and rural communities. The top 5 priorities for a better future are:

A Just Transition

1. Local decision making and empowerment are the keys to a positive future, with communities being listened to, and able to shape their own future.
2. Training and funding are needed to support local leadership development as well as raising awareness and re-skilling for low carbon jobs.

Lowing Carbon Footprint

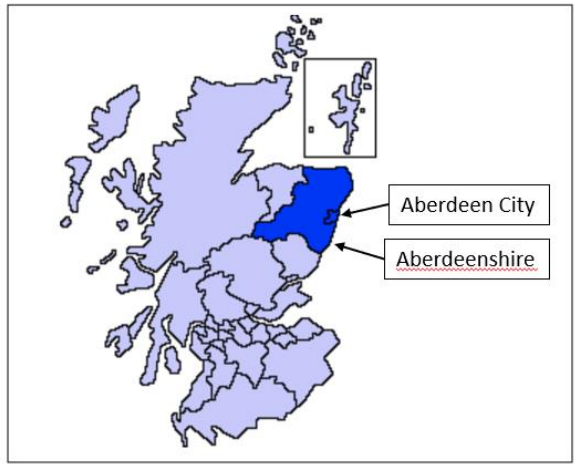
3. Less car use; more frequent, cheaper and accessible, local public transport connecting communities; more connected safe cycling and walking paths.
4. Thriving local communities through localism; access to local green space, amenities, food production, shops, and jobs; land management to focus on diversification and increased biodiversity.
5. Improved housing: Retrofit older housing for better insulation, net zero ready and affordable new houses; more community influence on development decisions including rewilding.



Background

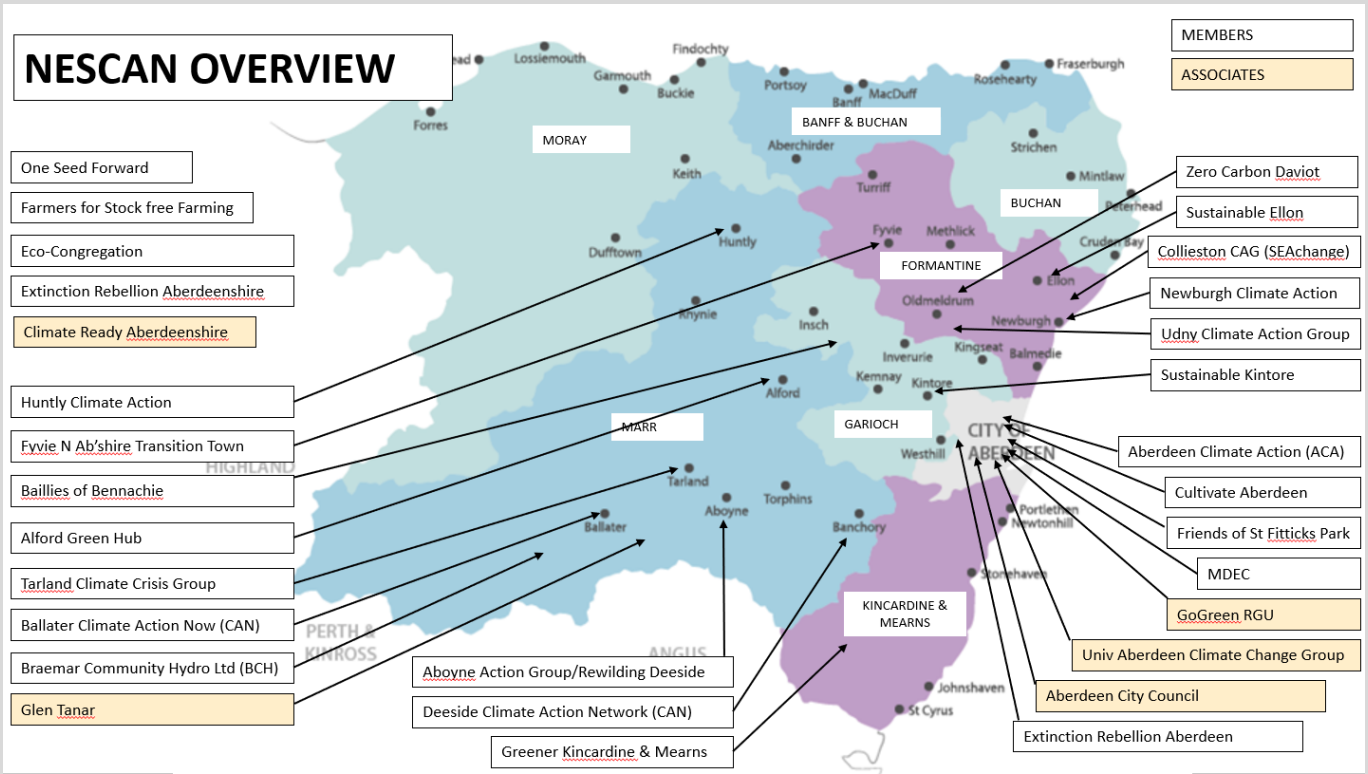
NESCAN 1

NESCAN (North East Scotland Climate Action Network) is a partnership network of 31 different community organisations working on climate action issues covering Aberdeen City and 16 different village/town-based groups in Aberdeenshire.



Scotland with Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City highlighted

Aberdeen is the centre of the oil and gas industry in the UK and employs tens of thousands of people. Rural villages and towns within commuting distance of Aberdeen (ca. 30-miles from the city) are also heavily economically dependent on the oil and gas sector. Further afield in Aberdeenshire, the economy is more rural with a strong pastoral and arable agriculture sector, plus extensive upland estates hosting fishing and shooting.



NESCAN's Member and Associates

Background

NESCAN 2

NESCAN was founded in 2021 and is actively building its membership. Member organisations include community climate action groups, development trusts, university climate action groups, educational charities, the Eco-Congregation movement, and a partner in Aberdeenshire Council.

