

**REPORT TO: DUNDEE, PERTH, ANGUS AND NORTH FIFE  
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY  
JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING ON 6<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2015**

**REPORT ON: CUSTOMER SURVEY FEEDBACK**

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**REPORT NO: SDPA11-2015**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report summarises the feedback from the TAYplan Customer Experience Survey that was carried out during July and August 2015.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

2.1 As part of its commitment to improve customer experience TAYplan ran its second Customer Experience Survey from 10 July to 31 August 2015. This followed on from the period for representations on the Proposed Strategic Development Plan which closed on 3 July 2015.

2.2 The Customer Survey questionnaire asked respondents to score TAYplan on how well they felt methods of engagement work, what they think could work better in future and also about how they think their comments are taken into account.

2.3 Many of the questions were used in the previous 2014 customer survey so that responses can be compared. Other questions focused specifically on evaluating the period for representations on the Proposed Strategic Development Plan.

2.4 There were 28 responses from a variety of backgrounds ranging from members of the public, to businesses, community councils and government bodies. This is slightly fewer than the 33 responses in 2014. The majority of responses are positive but also point out areas for improvement. This survey, like that of 2014, also suggests the need to improve communication with our 'less technical audience'. Many of the methods currently used to engage with people are supported for use in the future.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 It is recommended that the Joint Committee:

- a) Note the contents of this report

## **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 No financial implications arising.

## 5.0 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE SURVEY

5.1 The survey ran from 10 July to 31 August 2015. A copy of the questionnaire form is attached to this report at Appendix 1. More detailed analysis of each question is contained in Appendix 2. The survey was structured as follows:

- Respondents could choose which questions to answer and which not to.
- Respondents scored various methods of engagement or their view of TAYplan's performance from 1 to 10, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent.
- Other questions asked for choices from model answers.
- Respondents could also choose 'other' and specify.
- Respondents were offered the opportunity to explain their answers further if they wished.

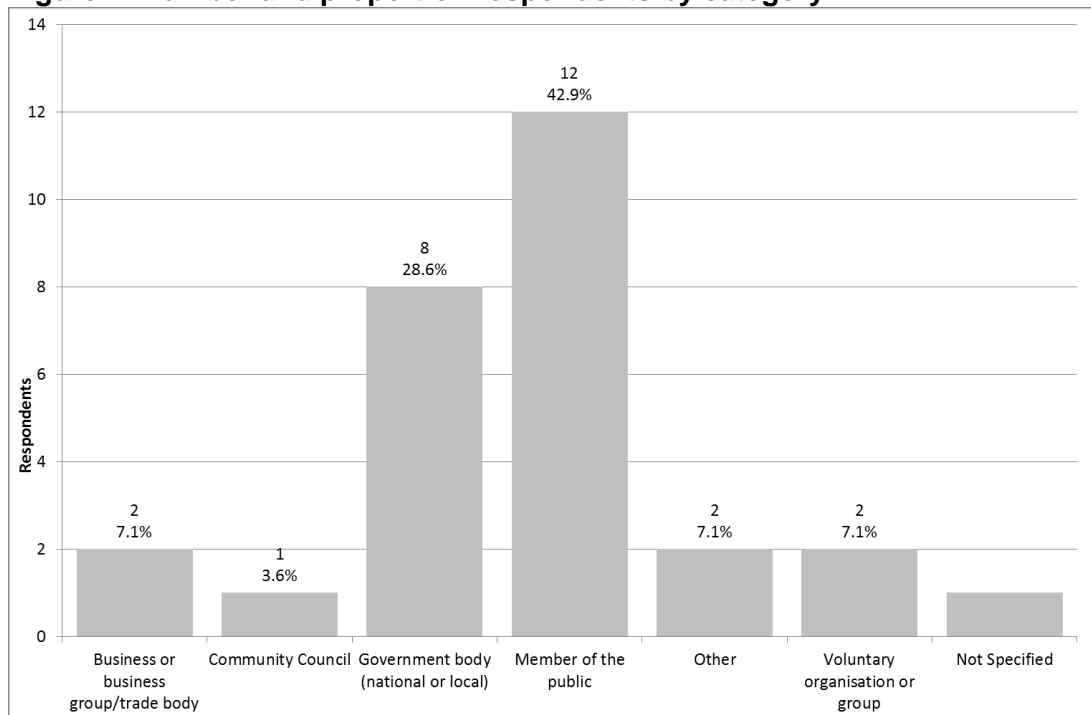
5.2 TAYplan emailed all those who are registered on our customer database (including all those who had responded to the proposed plan) inviting them to participate in the customer survey and promoted this through the TAYplan website and Twitter.

5.3 The survey was hosted electronically on the TAYplan portal with a direct link from the home page of the TAYplan website. Paper and word copies could also be completed on request. All of the 28 responses were completed online.

## 6.0 RESPONDENTS

6.1 The survey was anonymous but respondents were asked to categorise themselves. There was a mix of respondents with the majority being members of the public and government bodies (national or local) (see Figure 1 below).

**Figure 1: Number and proportion respondents by category**



## 7.0 ISSUES RAISED

### Scoring performance

7.1 The survey specifically asked respondents to rate the following using a score of 1 to 10 where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent:

- How well they think TAYplan keeps them informed about its work.
- How helpful they feel the information is that they receive or use (Letters, Newsletters, Website, Twitter, Phone, Email, other).
- How useful methods were for helping them understand and/or comment on the Proposed Plan (2015) and associated documents (online response forms, online response portal, TAYplan team support and assistance, community drop-in events, display material, leaflets, other).
- How methods of engaging should be used in the future (Community drop-in events, schools workshops, youth events, roundtable discussions, others).

7.2 In all four instances the responses were largely positive with scores of 6 or higher. However in almost all instances there were scores of less than 5, including some of 2 and of 1 (poor).

7.3 The detailed analysis presented in Appendix 2 reveals that there is broad satisfaction amongst the 'technical audience', those for whom planning or related disciplines are their day to day activity. However, there are still a variety of scores amongst these groups and some additional comments about improvements.

7.4 For members of the public (the largest single group of respondents) there is a more distinct split with some giving high scores and some giving low scores. There is also a consistency between low scores and where the respondent references specific issues that they do not feel have been taken on board or a policy approach that they do not support. This also reflects conclusions from the 2014 customer survey.

### Perceptions of information and how comments considered

7.5 Two questions provided model answers and asked respondents to choose those they thought appropriate. They could also specify another factor. These questions covered:

- How well people felt they were kept informed about TAYplan's work and when they could actively participate (not enough, about right, too much, a mixture – sometime too much and sometimes not enough, something else).
- How much difference people thought their comments had made:
  - They could see the difference in TAYplan's work;
  - They could see that their comments were taken on board even if it hadn't led to the change they wanted;
  - They could not tell what difference it had made;
  - They did not think their comments had been considered;
  - Sometimes their comments made a difference and sometimes not; or,
  - Something else

- 7.6 Most respondents (around 75%) felt that the level of information provided by TAYplan about its work was 'about right'. Two of the members of the public that responded and one business group said that there was 'not enough consultation'. Of those who elaborated the issues raised related to the type of information that is communicated and risks of too much consultation on too many things. Of those who said there was not enough consultation the concerns related to confusion and what they described as the broad brush nature of strategic planning and how this can make it difficult to understand what is proposed for a specific area.
- 7.7 There were also comments made by those who work more closely with TAYplan suggesting that there can sometimes be too much focus on process.
- 7.8 Just over half of those who responded felt that comments they made had influenced TAYplan's work or that they could see that these had been considered, even if they had not led to the change that was sought. These views were particularly prevalent amongst Government bodies (national and local), but not exclusively. This is perhaps less surprising as this group are very closely involved with the preparation of the plan and planning is part of their day to day work.
- 7.9 Just under half of those who responded could not tell what difference their comments made or felt that their comments had been considered at all. These were largely made up of members of the public.
- 7.10 Again the nature of these comments illustrates a split in the audience between those who are 'technical audience' and the 'less technical audience'. Of the 'less technical audience' there are those who feel engaged and those who do not. Some of the comments provided express scepticism about public engagements, the need for more user-friendly material and concerns about joined-up working in relation to matters that are dealt with at strategic level versus those that are dealt with at Local Development Plan level.
- 7.11 There were also some comments that appear to relate to where the content of the plan or other documents does not appear to do what the respondent would like. One response suggests that there is too strong an emphasis on engaging with young people and not enough on the rest of society.

