

ASSOCIATION OF SCOTTISH  
COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Response to Scottish  
Government Survey 2010

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5 May 2011

## Preface

The Association of Scottish Community Council was funded by the Scottish Government to during financial year April 2010 – March 2011.

Whilst the Trustees respect the right of Scottish Government Ministers to invoke Clause Four of the Grant Terms and Conditions the Survey and Analysis only reinforced the concerns of the Trustees as discussed with Scottish Government Officers prior to the inception of the Survey.

The Trustees of the Association of Scottish Community Councils intimated to The Scottish Government Officers their wish to discuss their concerns over the survey and the subsequent analysis prior to publication on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

The Survey and analysis drew concerns on three counts

- Timing of the Survey.
- Structure of the Survey.
- Analysis of the Survey.

## Methodology for Considering Concerns

The Trustees adopted three professional methods for establishing the validity of their concerns.

1. Internal – quality and quantity assessment of the outcomes of the Survey Analysis and the form of questioning against the agreed objectives for 2010-2011.
2. Internal - quality and quantity assessment of activities against the agreed objectives for 2010-2011
3. Engaging three independent consultants to appraise the Survey and Analysis. In order to permit a non predetermined overview the consultants were only provided with the
  - a) Survey Questions
  - b) Draft Analysis
  - c) Brief overview of ASCC and the agreed funding objectives

To ensure a non biased or tainted report, the professionals, a Marketing Consultant, Business Analysis University Lecturer, and a Voluntary Sector Management Consultant, received no remuneration.

## Overview of Concerns

### Timing of the Survey

The survey was undertaken in November / Dec 2010 to ascertain the opinion of ASCC stakeholders on the performance of key objectives which were funded during the financial year April 2010- March 2011. The Objectives were not agreed until June 2010.

The inception of the survey (November 2010) – rates a 12 month agreement within the first 6 months of the funded period.

The ending of the Survey coincided with the commencement of the National Development Officer to her full contracted hours (32hrs). Scottish Government Officers were fully informed of the agreed phased induction of the National Development Officer.

At no point did the survey or analysis confirm the fact that this survey only covers the first six months of a 12 month financial term, which is a period where the Charity is without a member of staff.

Therefore the survey lends itself to misinform the reader and intends to disadvantage and prejudice the Charity, Trustees and Staff.

### Structure of the Survey

The method for distribution was an 'e' platform and a word document format. There were no controls in place on the distribution to ensure the survey was in fact completed by relevant 'stakeholders'.

Therefore there was no qualifying evidence to state whether responders were in fact interested parties to ASCC.

There were no controls to quantify evidence to prevent multiple responders.

The method of question structure was restricted by the 'e' platform used. Quest is a Norwegian based 'e' tool, with limited capabilities.

The form of questioning was 'closed' and therefore predetermined the response of responders.

*'It is my opinion that the survey cannot and should not be used as a base of opinions of the key stakeholders. The questionnaire is not developed enough; it guides the respondents to answer on a predetermined and assumed set of answers, which may not represent their real views. This in my opinion discredits the information gathered as lacking considering the original aim of the questionnaire. A more developed survey with better quality of questions would be needed. The actual type of questions must be more varied. I propose the following types would be better suited to use to form a truly broad and balanced view:*

- *Closed ended questions*
  - *Scaled questions – Responses are graded on a continuum (example: rate the effectiveness of ASCC training on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the most preferred).*
- *Open ended questions – No options or predefined categories are suggested. The respondent supplies their own answer without being constrained by a fixed set of possible responses.*
  - *Completely unstructured - For example, “What is your opinion of ASCC?”*
  - *Sentence completion - Respondents complete an incomplete sentence. For example, “My opinion of the training courses offered by the ASCC is...”*

*Therefore, I believe any assumptions or critiques made within the analysis of the survey are at this stage irrelevant, and at best would be a series of assumptions made by the analyser due to the lack of information that can be gathered from the questions of the survey’ Marketing Consultant*

The questioning was aimed at individual opinions yet managed to confuse the concept of ASCC members with individuals.