The aim of NESCAN is to be an information and collaboration hub for climate action organisations within North East Scotland, build capacity and skills of those organisations and support members and local community. The member organisations activities and projects vary from undertaking physical projects such as rewilding, to raising awareness and education on climate change, its causes and the action that the local populace can take. A new NESCAN Hub is being created to help communities with the transition to net zero and enable them to become more sustainable and biodiverse. In September, it became one of two regional community climate action hub pilot schemes in Scotland to be funded by the Scottish Government to map and interconnect climate action activities withing the region.



NESCAN Zoom meeting

Background

Just Transition workshops, questionnaire, school competition and commissioned art

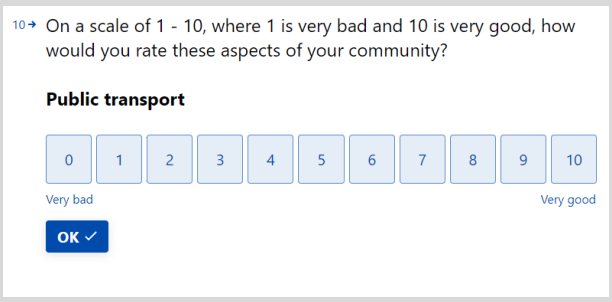
Ten local workshops were organised in August and September 2021 to canvas the views of community members on what a just transition in our region would look like. These included events at a church, community centres/ projects, Aberdeen Science Centre, the Institute for Mechanical Engineers and local villages and towns. A list of most of these events can be seen here. Artists were commissioned to produce artistic representations of the events and results of the consultations.

A questionnaire was issued during September 2021 to hear the voices of those unable to attend the workshops.

In total over 300 people gave us their views (190 in questionnaire, 116 in the workshops). The relatively low number of people involved highlights the genuine challenge in engaging people who will be affected. Nonetheless, it generated over 800 text comments from the community.

The low attendance at workshops may reflect challenges in communicating within the target communities or the low priority the people place on the issues. However, participants of the workshops found them very enjoyable and many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to talk about climate change and transition.

A primary and secondary school competition attracted 169 submissions from 18 schools. Many more students were involved as whole schools took part and only selected a few entries to submit and most entries were from teams of pupils or entire classes. You can see details of the school competition and winning entries here.

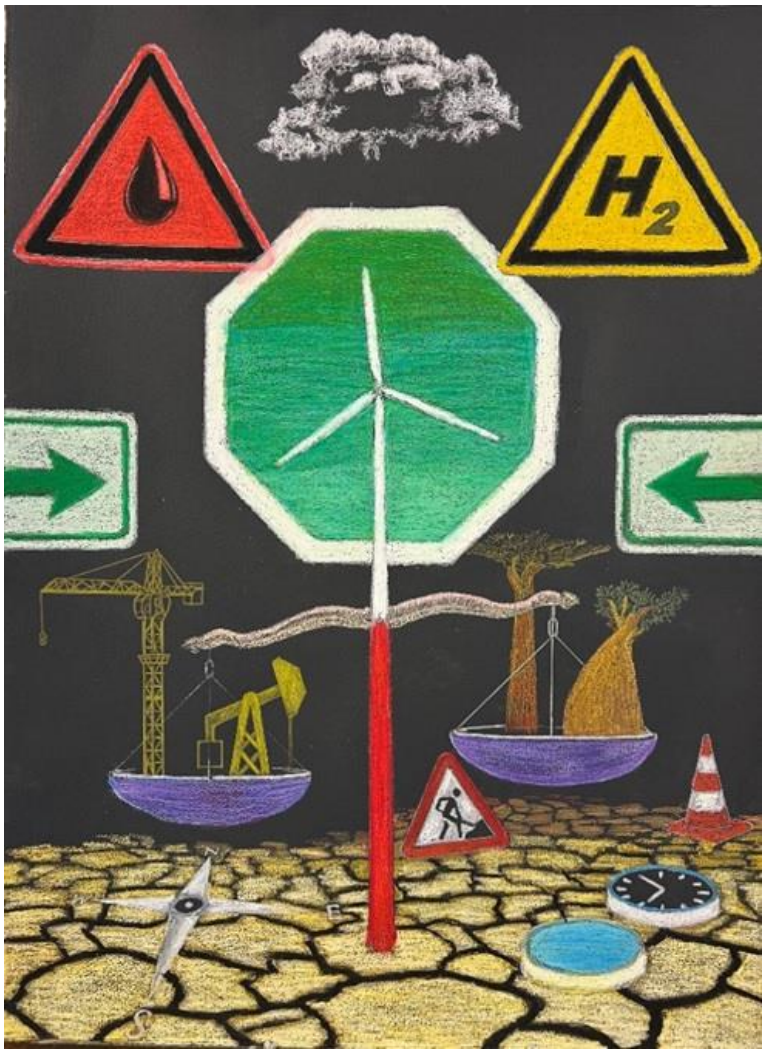


Screenshot of questionnaire

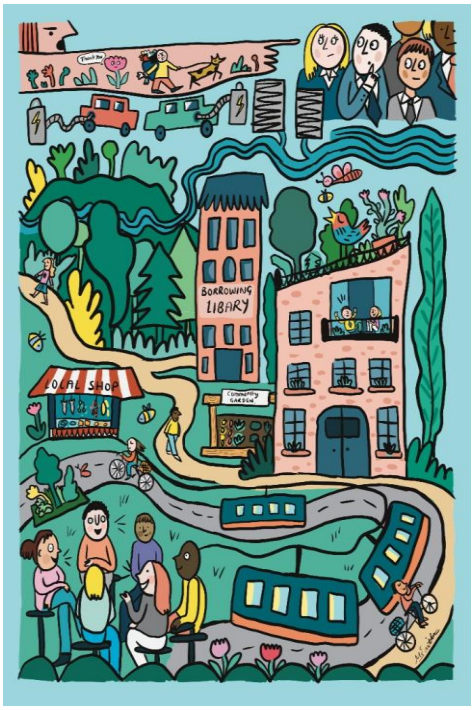


Our Communities: Our Choices workshop in Cults Parish Church

Artists contributions (a selection)