## **8.0 HOW TO IMPROVE**

- 8.1 The 2015 survey reinforces that there is clearly a technical audience for whom planning issues are routine. It is also clear that even despite strong efforts some of the 'less technical audience' (those for whom planning is not routine) still find the engagement process challenging to understand. In particular there is a considerable range of view from within the 'less technical audience'. These variations in experience continue to present challenges for communication.

- Communicating with different audiences
- 8.2 Over the last year or more TAYplan has worked hard to make information simpler and easier to follow. There were regular emails, there were quick guide leaflets, and TAYplan also ran information events.
- 8.3 Although the majority scored our online systems well it is clear that some respondents find the online systems difficult to use. Although TAYplan will continue to use online methods to speed up the planning system and will continue to direct its technical audience towards these, will also continue to support members of the public and others to use the online systems as many were able to use these.
- 8.4 There appear, though, to be two issues relating to this; the first is the purpose of the given consultation; and, the second is how easy the online system is to use and the clarity and availability of alternative systems.
- 8.5 TAYplan will need to reconsider how it communicates the purpose of the different consultation stages. For example, the Main Issues stage is where people are asked what they think the next Plan should cover and where options and preferences are presented, but, the Proposed Plan is when they are asked whether they agree with what is written or want a change. The latter is a narrower focus of engagement. There may be opportunities to explore how these messages can be more effectively communicated.
- 8.6 TAYplan will examine its online response systems to see how they can become more user friendly. There remain, however, certain questions that need to be asked in certain ways because of the stage in the process of plan preparation.
- 8.7 Following comments in the 2014 survey TAYplan has regularly reported on work activity and future work to assist some of those who are not clear about processes. In particular there were regular emails during and immediately after the proposed plan period for representations to ensure continued openness and to provide people with a helpful explanation of what is going to happen next. All online material also directs users to this material. TAYplan also started a blog site to help people follow the process.

- Methods of engagement
- 8.8 There has been clear support for the continuation of community drop-in events as a key method of engagement. Although there has been some criticism, there is general support for the value of these as a method of engagement. Some of those responding on the recent drop-in events held in spring 2015 consider that these were too few and as a result did not feel involved. It is also important that these events can be resourced and are appropriate to the nature of the engagement. For example, the Main Issues Report is a consultation process to help as many people as possible have the opportunity to shape the content and structure of the Plan. The Proposed Plan period for representations is to help people understand the Proposed Plan so that they can either support it or seek a change. The emphasis of these two engagement periods is different.

- 8.9 TAYplan had made improvements to online systems to make them easier to follow and use. Although there was support for this there was also criticism and TAYplan will need to explore how to improve user experience. The main focus is to ensure that a response can be fully understood and is clear. This is essential for both the respondent and for TAYplan. There also remains a balance between ensuring that the responses are in a format that is easy to analyse and meets statutory requirements but that there is freedom to comment and raise issues of legitimate concern. Not everybody favours online systems however they do speed up the procedural elements of the development plan system and reduce the cost, resource and environmental impacts of such exercises. Again there is now an opportunity to further explore how the alternatives to online systems are publicised whilst at the same time providing the education and support for people to easily make the transition to online.
- 8.10 TAYplan made significant efforts to engage with young people. There has again been some criticism that this is ageist and skews engagement away from other groups. However, this work was deliberately designed to redress the balance rather than create any imbalance. It was clear from the previous Plan preparation that most respondents were aged 40 or over. Analysis of attendance at community drop-in events showed that the majority of attendees were also aged 40 and above. However this does raise the point that it is important to ensure that all age groups are able to participate.

#### Impact of comments

- 8.11 Following feedback in the 2014 survey TAYplan emailed/wrote to all respondents that made representations on the Proposed Plan (2015) and associated documents. These emails/letters thanked them for their responses and explained the next stages in the process. However, as with the 2014 survey there continue to be some respondents that are not clear how their comments have been taken into consideration.
- 8.12 TAYplan reads in full and considers all responses it receives. However, it will always be the case that some responses will raise issues that are not strategic in significance, are not planning related or which are not supported. This does not mean that TAYplan has not listened or considered the response, but it may mean that some respondents are disappointed that they have not been successful in influencing the outcome they wanted to see.
- 8.13 TAYplan is also aware that the customer survey for 2015 has been run prior to the consideration of all of the comments and prior to any committee decision about them. This may offer some explanation; however, it is also clear more information may be needed. TAYplan already publishes the summaries of the responses received at Main Issues Report consultation stage and TAYplan's views on these. This is no statutory requirement but TAYplan considers it to be helpful. The 2014 Customer Survey also took place prior to the publication of this document.

8.14 It is clear though that explaining to people where they can see post-consultation analysis information would be helpful. It is not as clear how there could be more consultation on some matters. This can sometimes be the case where the Strategic Development Plan is about a principle but a Local Development Plan may be site specific. In these instances it can be unclear to people how one influences the other or that there is an opportunity to comment at both stages, albeit for related but different processes.

#### Key areas for improvement

8.15 The responses to the 2015 Customer Survey suggest that there are further opportunities to improve how TAYplan engages with its customers. Although this report has focused on the issues to resolve, it should be noted that the methods used are broadly welcomed and this is also reflected in the Scottish Government's review of Strategic Development Plans, TAYplan's recent Scottish Quality in Planning Award (2014) for public engagement, and, the recent shortlisting of the Proposed Plan (2015) for the Scottish Quality in Planning Awards (2015).

8.16 This customer survey reveals three key areas for improvement:

- Better communication of key messages with our non-technical audience with a particular focus on guiding them through the process.
- Continuation of the methods previously used to engage but with a strong emphasis on how information is communicated to make the customer experience easier and with an opportunity to explore further how to make online systems easier to follow.
- Clearer signposting to post-consultation analysis and views. There is also an opportunity to explore the format and publicity around this.

8.17 The TAYplan Manager will implement these improvement actions to assist in improving the customer's experience.

## **9.0 CONSULTATIONS**

9.1 The Treasurer and Clerk to TAYplan, TAYplan Manager, the Director of Communities Directorate, Angus Council, Executive Director of City Development, Dundee City Council, Executive Director of Environment, Enterprise and Communities, Fife Council and the Executive Director (Environment), Perth & Kinross Council have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

Pamela Ewen  
Strategic Development Planning Authority Manager  
22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015

# Appendix 1: Customer Experience Survey 2015

**Question 1. I am responding as a...**

|                                       | Please tick one |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Member of the public                  |                 |
| Business or business group/trade body |                 |
| Voluntary organisation or group       |                 |
| Community Council                     |                 |
| Elected councillor or parliamentarian |                 |
| Government Body (national or local)   |                 |
| Other – please specify _____          |                 |

**Question 2. How well do you feel that TAYplan keeps you informed about our work?**

*Please score us by ticking below where 1 is the worst score and 10 is the best score.*

| Score                               | 1 (poor) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 (Excellent) |
|-------------------------------------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| Keeping you informed about our work |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                |

**Question 3. How helpful is the TAYplan information that you receive or use?**

*For those you use please score us by ticking below where 1 is the worst score and 10 is the best score.*

| Score                           | 1 (poor) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 (Excellent) |
|---------------------------------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| Letters                         |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                |
| Newsletters                     |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                |
| TAYplan Website                 |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                |
| Twitter                         |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                |
| Phone                           |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                |
| Email                           |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                |
| Other (please specify)<br>_____ |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                |

If you would like to tell us more about your answers in Question 3, please do so here...