The questions ask individuals to state whether members of the ASCC but failed to put in any qualifying control.

It should be noted that membership of ASCC is the collective entity of the Community Council – not the individual Councillor.

The questioning went further to confuse, distort and misrepresent outcomes by asking individual to answer questions relating to ASCC membership and preventing other individuals to answer the questions. Therefore the questioning was not consistent.

*‘On the basis of the questioning structure, the lack of qualifying & quantifying Control, and the narrowness of the method of gathering evidence I would not advise any business judgment on the basis of the analysis of this survey’- Business Analysis Lecturer.*

*‘The survey claims to be opinion rated on the funded objectives of the ASCC. The structure of the Questioning permits responders to comment on item/ topic which are not a concern of the objectives. In consideration this disqualifies the value of any analysis if these comments are included or considered in any assessment’- VS Management Consultant.*

### **The Analysis**

The overall analysis gives cause for concern.

*‘The introduction to the questionnaire states to the respondents clearly; “Your response to this survey will help give us a broad, balanced view from ASCC stakeholders” – it does not. Most of the questions are closed ended questions, therefore the respondents are limited to*

*answering only from the options which have been given, and thereby nullifying the “broad” view that has supposedly come from all of the 17 questions of the questionnaire’ – Marketing Consultant.*

**The Analyser uses leading negative language from the beginning, and places logical fallacies to imply negative outcomes. The analyser goes further by making apparent assumptions on numerous occasions, due to the lack of information.**

- *It is also interesting to note that a **large** number of respondents (15.3% – 54) responded ‘Don’t know’, the same as the proportion who picked advice and support as their top reason. This may suggest a lack of engagement or understanding of the ASCC’s purpose from Community Councillors’.*

**Here the Analysts projects a Logical fallacy based on an unwarranted and unfounded comment on a personal assumption.**

**At no point does the analyser state this is their opinion and is not based on fact.**

*‘.....after reading it seems as if a lot of assumptions have been made by the analyser, due to the poor quality and structure of the questionnaire.....’ Marketing Consultant*

**On occasions the analyser contradicts the information they have given as fact in a previous statement which immediately casts doubt over other aspects of the analysis.**

- *‘.....As there is no comprehensive list of stakeholders from which to produce a sample..... The survey was also sent to those on an updated list of ASCC stakeholders.....’*
- *‘A total of 404 survey responses were received. The majority of responses were from Community Councillors, and most of these were from Community Councils that are ASCC members’.*

**At this point the analysis begins to make assumptions on the membership of ASCC. The survey put no control to confirm the return from the collective membership – nor does the analysis differentiate this fact. The analyser fails to understand the criteria of ASCC membership or inform the reader.**

**The analysis notes 404 responses and states most were from ASCC members 71%. This is an unsubstantiated comment and intent to mislead. The statement misleads by confusing the reader on the membership criteria of ASCC.**

- *‘Less than half of respondents had been in contact with the ASCC in the last 12 months. For those who had the most common form of contact was receiving a mailing. The least common form of contact was an ASCC representative or officer visit to a Community Council.’*

**This statement leads the reader immediately into in a negative understanding.**

Considering ASCC administration it is unlikely that individual CCLrs will have received direct contact with ASCC. The question should have been respectful of ASCC processes and resources. In regards to

*‘least common method of contact – officer visit to a Community Council’*

**‘The analyser failed to recognise that they were commenting on an outcome which was not a funded objective.**

- *‘Comments suggested that there is a desire for more direct engagement from the ASCC and that this may be an effective way for the ASCC to build relationships and increase its impact’.*

**This statement should be removed from the analysis and the opening statement. Here we have an opinion of the analyser placed to influence the reader, and imply inefficiencies within the ASCC.**