Ade Adesina



Megan C. Smith

Leanne Goodall



Natasha Falconer



Sponsored by GREENPEACE

School art winners 1



Minecraft/Full Render video,
Willow, Drumoak School



Eco Tower, video
Kingsford School P7

St Andrews Primary P7



School art winners 2



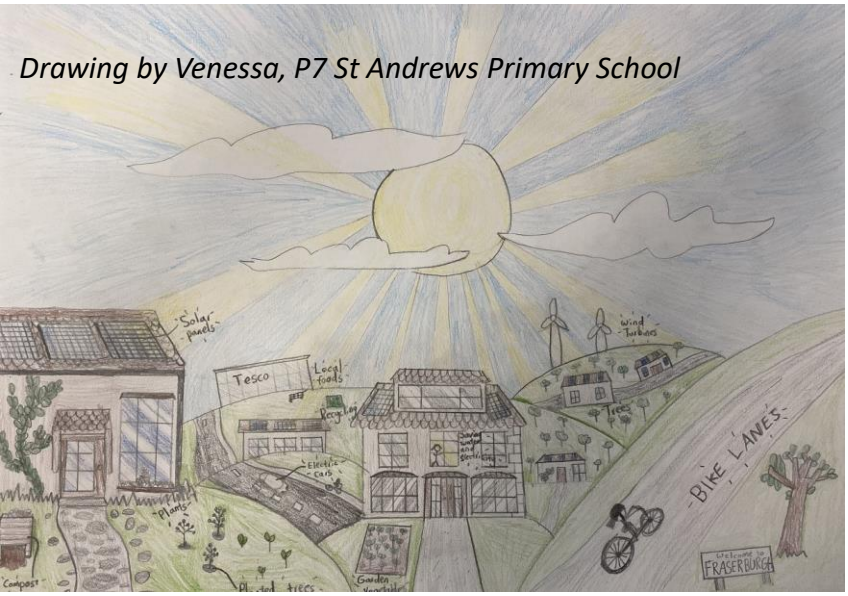
Our Sustainable City, Karim, Nathan, Ivan and Nico S1, International School Aberdeen



Save Newburgh, video, Sarah, Hannah, Cailyn and Alisha P7, Newburgh School



Eco Island, video, Elementary Sustainability Club, International School Aberdeen



Drawing by Venessa, P7 St Andrews Primary School

Bervie in 2030

There is a small town that's called Bervie.
Solar panels will give us all our energy.
Wind turbines will be in the sea.
You can't leave school till you plant a tree.

There will be bike trails all around Bervie.
Allowing bikers to ride safely.
We will have electric buses going through Bervie.
Not polluting the air and sea.

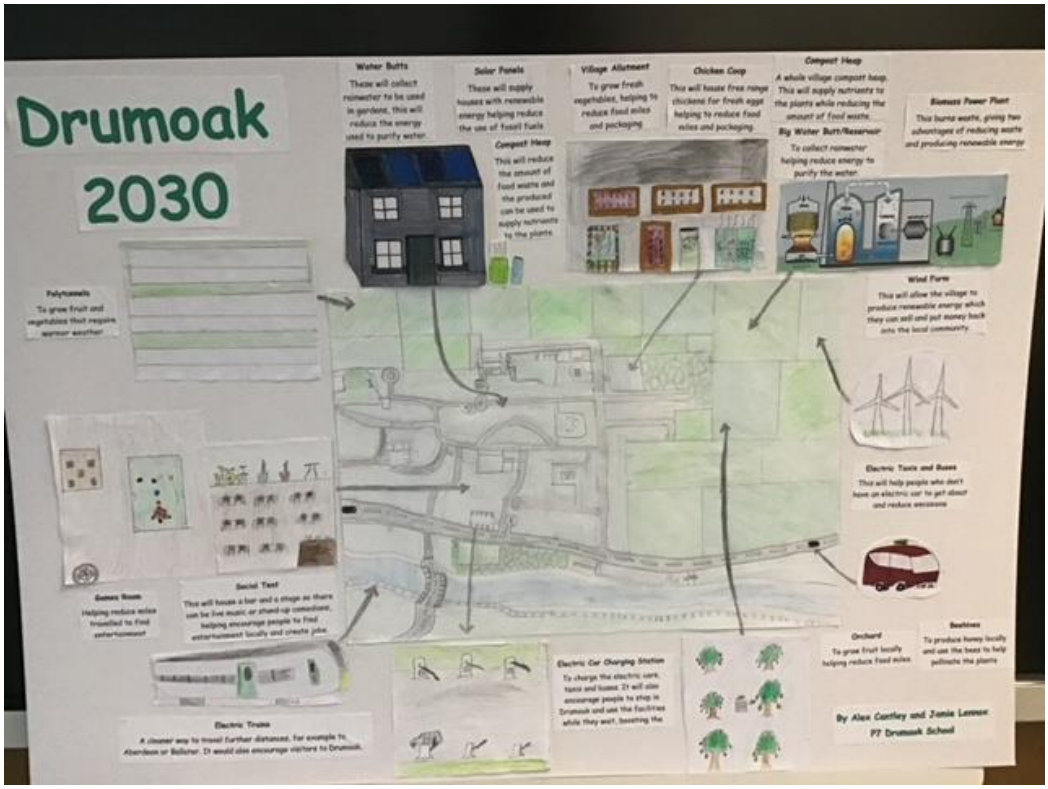
We will have a place to plant our vegetables.
Which will be on our dinner tables.
We'll plant everything be hand.
Which is what we planned.

Please recycle everything.
Don't waste anything.