**Question 4: Do you think we tell you enough to keep you informed about what we are doing and stages when you can actively participate?**

|  | Please tick one |
|--|-----------------|
| Not enough   |                 |
| About right  |                 |
| Too much   |                 |
| A mixture - Too much on some things and not enough on others                             |                 |
| Something else (please tell us about this below)   |                 |
| No comments on this question   |                 |
| If you would like to tell us more about your answers in Question 4, please do so here... |                 |



**Question 5: Are there any things that we have not engaged you on that you think we should have done?**

Please write your response to Question 5 here...

**Question 6. How useful did you find the following things in helping you to understand and/or comment on the TAYplan Proposed Plan (2015)?**

*For those relevant to you please score us by ticking below where 1 is the worst score and 10 is the best score.*

| Score   | 1<br>(poor) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10<br>(Excellent) |
|---|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Online response forms   |             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| TAYplan Online response portal  |             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| TAYplan team support and assistance   |             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| Community drop-in events (we held 4: Forfar – 19 May; Perth – 20 May; Cupar – 28 May and Dundee – 3 June) |             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| Display material  |             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| Leaflets  |             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| Other (please specify)  |             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |

If you would like to tell us more about your answers in Question 6, please do so here...

**Question 7: If you have contacted TAYplan or responded to one of our earlier consultations (prior to April 2015) what difference do you think your comments made to our work?**

|   | Please tick any that apply |
|---|----------------------------|
| My comments have made a difference and I can see this in TAYplan's work                               |                            |
| I can see that my comments have been taken on board, even if they have not led to the change I wanted |                            |
| I cannot tell what difference my comments have made   |                            |
| I do not think my comments have been considered at all  |                            |
| Sometimes my comments make a difference but other times they don't                                    |                            |
| Something else (please tell us in the box below)  |                            |
| No comment on this question.  |                            |

If you would like to tell us more about your answers in Question 7, please do so here...

**Question 8. We have used several ways of engaging with people and organisations. How would you rate the methods below as ways of engaging in the future?**

*For those you use please score us by ticking below where 1 is the worst score and 10 is the best score.*

| <b>Score</b>                    | <b>1<br/>(poor)</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>10<br/>(Excellent)</b> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------------|
| <b>Community Drop-in events</b> |                     |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |                           |
| <b>School workshops</b>         |                     |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |                           |
| <b>Youth events</b>             |                     |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |                           |
| <b>Roundtable discussions</b>   |                     |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |                           |
| <b>Other (please specify)</b>   |                     |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |                           |

If you would like to tell us more about your answers in Question 8, please do so here...

**Question 9. If TAYplan could do anything differently to improve our customer relations, what do you think this would be?**

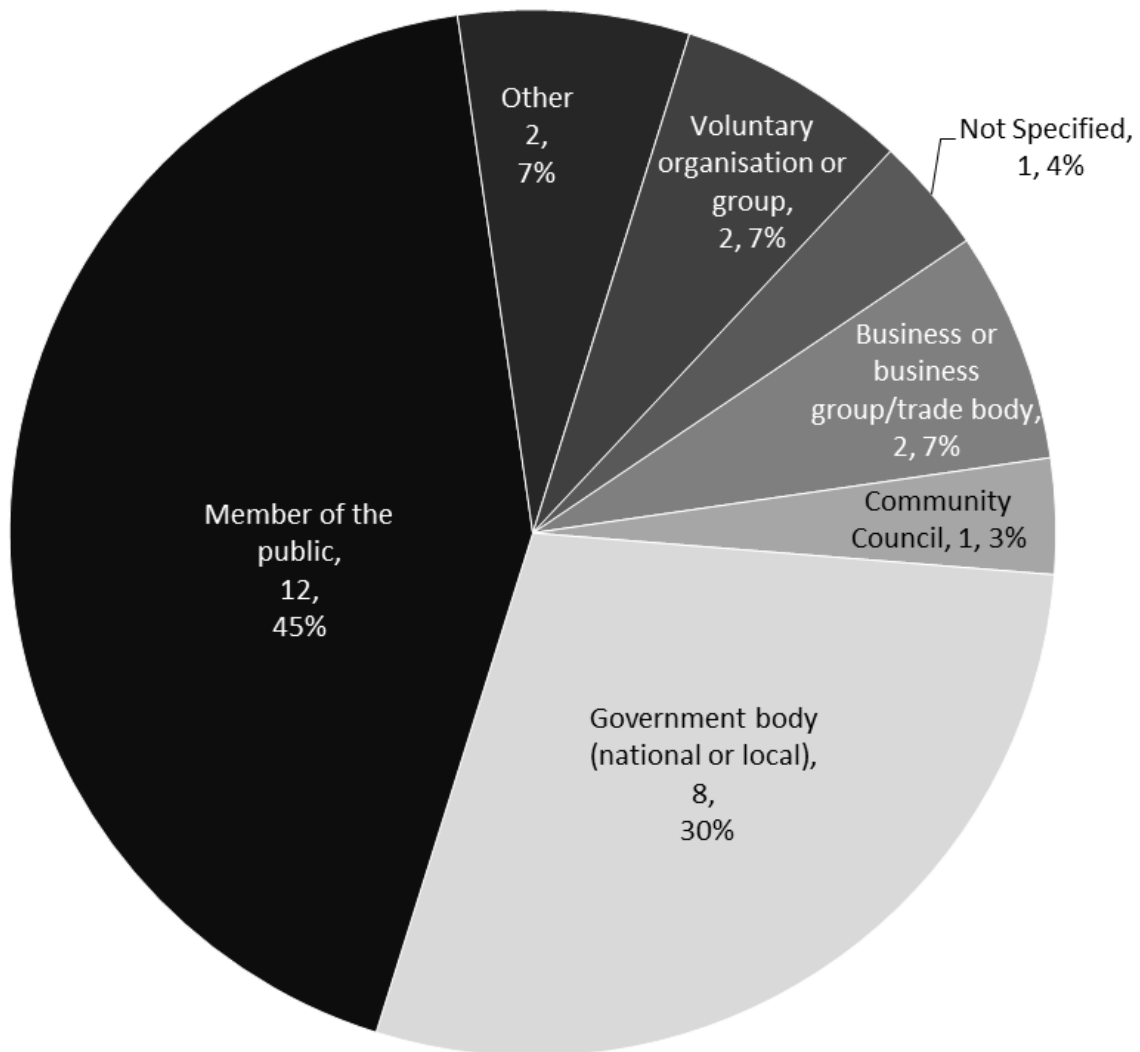
Please write your answer to question 9 here...