**The fact this statement was placed in opening Key Findings suggest that the ASCC has poor relationships and failing to address the issue. Again it must be noted that Visits was not a funding Objective and to add a comment at this stage as suggestive of improved engagement required, promotes a negative influence on the reader through an implied statement.**

**Realistically ASCC Representatives as previously stated requires an invite from respective Collectives. Resources considering only 32 ASCC voluntary reps, one member of Staff (P/T), financial constraints visiting 639 CC effectively throughout Scotland are a Logistical Impossibility.**

**The inclusions of non related comments within the analysis which are not relevant to the objectives are invalid and should not be include in the analysis.**

**The negativity projected throughout the analysis draw claims on the overall objectives of the survey.**

- *‘When looking more specifically at respondents from ASCC member Community Councils, there was a small increase in awareness compared to all respondents, but less than half of these respondents (42.5%) were aware of training and development offered through the ASCC.’*

**This statement is beyond comprehension and makes no sense of the supposed outcomes. Even if we analyse the statement as factual it is contradictory – small increase = 148.55 (57.5%)..... Not logical (against 20 (5%) of overall awareness!) If anything this statement projects a positive outcome – if it was at all relevant. – More of the ‘supposed’ ASCC member is aware of training than non members and therefore a more logical analysis is , from this statement, ASCC members are better trained and more informed than non members!**

**Here it is evident that the analyser has put a ‘spin’ on the analysis to project a negative report of the Survey. This again discredits the survey, report and analyser.**

**A full in depth Critique follows in this document.**

### **Conclusion**

**The analysis framework deliberately infers a negative response in the reader from the beginning.**

- **The language and the structure used by the analyser is questionable, in that at no time does it state that comments and assumption are of personal assessment and opinion and not based on substantiated fact.**
- **The analyser at no time quantifies the % of respondents against ASCC membership and fails to highlight this exclusion.**
- **The analysis claims to be qualitative and quantitative but at no time has a base line been taken, nor does it utilise differing methods of engagement to qualify the outcomes.**
- **The fact that the analysis fails in these basic requirements draws reasonable doubt on the findings, in particular the claims that the survey is precise and gives useful insight.**

**Therefore it can be reasonable to draw questionable doubt over the rationale for such a presentation other than to promote a negative perception of ASCC performance.**

**Further comments from the analyser suggesting that the ASCC had failed to reach their objectives are placed to deliberately mislead the Ministers decisions. At no time did the analyser qualify their opinion – ASCC has met its agreed objectives as outlined in Schedule 3 submitted to Scottish Government Officers. (Appendix 1)**

**The Trustees of ASCC are concerned that this flawed analysis has been placed with Ministers to support them in their funding decision.**

### Further Comment from Trustees

The analyser comments on the need to ASCC improve its engagement with its members and suggest ways of achieving this – despite not recognising organisational restraints. This only aims to imply and emphasise a negative response in the reader.

For example:

*‘Some comments also suggested a desire for greater engagement from the ASCC with individual Community Councils, which may go some way towards addressing these concerns’.*

The ASCC undertakes direct engagement with Community Councils on request – taking into account organisational constraints.

- Recent visit to Glenrothes Community Council by National Development Officer:

Total Cost to ASCC                      **£168.80**

- Recent Visit to Aberdeen CLO engagement (Aberdeenshire & Aberdeen City)

Total Cost to ASCC                      **£321.65**

### Recent Development Support & Training

- Pollocksheilds CC

Total Cost to ASCC                      **£104.40**

NB.

This is a two visit support plan and will incur a further cost to ASCC of £ 89.40

- Recent Facilitated Training Falkirk by National Development Officer

Total Cost to ASCC                      **£160.80**

Considering the recent grant offer the ASCC would be running these specific activities at a loss to the amount of £2280.