By Ollie and Lewis

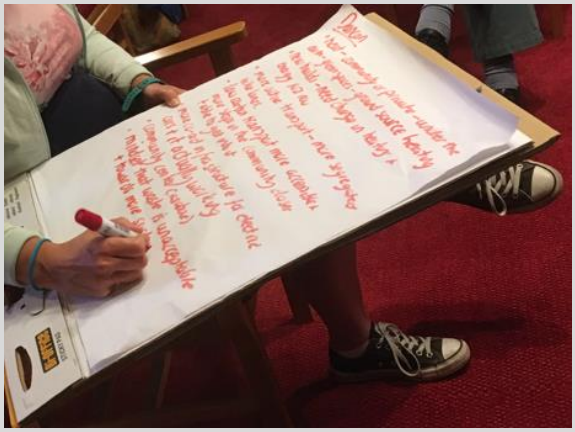
Poem by Ollie and Lewis, P5 Bervie School

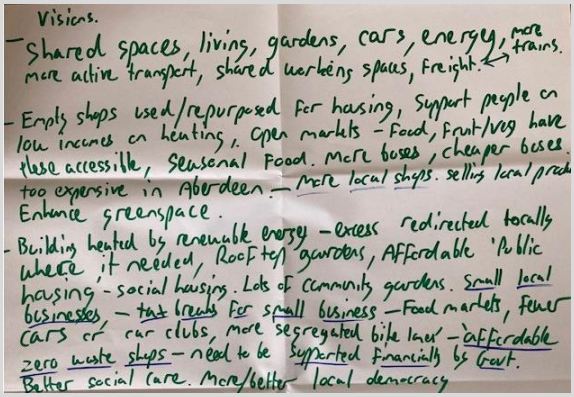
School art winners 3



Posters by Alex and Jamie of P7 (above) and James, P6 (below), Drumoak School









Data capture during workshops

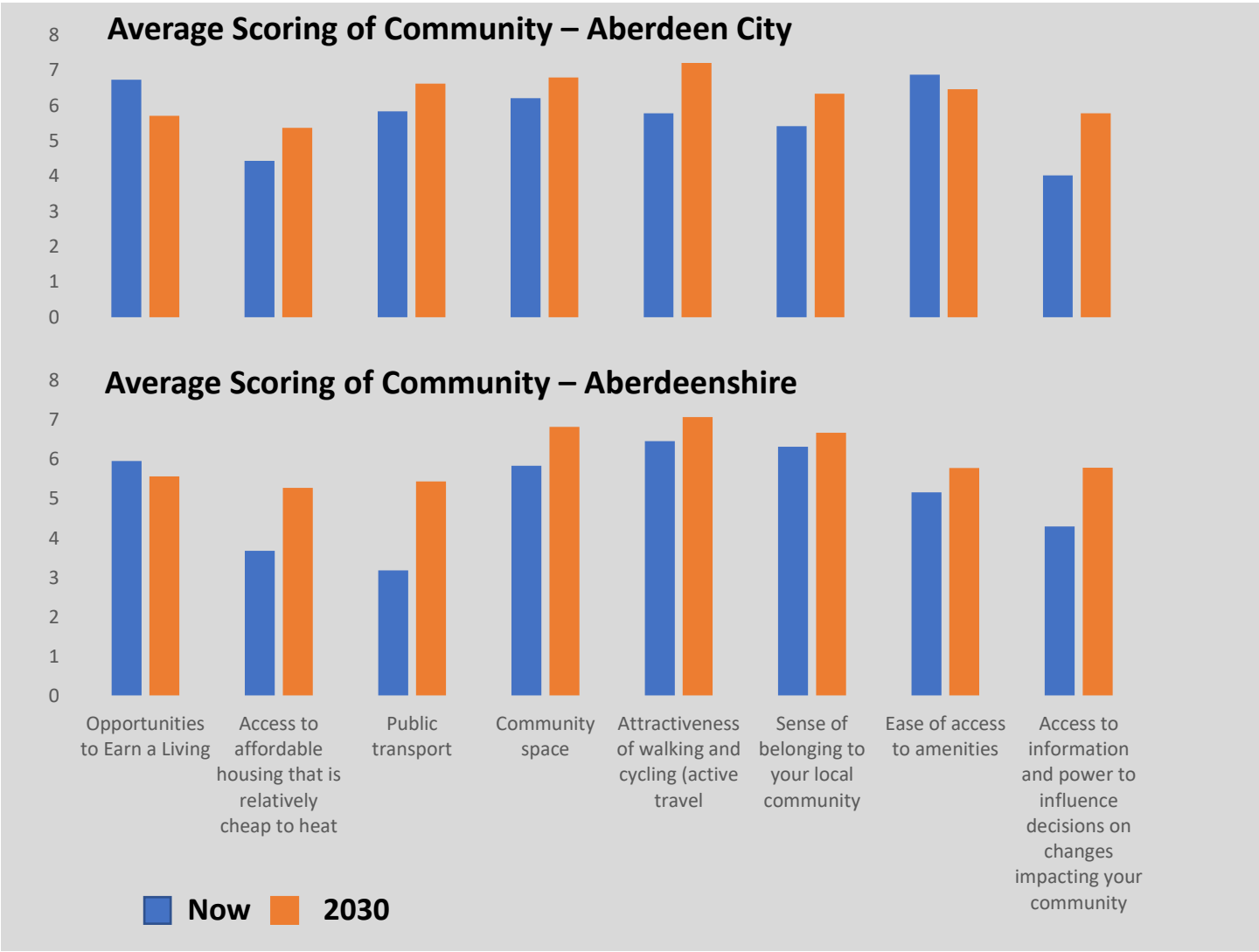
Data

We appreciate that people who attended the workshops and responded to the questionnaire were all self-selected, so most of them understood what the terms 'climate change' and 'just transition' meant. Many also understood and feared that the changes would impact our area disproportionately because of the local economy's dependence on oil and gas. Despite this inherent bias in the data, some key conclusions can be made.

There were clear differences in responses from those living in the urban Aberdeen City and those in rural Aberdeenshire. Although there were some differences in demographics of questionnaire respondents between the two areas with a generally younger, working population in the City and an older, retired population in the Shire, we think it's likely that the differences in responses largely reflect the different experiences of those living in an urban setting compared to a rural one.