## Appendix 2: Analysis of the Responses to the TAYplan Customer Experience Survey (2015)

### 1.0 QUESTION 1 RESPONDENT PROFILE

1.1 There was a broad mix of respondents with most of the 28 responses being from members of the public and government bodies (national or local):

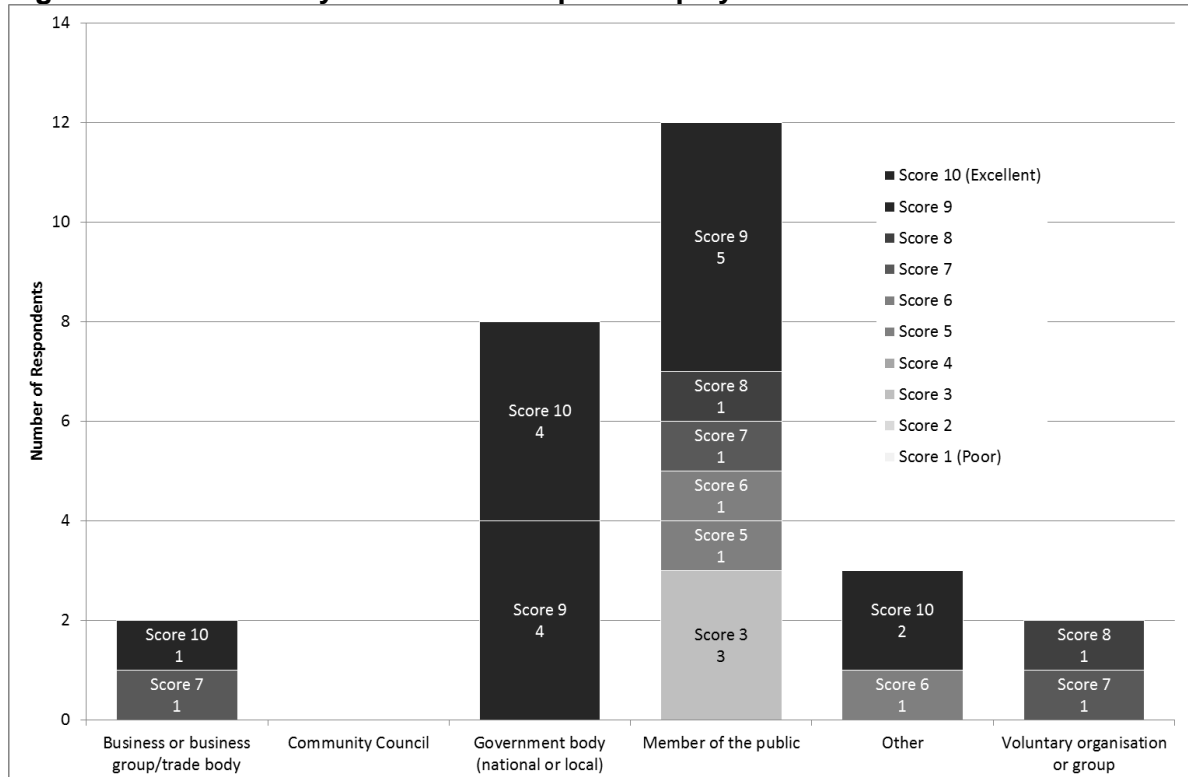
Figure 1: Number and proportion respondents by category



## 2.0 QUESTION 2: HOW WELL TAYPLAN KEEPS PEOPLE INFORMED

2.1 The respondents were asked to score how well they feel that TAYplan keeps them informed about our work. A score of 1 is poor and a score of 10 is excellent. The majority of responses were positive. Those scoring poorly on this matter were from some members of the public only.

**Figure 2: How well do you feel that TAYplan keeps you informed about our work?**



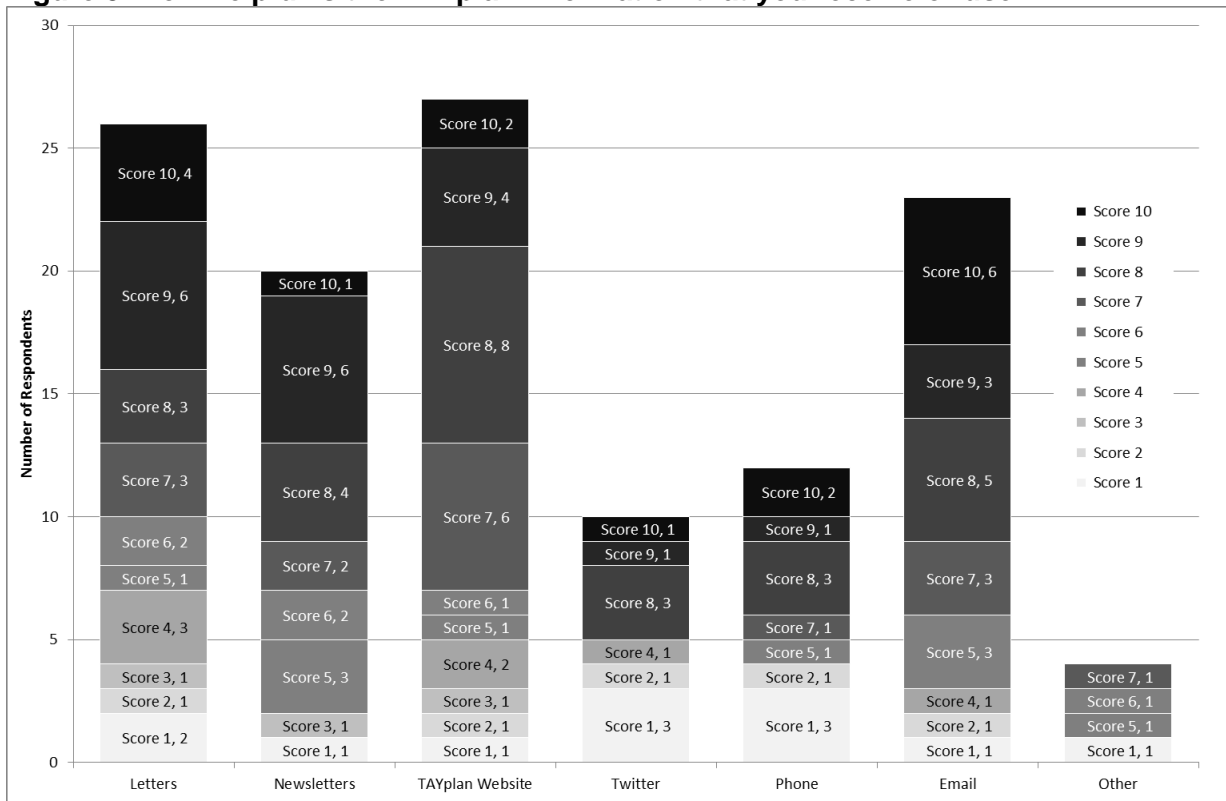
## 3.0 QUESTION 3: HOW HELPFUL IS THE TAYPLAN INFORMATION PEOPLE USE AND RECIEVE

3.1 TAYplan asked how helpful the information is that is either received by or used by the respondents based on several different media used for the information (see Figure 3 below). Some respondents chose the category 'other' and specified key stakeholder meetings (government agencies) and two others but these were not specified by the respondent. Respondents were asked to score these from 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent).

3.2 The majority of responses are high scoring; these came from business, voluntary organisations, members of the public and government bodies. There are also some lower scores. These came from members of the public.

3.3 This shows significantly differing views between different members of the public. It also suggests the strongest satisfaction amongst the technical or corporate focused respondents.