The Government within its Manifesto promised

*‘We want to give Scotland’s Community Councils greater relevance and more opportunities to make a difference for the areas they represent.’*

**This promise needs to be supported in development and direct support to Community Councils.**

**Yet the offer of funding doesn't reflect this by restricting ASCC support to part funding a part time development officer, with no provision for development costs.**

**The current offer of Scottish Government funding 2011-2012 failed to address this issue of support despite comments from the analyser. The current offer fails to address all resources required to meet the conditional objectives.**

**In real terms the grant offer amounts to £20.29 to provide staff, advice, support and resources to each Community Council, and Local Authority CCLO's throughout Scotland.**

**Interestingly the funding bid submitted by ASCC in February 2011 did go somewhere to address empowering Community Councils to make a difference to the areas they represent, but Ministerial Consideration seems to have dismissed the bid without full consideration of both the bid and their manifesto pledge.**

## **In depth Critique of Analysis**

### **Introduction**

The analysis covers the first six months of a twelve month Funding period. The Analysis at no stage mentions this fact.

Whilst the Survey of 2010 states to present an insight into the opinions of Stakeholders on ASCC performance it lends itself to directing negative Logical Fallacies through not analysing the actual activities of the ASCC against the Survey outcomes, presenting assumed negative statements and therefore presents to mislead and misinform interested parties.

It is interesting to note that where positive outcomes were identified the author chose not to offer positive comment.

Independent assessment of the analysis also comments on the failings of both the survey and the subsequent Analysis, and in particular all question the freely given yet not credited assumptions of the analyser.

### **BACKGROUND**

*'As a condition of grant funding for the Association of Scottish Community Councils (ASCC), the Scottish Government undertook a survey of stakeholders of the ASCC in November/December 2010. The aim was to gather as wide a range of views as possible. The results of the survey presented in this report will, in part, inform future considerations of Scottish Government grant funding of the ASCC'.*

The statement creates a canard in that it states the report shall in part inform future considerations of Scottish Government Funding. The ASCC was informed verbally by Scottish Government Officers that the Survey would not be used in full or in part of Grant Consideration. This informs when the when the survey was undertaken, and does not highlight the time frame which is under consideration. This misleads the reader to assume the funding period was complete.

The survey only covers the first 5- 6 months of the funding term.

However what is more concerning is that this document must have then been presented to Ministers for consideration of Funding without validating facts.

## **AIMS**

'The aim of the 2010 Scottish Government ASCC stakeholder survey was to understand how Community Councillors and a range of stakeholders with an interest in the ASCC feel that the organisation is performing against a range of objectives tied to its current grant funding'.

**Whilst the Scottish Government chose to invoke a Survey under ' Terms And Condition of Grant point 4' ' to understand how Community Councillors and relevant stakeholders feel that the organisation is performing' normal practice would be that a full analysis of ASCC undertakings against received 'opinions' would be used in analysis of the survey'.**

**This would have resulted in a more transparent and precise report of how the ASCC was performing against a 'range of objective tied to its current funding within the period being considered.**

## **METHODOLOGY AND RESPONSE**

*'The ASCC stakeholder survey was available for completion online between 23 November 2010 and 31 December 2010. A Word version was also available for those who preferred not to complete the survey online.'*

**The survey was only 'live' for 5 weeks which is less than the recommended time frame. The analyser comments on the 'word version of the survey yet fails to comment on the number of returns from either method.**

*'A total of 404 survey responses were received. The majority of responses were from Community Councillors, and most of these were from Community Councils that are ASCC members'.*

*A Scottish Government ASCC stakeholder survey was also conducted in 2008. This was focused on different issues and the results are therefore not directly comparable.*

**At this point the analysis begins to make assumptions on the membership of ASCC. The survey put no control to confirm the return from the collective membership – nor does the analysis differentiate this fact.**

**The analysis notes 404 responses and states most were from ASCC members 71% - unsubstantiated comment and intent to mislead. The statement misleads by confusing the reader on the membership criteria of ASCC.**

**Secondly the statement cannot be substantiated due to the anonymous nature of the survey. As responders cannot be qualified this then puts question to the validity of the survey and subsequent analysis.**

It is important to recognise that the survey represents personal opinions and not that of the collective view of Community Councillors.