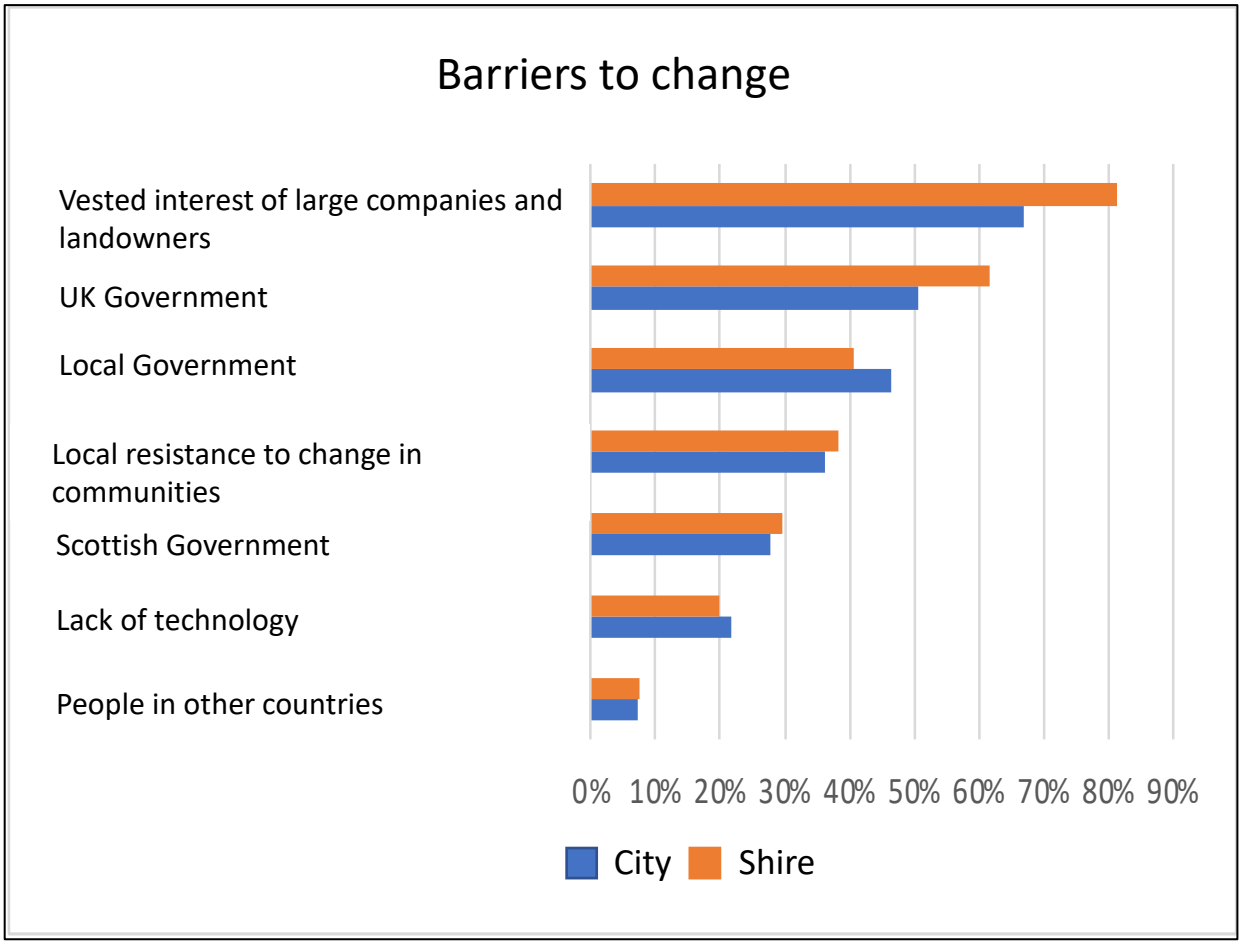
Conclusions 1
Visions of life in 2030 are positive but change is difficult

The workshops and questionnaire were focussed on helping people articulate their vision of life in North East Scotland in 2030. In general, people are expecting improvement in all aspects of life questioned, apart from opportunities to earn a living. In the City, ease of access to local amenities is also expected to decline by 2030.