**Figure 3: How helpful is the TAYplan information that you receive or use?**

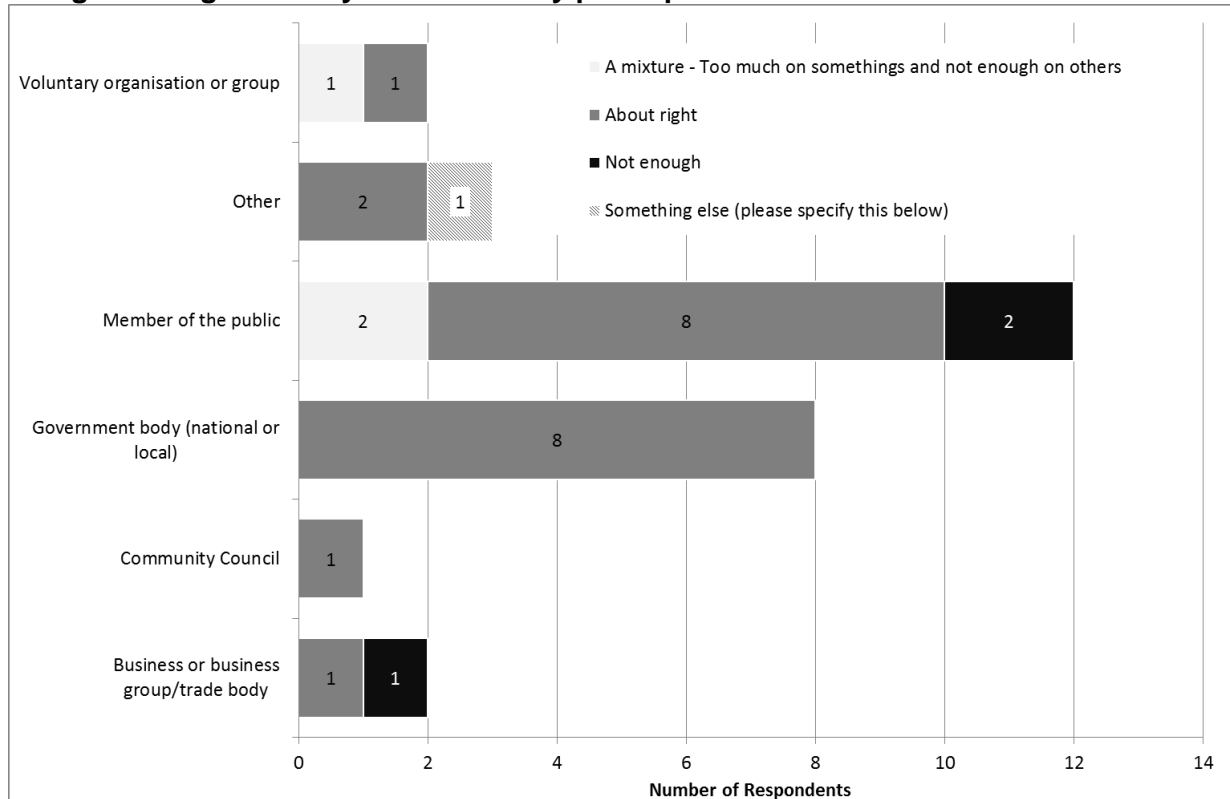


- 3.4 In addition to the scoring TAYplan also asked those who wished, to explain more about their reasons for these answers. This showed that some members of the public welcome the regular information and feel informed as a result. Others feel that the material could be more eye catching. Some members of the public comment that staff are always helpful on the phone.
- 3.5 Some government bodies value the key agency group and feel well informed but consider there to be too strong a focus on process rather than plan content. One also suggests some improvements for the customer survey which will be considered.
- 3.6 Some members of the public consider that TAYplan is telling them rather than asking what they want. This respondent goes on to comment on aspects of design that they consider to be important. Another raises concerns about the complexity and technical nature of material and some of the challenges in responding to this. Another respondent comments that they find Twitter updates helpful.
- 3.7 TAYplan used similar issues raised in the 2014 Customer Survey to help improve the Proposed Plan period for representations during 2015. TAYplan will consider this feedback in considering how best to carry out related activity and communication for the third Strategic Development Plan process.

**4.0 QUESTION 4: DOES TAYPLAN TELL PEOPLE ENOUGH TO KEEP THEM INFORMED ABOUT WHAT IT IS DOING AND WHEN THEY CAN PARTICIPATE**

4.1 Respondents were then asked choose between several statements about how well TAYplan keeps them informed and offered the chance elaborate. They could also choose 'something else' and specify.

**Figure 4: Do you think we tell you enough to keep you informed about what we are doing and stages when you can actively participate?**



4.2 The majority of respondents overall, and the majority in almost every category of respondent considered this to be 'about right'. One community council remarked that this was very comprehensive and very informative.

4.3 Responses from members of the public were split between those who considered this to be 'about right', those who felt there was a 'mixture of too much and also not enough' and those who felt it was 'not enough'. Of those considering there was not enough several points were made:

- One suggested, who considered there to be 'not enough' said that it was difficult to translate what they describe as 'broad brush strokes' in to how it will actually affect specific areas;
- One, who considered there to be 'a mixture' focussed on specific issues relating to design and economic direction – essentially matters of policy which they consider to be important; and,

- One who thought it was 'about right' discusses the uptake of 'Localism' by Scottish Government and another highlights the importance of traditional methods of consultation as not everyone owns a computer. The same respondent also raises issues regarding the relationship of planning geographies to political and civic representation.
- 4.4 Of the Government bodies two commented that there can sometimes be a tendency to consult on very minor points and another reiterated their concern about process focus.
- 4.5 No respondents considered that there was 'too much' consultation. However, some members of the public and some voluntary groups felt that there was 'too much on some things and not enough on others'
- 4.6 One respondent (who did not specify their organisation type) chose 'something else'. They commented that 'while information is given it does not always cover the main issues that affect individuals and is too blue sky to be of real use'.
- 5.0 ARE THERE ANY THINGS THAT TAYPLAN DID NOT ENGAGE ON BUT PEOPLE THINK IT SHOULD HAVE**
- 5.1 This question specifically sought written answers. Of the five respondents to this two (a government body and a member of the public) did not feel there was anything that TAYplan did not engage on but should have done. The government body notes its satisfaction with the engagement and working arrangements.
- 5.2 Some members of the public raise the following specific points:
- The respondent has not seen any consultation on whether 'the existence of TAYplan serves any useful purpose and whether it could be abolished without any detrimental impact'.
  - A respondent seeks more emphasis on better design and different styles of design, providing examples of Hammarby in Stockholm or examples in Holland.
  - A respondent considers that the web portal structure can be difficult to follow.
  - A respondent considers that in all businesses and in every other walk of life where strategic plans are used the results from the previous plan are evaluated before drawing up the next. They consider that this is not the case in the planning process for local government and regions. They consider that this has led to the same mistakes being made and that it is a waste of money.
- 5.4 It is important to clarify matters on two of the points raised above. TAYplan considers that city region planning is important and beneficial because urban areas, housing markets, labour markets, travel to work areas and many other aspects of life and policy cross-local authority boundaries. It is rational to consider these collectively for a city region. TAYplan prepares a monitoring statement and uses the Main Issues Report consultation to explore how effective the previous plan has been and what approaches may be beneficial to plan for in the future. Sometimes this will be a continuation of the current approach and other times it will not. The process is designed to consider issues that represent a change from the position of the current plan and also only includes what are