Putting the survey respondents into perspective.

ASCC represents 639 Community Councils throughout Scotland. This equates with 55% of the total number of Community Councils active in Scotland (1167), no Community Council Collective was recorded as responding to the survey.

Therefore Statistics should read:

0% is ASCC members

355 (88%) Community Councillor Respondents were not ASCC members.

7 (1.5%) were Local Authority Elected members

7 (1.7%) were members of public

29 (6.7%) Public Sector employees

2 (0.5%) MSP

3 (0.7%) Other

In reality this survey only represents at most

0 % of ASCC Community Councillor Member Population.

2.9% of (Non ASCC member) Individual Community Councillor Population in Scotland.

0.5% of Local Authority Elected members.

1.5% of MSP's

'Public Sector employee' (6.7%) and 'other' (0.7%) is more difficult to quantify.

Assuming Public Employee refer to Community Liaison Officers (1 per Local Authority which does not follow true) this would equate with 90% of CCLO staff.

Other (0.7%) is impossible to quantify as member of public.

Through such a low % rate of responders, in particular reference to Member Community Councillors, the survey cannot claim give a useful or valued insight into the range of experiences and opinions of ASCC stakeholders.

Nor is it possible to know how many CCs these CCLr respondents reflect. Some CCs may have had a number of CCLrs respond, many others none.

*'It is my opinion that the survey cannot and should not be used as a base of opinions of the key stakeholders' – Marketing Consultant.*

## **KEY FINDINGS**

**The initial summary of Key Findings at the beginning of the 'Draft' deliberately leads with negative Logical Fallacies aimed at projecting a specific response from the Reader.**

**The analyst immediately utilises negative assumptions without relevant evidence or back up of their statement with fact.**

**The analyst at no time advises that the stated assumptions fail to consider outcomes with actual facts.**

**The Analyst at no time advises the reader that the assumptions are a reflection of their own opinion.**

*The key findings from the survey were:*

- *'There is low awareness and uptake of the training and development offered by the ASCC. Around a third of respondents were aware that training and development was offered and less than 10% had participated in any training or development.'*

**Training for Community Councillors is not compulsory and uptake is entirely voluntary.**

**It does not comment on the fact that Training Advertising was effectively highlighted through the TCC with all members CC being sent hard copies of the magazine and 'e' Newsletter being sent to 777 individual members, spoken verbally at meetings by the NDO, spoken of at National Conference.**

**This raises the question whether respondents fully understood the question or emphasises the continued issue of Community Councils Internal communications**

**It also takes no account that the period covered by the survey there was no National Development officer in post for 50% of the time and thereafter on part time.**

**Note also a number of respondents talk of difficulty with time and location for meetings and this must also be factor in take up of training.**

- *'Less than half of respondents had been in contact with the ASCC in the last 12 months. For those who had the most common form of contact was receiving a mailing. The least common form of contact was an ASCC representative or officer visit to a Community Council.'*

**This statement leads the reader immediately into in a negative understanding.**

**Considering ASCC administration it is unlikely that individual ASCC members will have received direct contact with ASCC. The question should have been respective of ASCC processes and resources, and therefore not representative of ASCC member experience.**

**Scottish Government Officers are aware of the format of ASCC data Base containing the contact details of one or two voluntary appointed contacts.**

**It must be acknowledged that the ASCC does not hold contact details of individual Community Councillors.**

**With reference to ASCC Rep Visits it misleads the reader into assuming the ASCC has not undertaken visits. It should be noted that visits was not an objective tied to Funding. That said, it should be noted that Visits by ASCC Reps require a request by Community Councils as a Collective.**

**From a strategic approach visiting all community councils would be impossible – from a financial issue and practical issue. There are 1167 CCs in Scotland, so ASCC would need to visit at least three CCs each day to see them all in a year!**