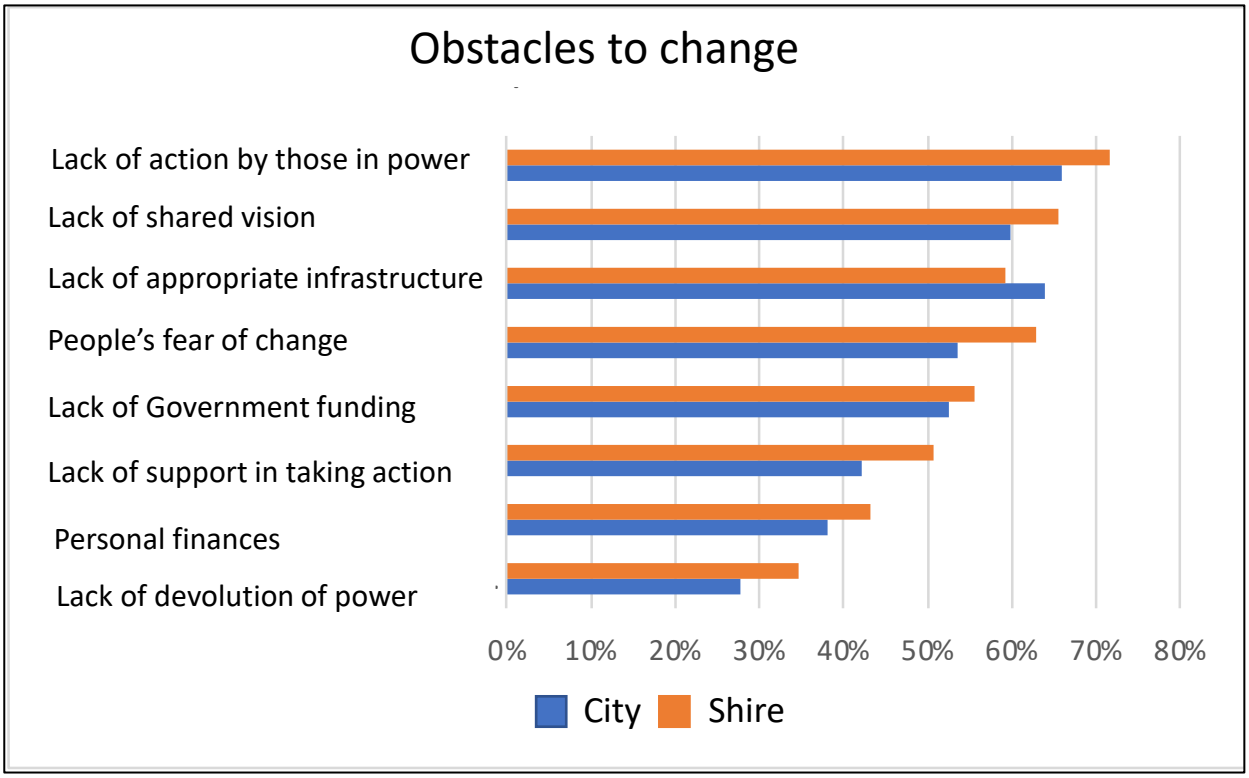


However, in the workshops there was acknowledgement that change is difficult ('people's behaviour is very hard to change', 'people's dislike of change has to be recognised, so they need to be helped') and that there is a key role for Government and business to take a lead in making the changes, ('it has to be government led, because individuals will only do what's easy and within their financial resources and understanding', '100 companies are responsible for 70% of all carbon emissions').

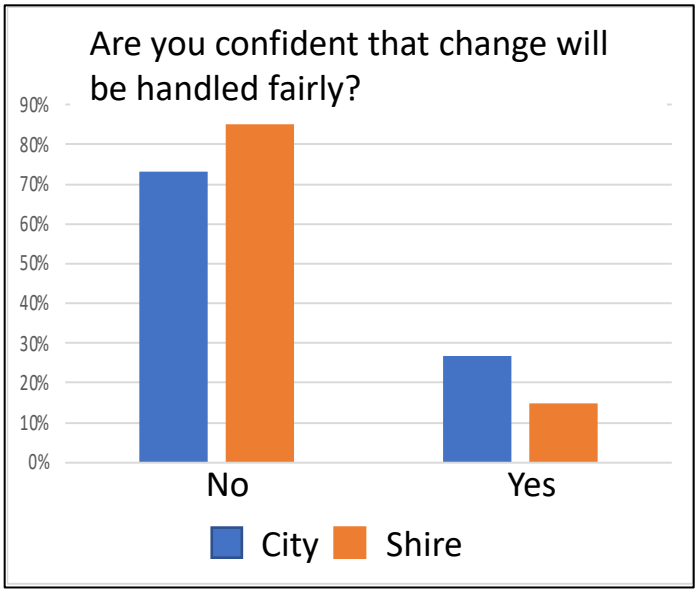
In addition, the biggest blockers to change were perceived by almost 70-80% of questionnaire respondents in both City and Shire to be the vested interests of both Government and business (Fig. 5); ('why is it up to us as individuals to decrease our carbon footprint when it's a few large companies that produce the majority of the carbon', 'Government must enforce policies and realise the promises', 'too many policies contradict', 'I want to see action, not just policies').



The biggest obstacles to change were cited by 60-70% of the questionnaire respondents in both City and Shire as lack of action by those in power along with no shared vision, followed by a lack of appropriate infrastructure. Around 50-60% thought that fear of change as well as lack of Government funding and support were also problems. Personal finances were said to be the main obstacle by around 40%.



Most people realised the importance of the change that is required but there is very little confidence that it will be a just transition – about 25% of questionnaire respondents in Aberdeen City thought the change would be handled fairly, and only about 15% in Aberdeenshire.





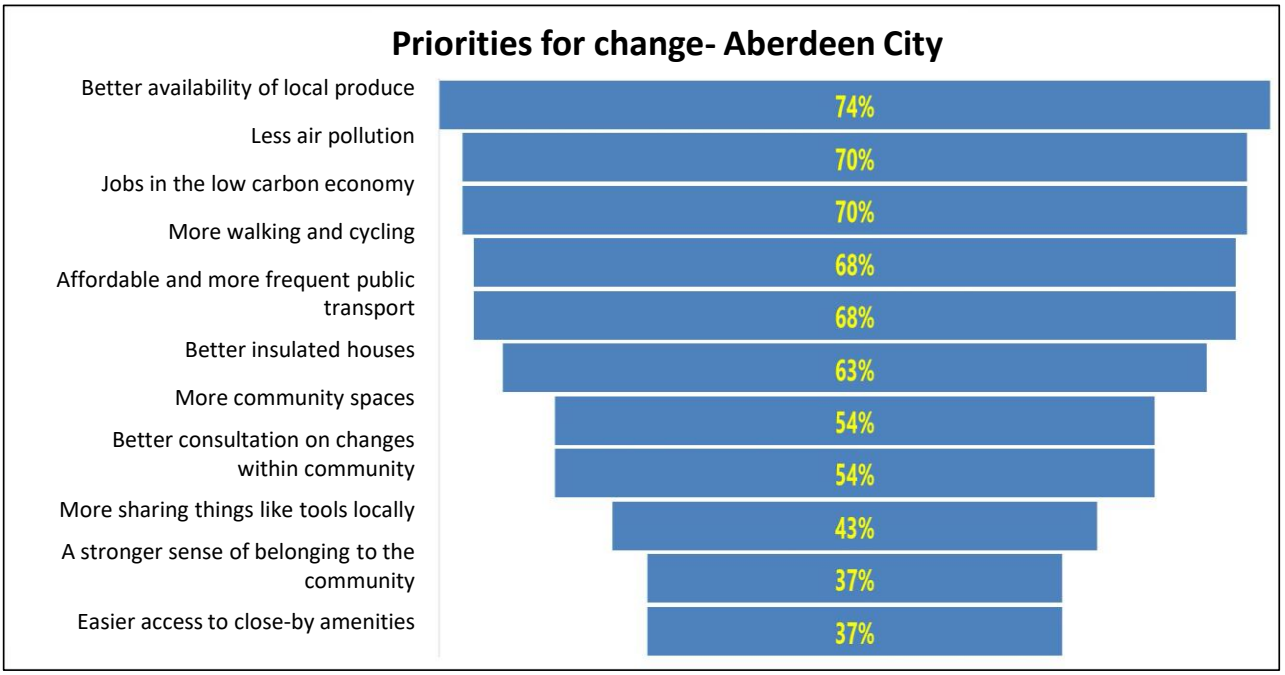
Conclusions 2
Priorities for change in North East Scotland