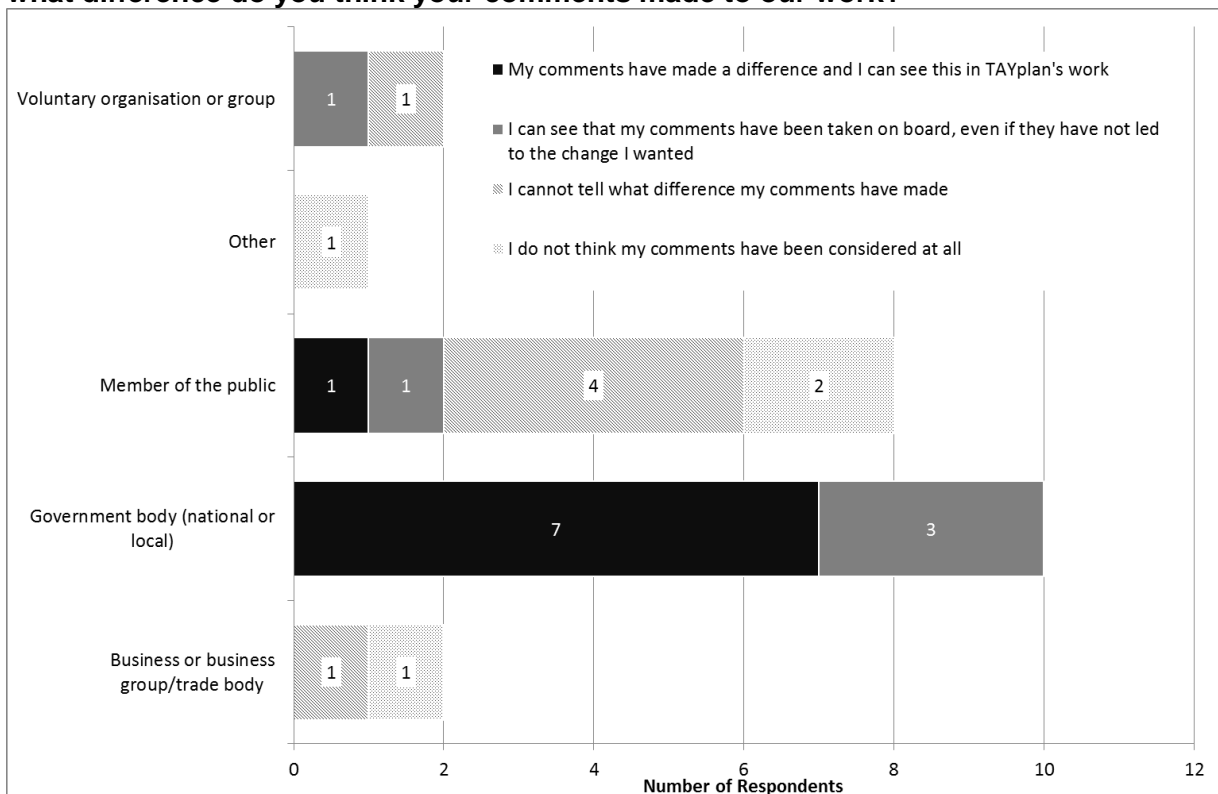
considered to be reasonable options. Reasonable options are those which are deliverable and which continue to reflect the vision of the Plan. Issues are either excluded because they do not represent a change, are not strategic in nature or are not considered to be reasonable options. TAYplan officers will continue to be open minded in their consideration of evidence in preparing the next Plan.

## 6.0 HOW PEOPLE FEEL THEIR COMMENTS OR QUERIES HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE

6.1 This question specifically sought views on what difference people felt their responses to consultations or general comments made to TAYplan’s work. Respondents were asked to choose from a series of model answers but also offered the choice to specify something different. They were then offered the opportunity to comment further if they wished.

6.2 Answers were considered positive where people could see their comments had made a difference or where they could see that these had been taken on board, even if it did not deliver the change they wanted. Responses were considered negative when the respondent did not feel their comments had been considered at all or when they could not tell what difference they had made. Neutral comments were considered to be those who felt that sometimes their comments make a difference but other times they do not.

**Figure 5: If you have contacted TAYplan or responded to one of our consultations what difference do you think your comments made to our work?**





- 6.3 All respondent categories except 'other' included some of the positive answers. For government bodies all responses were positive. One commented that they 'appreciated the joint working on green networks'.
- 6.4 Most responses from members of the public, and all those from business groups and other indicated that they could not tell what difference their comments have made or that they did not think their comments had been taken into account.
- 6.4 Four respondents added comments to explain their choices as set out below:
- 'TAYplan cannot deviate from Scottish Planning Policy which is where all the key issues are 'decided'.'
  - 'I am sceptical about the effectiveness of public comments'.
  - 'Nothing is joined up. The responses I have had is that is not TAYplan that is Perth & Kinross Council. You call Perth & Kinross Council that's not us that's TAYplan. Both the Local Development Plans and TAYplan are a means not for consultation and listening but one for buck passing. They are supposed to be strategic plans but one process is just finish and the next one starts before the results of the previous plan are seen or can be reviewed. Strategic Planning in business involves planning, implementation review and then adjustment based on successes and failures, and change of situations. It appears that TAYplan and Local Development Plans are based on planning, more planning and then even more planning. Planning for planning sake with no review of the effects of the previous plans. Consultation is not valid we are asked for comments and then told that it is not in line with TAYplan and subsequent Local Development Plans. Basically, we do not care what you think we are right and you are wrong. You do not understand. Trust us. But it appears that this trust is to be one way and the people whom these plans affect just have to live with it because we know better'.
  - 'It needs to be made more user-friendly for individual members of the public'.
- 6.5 Although the question was tailored to focus on previous work, one of the reasons why some respondents may not be able to see what difference their comments made could be because the customer survey took place after the Proposed Plan period for representations but prior to publication of any response to this by TAYplan. It may also be that people were not able to find or to easily follow the Main Issues Report comments that were published in February 2015.
- 6.6 It is also important to clarify that TAYplan occasionally receives telephone or email queries that relate to specific sites. In these circumstances staff explain what TAYplan does and its role. Often the customer is directed to the respective council, particularly where the detailed matter of sites are concerned. Sometimes TAYplan policy may be the explanation for why a particular site has or has not been allocated for development in a Local Development Plan. This is not always easy to understand for those who do not deal with planning on a day to day basis. This does not mean that our work is not joined up but there may need to be clearer communication between staff in councils and TAYplan when such matters arise to ensure that customers are helped to find answers – even if these are not the answers they would prefer.