**The statement is also contrary to 2500 issues of TCC dispatched to member CC quarterly evidenced through postal receipts, 777 recipients of monthly ‘e’ newsletters- evidenced and monitored through recorded on line stats and Click through.**

**Therefore we have to assume that of the 404 respondents only half can be secretaries or treasurers or have taken the initiative to voluntary sign up for the ‘e’ newsletter!**

**However what can be evidenced quite simply are the contacts via email, contact received through mailings, evidence of the 777 email recipients, on line meeting registrations, signing in sheets of meetings, and meetings attended by ASCC Representatives by invite.**

- **Comments suggested that there is a desire for more direct engagement from the ASCC, and that this may be an effective way for the ASCC to build relationships and increase its impact.**

**This statement should be removed from the analysis and the opening statement. Here we have an opinion of the analyser placed to influence the reader, and imply inefficiencies within the ASCC.**

**The fact this statement was placed in opening Key Findings suggest that the ASCC has poor relationships and failing to address the issue. Again it must be noted that Visits was not a funding Objective and to add a comment at this stage as suggestive of improved engagement required, promotes a negative influence on the reader through an implied statement.**

Realistically ASCC Reps as previously stated requires an invite from respective Collectives. Resources considering only 32 ASCC voluntary reps, one member of Staff (P/T), financial constraints visiting 639 CC effectively throughout Scotland are a Logistical Impossibility.

This statement may well have been a more productive outcome if placed as a suggestive and linked to the funding application for 2011-2012 conclusions.

Opinion is that this statement was placed to mislead and imply a negative response on the reader.

- Only a third of respondents knew that their Community Council received the quarterly Community Councillor journal.

Again wording aims to mislead – The Analyst places a negative emphasis by the use of ‘Only’.

This language use promotes a negative perception. It would have been more professional just to state the fact ‘A third of.....’

Is this a third of all respondents or a third of 88% who claim to be individual Councillors?

It must be noted that it is not a funded objective within the year of 2010-2011 of ASCC to ensure CC’s follow best practice and communicate well. We can only advise. The ASCC have continually advised Scottish Government officers of the lack of communicative practices within Community Councils and the barrier this places on ASCC engagement process.

It is a training need which has been highlighted and currently being addressed. However the analyser through failing to access the Survey against the activities of ASCC objectives deliberately instils a perception of ASCC inadequacy on the reader.

- *‘There were concerns amongst some respondents regarding how the ASCC operates, and particularly its accountability and transparency’*

Again with statement placed in Key findings and the language used by the analyser aims to induce a negative perception on the reader. This is not consistent with the stated purpose of the Survey and serves only to promote an immediate negative view of ASCC. This statement should NOT be included into the survey as it is not relevant to the objectives of the funding. The analyser fails

- To state this statement was based on personal opinions of the responders.
- Was not an agreed outcome
- Explains how responders come to the opinion.

**The ASCC operates to the Constitution (agreed by 96% of members), and to current legislation. The ASCC goes further than most charities by**

- a) Posting minutes of Board/Executive meetings on the web site ( an agreed objective)**
- b) Positing professionally audited Accounts on the website**
- c) Mailing Accounts and annual reports to all member Community Councils.**
- d) Provided this information on request from Community Councils.**

*'The Scottish Government ASCC survey gives an indication of the range of views of the ASCC from its stakeholders – largely individual Community Councillors, and some areas of work where the ASCC may need to raise awareness of its activities. The survey suggests that there is a need to increase awareness of training and development and to communicate with members regarding their requirements. The additional comments also suggest that there are concerns over how the ASCC operates, and its perceived lack of transparency and accountability. Some comments also suggested a desire for greater engagement from the ASCC with individual Community Councils, which may go some way towards addressing these concerns'*

**The Scottish Government Claims that the survey gives a clear view of ASCC Stakeholders mainly individual Community Councillors.**