Priorities for change identified from the questionnaires were different between the Aberdeen City and the more rural towns and villages in Aberdeenshire. These differences are important to note, and again emphasise the call for local action *('many of the ideas to address the climate emergency are much more relevant to urban communities').*



Aberdeen City priorities for change

According to the questionnaire data, the top 5 priorities for change in Aberdeen City were better availability of local produce, less air pollution, and more jobs in the low carbon economy, followed by improved ability to travel without a car, i.e., walking, cycling and public transport, Fig.8.



In addition, in the Aberdeen City workshops, there was extensive discussion about:

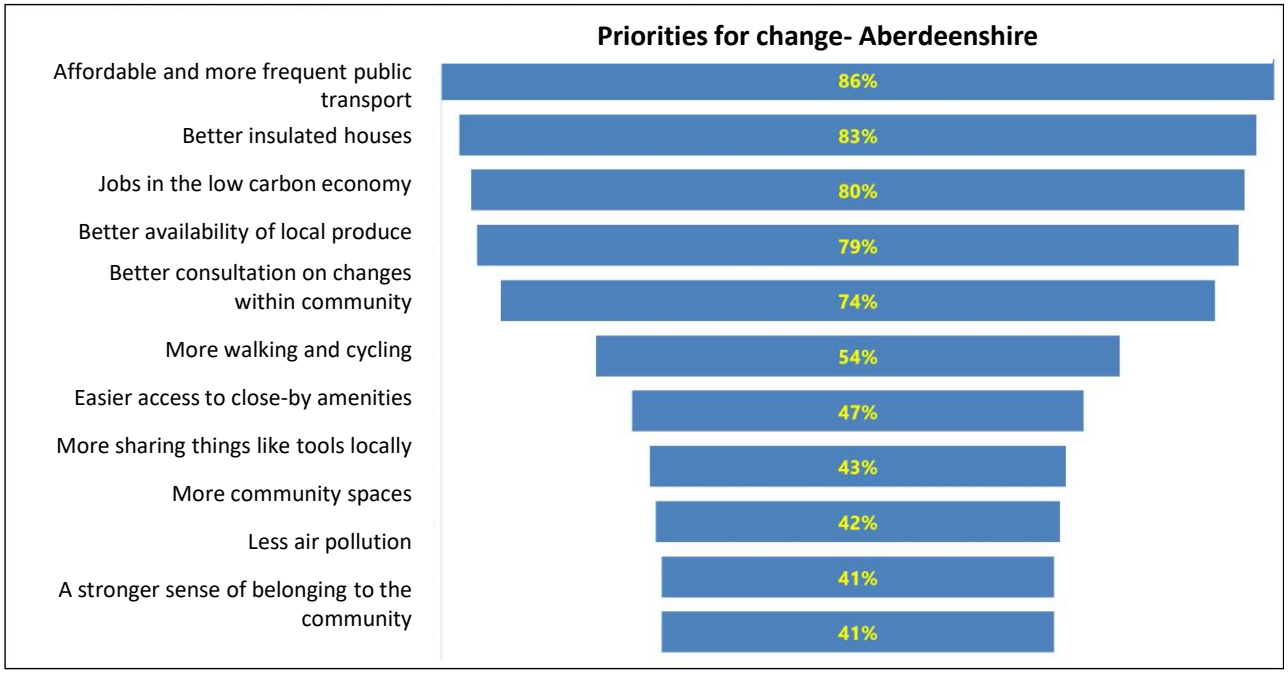
- Better connected and self-sufficient communities – shops selling local produce, green community energy, local amenities and jobs- available in the local community and community co-operatives and sharing schemes.
- Better public transport and active travel designed around the 'the 20-minute community'
- Affordable, sustainable, and well-insulated housing, for both new and older houses
- Access to connected local green biodiverse spaces.



- More holistic thinking and action to reduce social inequities alongside a change of mindset to align with 'green' values
- In the Institute of Mechanical Engineer's workshop, there was a greater focus on the energy sector and job transition than other workshops

Aberdeenshire priorities for change

For Aberdeenshire, the questionnaire data showed that the top 5 priorities for change were affordable and more frequent public transport, better insulated houses, and jobs in the low-carbon economy, followed by better availability of local produce and better consultation on changes within the community (Fig. 9).



In addition, in the workshops, there was extensive discussion about

- Local empowerment and decision-making to create local thriving communities
- Improved education and training to raise awareness, encourage young people not to leave, and to re-skill people for a sustainable economy
- Better local public transport networks (not all going into Aberdeen City), and active travel so that cars are not so necessary
- Affordable, sustainable, and well-insulated housing, for both new and older houses
- Change in local land management to promote both local sustainable food production and rewilding.



Conclusions 3

Top 5 priorities for change

Pulling together the input from the questionnaire and workshops 5 top priorities for change were identified:

Top priorities 1: Local decision-making and action

In all workshops, there was a strong call for more local decision-making and action for a just transition (*'get more local action and feeling of belonging and empowerment', 'local is more important').*

This issue was not explored in the questionnaire.

Many expressed frustrations about being distant from both UK and Scottish Government *('I don't feel we are a priority for either Scottish or UK Governments, and I fear we will be sacrificed to meet a political target')* as well a lack of consultation *('there's very little public consultation on all this', 'community inclusion in decisions is very poor', 'honestly consult with people in a meaningful way. Listen to what they say. Then try extremely hard to make it happen, instead of trying very hard to come up with excuses of why the public is wrong').*



Conclusions 3
Top 5 priorities for change

Top priorities 2: Training and financial support

Key to local empowerment and decision-making are the social and financial capital to make changes happen. This requires training and support to build local capacity and enable community leadership (*'I would like to see more support/training for people to take on leadership roles within the community', 'we need more training to build capacity and enable community leadership'*).