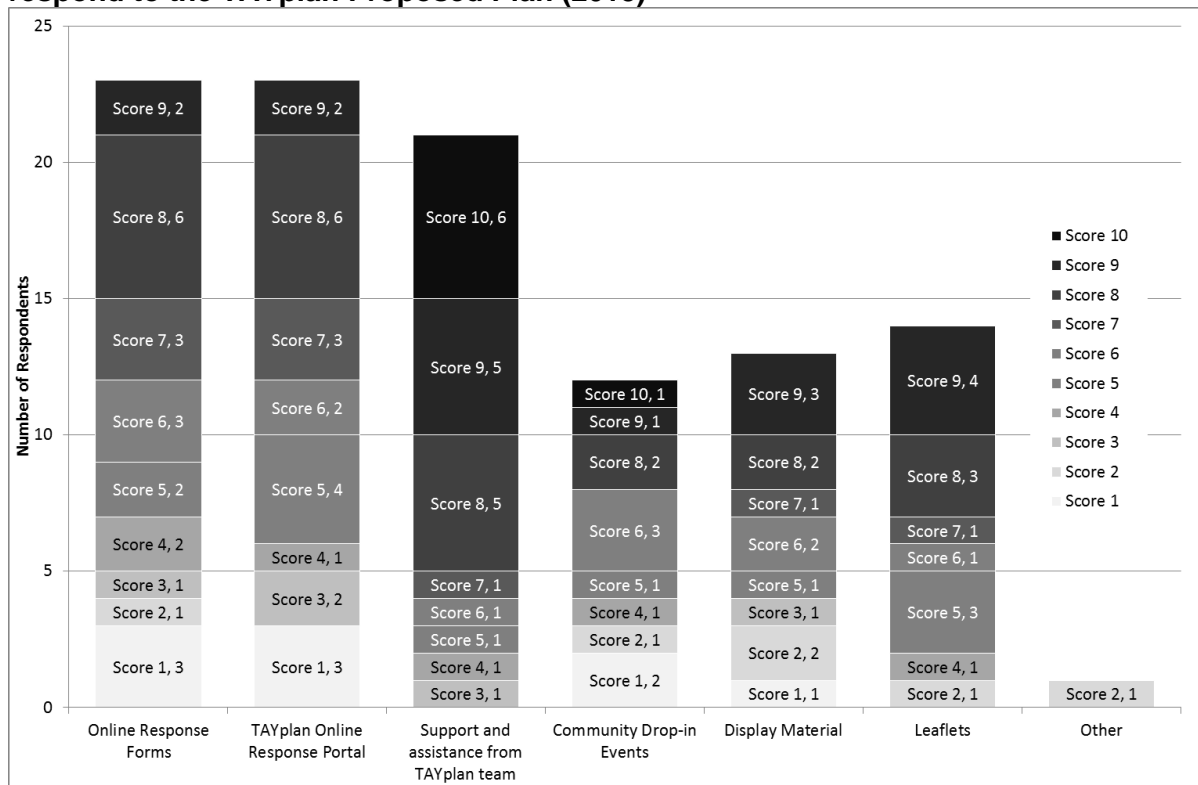
**7.0 QUESTION 7: HOW USEFUL DID PEOPLE FIND TAYPLAN'S CONSULTATION METHODS FOR HELPING THEM UNDERSTAND AND/OR RESPOND TO THE PROPOSED PLAN (2015)**

7.1 This question asked people to score different methods of engagement that had been used for the Proposed Plan (2015) period for representations. The focus was on whether this helped them to understand or respond to the Proposed Plan.

7.2 The question listed 6 different techniques or approaches and asked for scores between 1 and 10 where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent. There was also the opportunity to specify 'other'. There was also further opportunity to elaborate on these responses for those who wished to.

7.3 Not every respondent commented on every method. However, Figure 6 (below) shows that the majority of respondents scored each of the methods positively (with scores of 6 or more).

**Figure 6: How useful were these methods in helping people to understand and/or respond to the TAYplan Proposed Plan (2015)**



7.4 The lowest scores were given by members of the public and some other groups. However, members of the public were also amongst those scoring these methods positively. This shows a mix of different views or preferences within each of these categories. 12 of the respondents provided further explanation of their views:

- For the type of consultation I found the portal questionnaire too prescriptive.
- Maps could have been more detailed.

- In some instances there are difficulties in answering the online forms, the forms identify very specific areas (pages) of the proposed plan. For many our comments are crossing cutting over a range of topics and simply having to answer on a specific page without losing the overall theme can be difficult.
- The online system is a bit overly complex and there are still quite a few bugs in the system. e.g. when you convert comments to PDF it generates lots of question marks. However, I like the plain English instructions which should help to keep comments relevant.
- Stakeholder meetings are too process focussed.
- There are still some weird glitches in the online response system. It should be easier just to cut and paste stuff in from a word document and the format to remain the same. The format should also stay the same when you generate a PDF - as it is - there are often weird glitches like lots of question marks appearing.
- Absolute nightmare to use. And why should I have to register and expose personal details to yet more risk of breaches of security?
- I find the format for the online response forms most user unfriendly and off putting and would suggest that you review this in order to encourage more widespread responses from the public.
- I found it difficult to work out how to use the online response forms. The system was not intuitive and the guidance notes were convoluted. It gave the impression of being a system designed for ease of analysis of responses rather than for making responses.
- I'm afraid to say that I didn't respond.
- I attended the drop in event in Cupar although I live in St Andrews and the times of buses are not convenient during the evening. It should have been held in the early afternoon also. There was no-one available to answer my questions about the St Andrews green belt and the person who promised to follow up my question did not bother to do so. The maps were so small in scale they were difficult to read. One got the impression that public consultation is a mere legal requirement and the team is going through the motions of consulting the public but does not expect them to understand the plan. This may be because most of the proposals are too vague to be commented on in detail as yet.
- For more remote communities and even less remote response and drop in events are not local but seem to be for major conurbations. The impression is that you do not care unless it is Perth City, Dundee etc.
- I did not see any Leaflets.

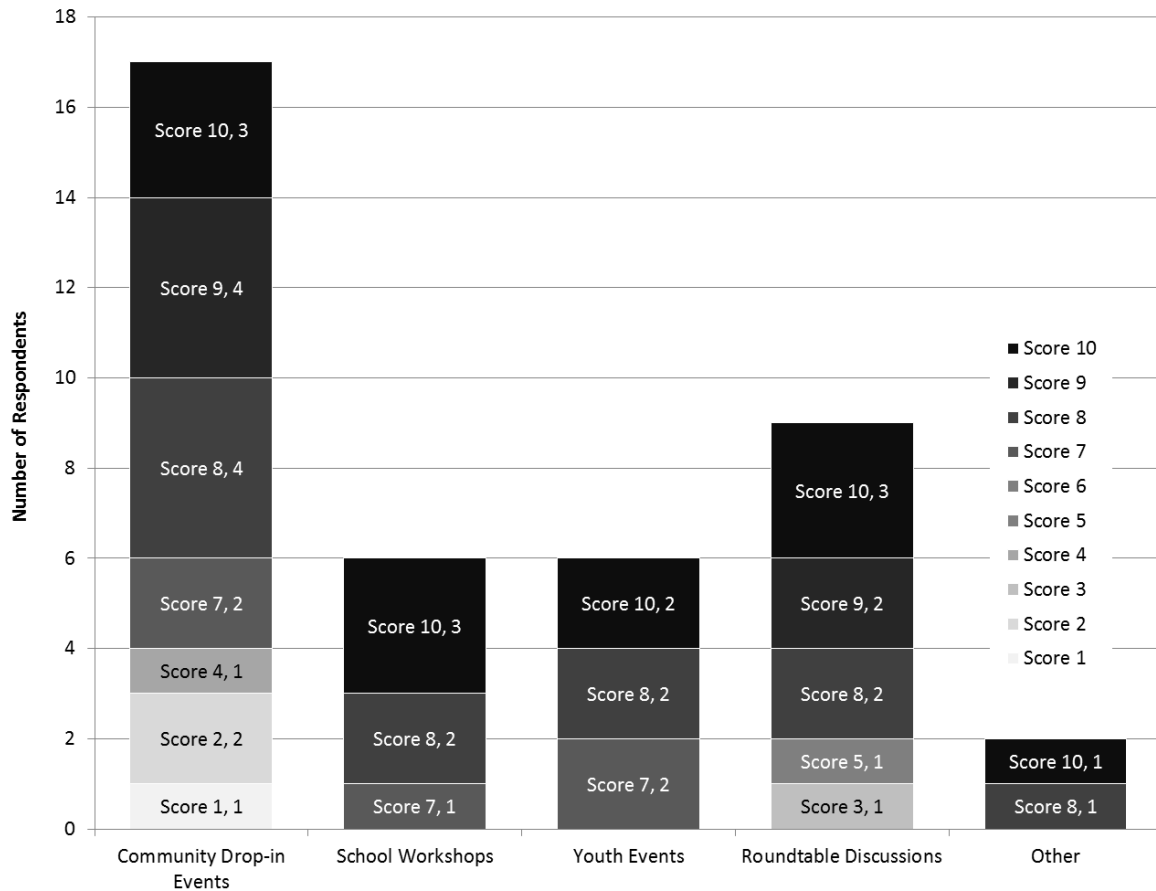
7.5 The views above provide some illustration of the challenges associated with undertaking Main Issues Report consultations and Proposed Periods for representations. Namely it is not possible to host events in all settlements. Some issues that are of specific interest may not always be addressed by the document that is being consulted upon and this can often be because this is not a strategic issue. It also illustrates some of the additional value that can be gained from linking up people in different organisations. For clarity TAYplan does not favour one settlement more than another.

- 7.6 There has been particular criticism of the online system. The online system has made a major contribution to speeding up the administrative side of plan preparation. However, TAYplan will explore ways to make this easier to use. The issue relating to PDFs and question marks is the result of users copying and pasting text in from Microsoft Word. This is an electronic format issue that is outside of TAYplan's control. Although TAYplan welcomes this as a way of supporting the ease of using electronic systems for customers this action also pastes in characters that PDF does not recognise. The only solution is to type directly into the form or to copy and then paste as plain text.
- 7.7 The role of the Proposed Plan period of representations is to allow interested parties to identify specific parts of the document that they support or want to change. Responses which do not follow the general structure of the online form can be very difficult to interpret and this is not in the best interests of the respondent. This is particularly the case where it is not clear whether they are seeking a change and if so what this change actually is. The online forms are designed to make sure that TAYplan properly understands what people are saying. These are not designed to prevent people saying what they would like but are designed to make sure it is presented in a way which aids comprehension. Respondents using letters or email were asked to provide headings, document references and clarity about whether they sought a change or not.
- 7.8 It is true that the online forms have made a massive contribution to the speed and accuracy of the post consultation work. This has enabled TAYplan to reduce the administrative burden and focus on analysis as well as being able to quickly and easily group similar responses and organise them into the legal format required.
- 7.9 Overall this shows that the methods used are generally supported but that some of the issues raised or the low scores could be resolved with additional work and thought. These comments offer the opportunity to explore our online material and to work more closely with Objective (our online portal provider) to improve the customer experience. The preparation of the next Plan also offers the opportunity to consider all related material again from outset.

## 8.0 HOW PEOPLE RATE SOME METHODS OF CONSULTATION FOR THE FUTURE

8.1 This question asked people to score different methods of engagement to be used in the future. They were also given the opportunity to specify others and to provide further explanation for their answers if they wished.

**Figure 7: How people rate the methods below as ways of engaging in the future**



8.2 All of the methods were considered to be appropriate for future engagement and scored positively. Of those specifying 'other' one member of the public considered that more online facilities would be 'great' as it can be 'tricky to find the time to attend actual events'. Positive responses were received from all categories of respondent. Negative responses were received from some community councils and some member of the public.

8.3 Five of the respondents chose to elaborate further on their comments as follows:

- 'Great that you involve schools but you do not involve the community, a few exhibitions in Perth means that those people living in outlying areas do not have the chance to view. Basically, it controls to the benefit of officers what they hear and does not give the public any real involvement'.
- 'All [these are] vital as indeed is reaching out to and informing residents with restricted mobility who cannot easily attend events, workshops and round tables (such as residents in sheltered housing complexes) but who still wish

to engage in active citizenship. 20% of the Scottish population do not own a computer, are not computer literate and mainly drawn from the older population.'

- 'I have not heard of any events [described in the question]. I would have liked to attend any of these.'
- 'Briefing reports for community councils would be helpful. Most community councils do not understand strategic development planning, are cynical about the relevance and/or do not consider it a priority.'
- 'Drop in events are too remote and at inconvenient times. You have School Events and Youth events but care little for those of use who actually pay the bills. While it is important to look at youth they are in the minority and there seems to be more activity with youth than with other groups. Also you allow too much sway from vested parties over the people whom these plans really affect.'

- 8.4 Some of the specific comments offer strong views, in particular those suggesting that there is too much emphasis on engaging young people. These efforts to engage young people are the consequence of the previous Plan exercise where it was clear that the majority of respondents were aged over 40. This has also been reinforced at our community drop-in events in 2015. TAYplan wanted to engage those who will grow up and become adults over the next 20 years and possibly have families of their own. TAYplan officers are strongly of the view that this has successfully redressed the balance rather than created any imbalance.
- 8.5 There appears to be general support for a continuation of community drop-in events although some seek more of these in more locations.
- 8.6 TAYplan has also gone to some lengths to make material easier to understand and follow. This is challenging, but is the right way to go to better engage audiences. Online and electronic systems are not to everybody's taste and concerted efforts will be made to re-examine how these are presented. TAYplan currently does and will continue to offer opportunities for engagement amongst those who do not have computers. However, online system offer huge time, cost and environmental advantages.
- 8.7 The idea of community council briefing notes is also interested although TAYplan does provide quarterly newsletters which serve as briefing notes for wider audiences and community councils are always included in the circulation lists. This offers further opportunity to explore how news letters can be made more easy to read and be more helpful.

## 9.0 THINGS TAYPLAN COULD DO DIFFERENTLY TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER RELATIONS

9.1 Question 9 specifically asked whether TAYplan could do anything differently to improve customer relations and what people thought this would be. 10 respondents chose to provide an answer as categorised below.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Business or business group/ trade body | Tell people what you are actually planning in plain language and cut out all the aspirational [material].   |
| Government body (national or local)    | Continue the good communication avenues that have already been established and maintain the strong project management style of communication and consultation.  |
| Member of the public                   | By regarding people - the public - as citizens, not customers.  |
|  | Do or could TAYplan staff offer themselves as community speakers on how TAYplan works and how it dovetails into Local Plans? Obviously this is a staff resource issue and limitations on how often and to whom speakers could be available for greatest impact and best use of staff/time/monetary resources but this could be applied effectively to speaking at large community events in Tayside such as the Association of Community Councils AGMs/the retired Civil Service AGMs/the large trade union AGMs such as UNISON and UNITE/social housing AGMs where Tayside citizens who are naturally interested in community affairs anyway, congregate in large numbers. |
|  | Examples of international urban design to show people there is a difference. Bring in renowned international architects such Zaha Hadid to advice or inspiring talks. Scandinavian counties are very similar to Scotland yet are considerably more advanced in their approach to planning and architecture, Denmark is a good example where shared information between planners   |
|  | I found it difficult to access comments made by others and suggest that this should be simplified.  |
|  | Improve presentation of emails to help people identify the salient points more easily and respond where appropriate.  |
|  | Make their presence known more. I found out about TAYplan purely by accident. Think what you do is crucial and incredibly important but needs to get out to a wider audience. Greater online presence especially needed.  |
|  | You seem to be doing pretty well so please keep it up.  |
| Not specified                          | Listen, Listen, Listen. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate. Listen and communicate to everyone equally.  |

9.2 These comments, both supportive and critical appear to reinforce the position taken by preceding questions; namely:

- TAYplan has a wide audience made up of differing degrees of knowledge and understanding. Although there is good engagement more is needed to support those with a less technical understanding, in particular members of the public, voluntary groups, business and community councils.
- The methods used to engage with people are generally supported, but there is some work to do to make these more beneficial and appealing to attendees/participants.
- Both of these prompt TAYplan to think further about how it continues its work in to presenting its messages clearly and simply to support all with an interest in being able to participate. It is clear that there are opportunities to use the skills that have been learned over recent years to further explore the opportunities to improve engagement.