Furthermore, training is needed to raise awareness of climate change and the societal changes that are needed to mitigate and adapt to it (*'my community lacks opportunities to educate itself about, and process learning about, the impacts of climate change', 'raise awareness, bring people with you, and help people make the change in simple ways by giving them easy to do options'*).

Change in the community cannot happen without financial support (*'fund the solutions to help individuals achieve a low carbon lifestyle', 'support and subsidise those who cannot afford to make the changes at present', 'without funding and incentives from Government, it will take too long to happen', 'rebalance taxation to better reflect the things we want to encourage'*).



Conclusions 3
Top 5 priorities for change

Top priorities 3: Thriving local communities through localism and better land use

Localism – defined as access to local shops and businesses offering local products, local amenities, and jobs (in the low carbon sector), is a strong theme picked up in both the workshops and questionnaire.

Comments included *'we need more home-grown food', 'more local affordable produce', 'accessible local amenities', 'living more locally: local banks, food, tool library, sharing of things', 'create local job opportunities', 'support local farms and businesses', 'develop local power plants to supply local communities', 'how can we get people to buy more locally?', 'local recycling and upcycling facilities', 'encourage more local tourism rather than travelling abroad'.*

Land management that results in a diversified landscape and increased biodiversity, i.e., less mono-culture and pasture, was highlighted, particularly in the Shire. There is concern about the lack of diversity in the current landscape (*'I look on my surroundings as an ecological desert', 'I am surrounded by farming with lots of land without any living creature in it', 'we need to re-think farming'*).

Options to 'shift to agroforestry, permaculture, and rewilding (especially moorland), with increased natural wetlands, more trees and well-planned fruit and vegetable growing were encouraged (*'expanded mixed woodland', 'thriving peatlands', 'rewilded land with biodiversity', 'water management to prevent flooding in winter and drought in summer'*). But support for farmers was needed to make these changes *('recognise the emotional and financial investment of many farmers who may be most impacted by the change'*).

In the City access to more and better greenspace came across very strongly in every workshop. *'What bothers me most about my community currently is the creeping and increasing loss of greenspace', 'the biggest issue is the new built of housing on green spaces', '… there are hardly any green spaces left in my local community'.*



Conclusions 3
Top 5 priorities for change

Top priorities 4: Less car use, more public transport, cycling and walking

There was a strong plea for more frequent and local public transport, more connected cycling and walking paths so that people don't have to rely on their cars so often.

In both City and Shire this is expressed as '20-minute communities', whereas in Aberdeenshire there is a wish to have local transport networks that don't require travelling into Aberdeen City to get anywhere, and safe cycling networks.

Comments about public transport included *'I'd really like to drive less in my car, but public transport links are so dire', 'public transport in the NE is shocking compared to the central belt', 'more reliable, frequent and affordable public transport', 'irresistible public transport', 'need to invest hugely in public transport', 'extend public transport to rural areas', 'better cross-town public transport links – you have to change at Union St for everything', 'bus service is OK if you want to go to Aberdeen, very poor if you want to go anywhere else').*

Cycling and walking paths comments were extensive too *'cycling on main roads is too daunting in my area', 'cycling infrastructure within the city is very poor', 'traffic is way too fast to risk cycling on roads unless you are very brave', 'paths don't link up for walkers', 'need more safe walking routes', 'there needs to be a major mindset change to get people out of their cars to walk and cycle', 'more incentives to walk and cycle'.*





Conclusions 3
Top 5 priorities for change

Top priorities 5: Improved housing

Both the questionnaire and workshops elicited strong comments about improving housing. This includes:

- retrofitting older housing for better insulation and heating *('it's difficult and expensive to retrofit granite houses,' 'get our housing stock into shape', 'all older houses have inadequate insulation', 'provide subsidies to switch to alternate heating', 'need funding for hard to heat properties and training for skills in appropriate joined up insulation, retrofit and low carbon heating systems, making our house low carbon is a real headache', 'heating is by far the hardest thing to de-carbonise', 'poor households have the lowest EPC and need the most help'*).
- building net zero ready and affordable new houses (*'create houses that are sustainable', 'affordable housing is a big issue', 'strongly enforce new building regulations so houses have proper insulation and carbon-free heating'*).
- having more local community influence on development decisions (*'what bothers me most is the creeping and increasing loss of greenspace', 'we are lucky to have woods and trails nearby but there is constant encroachment by housing development, much of it not affordable', 'too much development with insufficient infrastructure', 'removing areas of beauty to accommodate large ugly houses not in keeping with the area', 'landowners and developers are too profit-driven', ' the planning system and legislation needs to put the community first, not the developer', 'Union street is like watching the decay of a lovely flower', 'we look like a dying city', 'Aberdeen city council do not listen to citizens and insist on building, building, building'*).

Acknowledgements

NESCAN
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Clemence O'Connor

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Mary Scott

Friends of Saint Fittick's Park
Susan Smith

Aberdeen Science Centre
India Copeland
Kostas Minas

Friends of the Earth Scotland
Katie Whitaker
Scott Herrett
Ryan Morrison

Aberdeen Climate Action
Gordon Charlton
Sam Hardman
Dave Shannon

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John Sergison
Lucy Edwards

University of Aberdeen
Gearoid Millar

Aberdeen City Council
Fiona Saunders

MDEC
Natalija Clark-Mills

Church of Scotland
Rev. Shuna Dick

Institute of Mechanical Engineers
Matthew Isakaj
Alexey Lassinski

Maha Abhishek
Annie Begg

North East Scotland Climate Action Network

Friends of the Earth Scotland

Aberdeen Climate Action

GREENPEACE

North East Scotland Climate Action Network



Clip of winning Secondary School art, International School Aberdeen S1

Thumbnails of submitted School pupil art