**However, a reader often forms their opinion on the opening statement, and as the author utilises negative language we can only surmise that their aim is to mislead and misrepresent. At no time does the Analyst give back ground on the organisation itself.**

- Advise the reader that the ASCC members ( Entity) represents 55 % ( 639)of Scottish Community Councils (1200 )**
- Advise the reader the survey is Not representative of members ( it is the collective entity of Community Councils which are members Not individual members**
- Advise the reader the survey only represents (on Average) 2.5% of Scottish Community Councillors population.**
- Advise the reader the of organisations structure, legal status and aims**

**In other words, the survey was NOT representative, by design, and the analysis did not take into account the culture of Community Councils or the organisational constraints on ASCC.**

**The analyst and 'constructor' of the survey also failed to clearly inform of the respondents the objectives the ASCC performance was being assessed on.**

The structure of the Survey lent itself to encouraging and reporting on personal opinions on activities which were not being funded by Scottish Government. As such the respondents commented on issues which were not included in the performance rating.

The analyst failed to recognise this flaw but more so deliberately promoted Logical Fallacies by commenting and including non relevant issues, particularly with in the opening statement.

Considering the constructor and analyst is a professional within the Statistical Profession, the method in which the findings have been reported, structured, use of language, along with the implied statements within the opening account, can only be intentional and aimed to confer a perception of negativity and failings upon the reader with regards to ASCC failure to meet its objectives and to imply a deterioration of Community Councillor Support.

**This view is supported by the independent assessment of the survey**

*'It is my opinion that the survey cannot and should not be used as a base of opinions of the key stakeholders. The questionnaire is not developed enough; it guides the respondents to answer on a predetermined and assumed set of answers which may not represent their real views. This in my opinion discredits the information gathered as lacking considering the original aim of the questionnaire'. Marketing Consultant*

## **RESPONDENTS**

*'A total of 404 responses were received to the survey. The vast majority (88.8%) of responses were from Community Councillors.*

*The vast majority of Community Councillor Respondents (71%) of were from Community Councils that are members of the ASCC. Of these nearly half, (43.9%) of total members were from Community Councils that had been members for five years or more. Around a third did not know how long their Community Councils had been members'.*

**Whilst we appreciate the need for clarifying where the respondents originated from the analyser fails again to report correctly. By failing to fully understand the operations of and membership type of the ASCC the survey does Not correctly reflect the breakdown of respondents, and therefore id crucially flawed**

**358 respondents were from individual Community Councillors,**

**0 were members of ASCC**

Through failing to include controls to qualify member responses this nullifies the whole survey.

We fail to understand the relevance for the inclusion of questioning the length of time Councillors knew they were members? Again this questioning is misleading. Longevity of membership (despite not being qualified) is not to a quantifier of objectives. Instead the analyser projects this out come as a negative.

6 Local Authority Elected members (0.4% of elected members)

7 Members of public

27 Public Sector employees

2 MSP (1.5% of MSP)

3 Other

*'There was a wide spread of responses across all local authorities except East Dunbartonshire. However, the number of responses from individual local authorities was too small to permit analysis by local authority area. The largest responses were from Glasgow (13.7%), Edinburgh (11.9%) Highland (10.4%), and Aberdeenshire (8.7%). This demonstrates that no particular local authority dominates responses overall.'*

**It could also be stated here that the overall responses could be too small to permit analysis when taken into context – yet the analyser continues to project negativity on the flawed processes.**

#### **COMMUNITY COUNCILS AND THE ASCC**

*'Respondents from ASCC member Community Councils were asked how long their Community Council had been a member of the ASCC, the reasons why they thought that their Community Council had joined and what they thought was the single most important reason for their Community Council joining. As noted, the majority of respondents were from ASCC member Community Councils.'*

**It needs to be noted that the responses were not from members but as stated in the opening paragraph of the survey – from individual councillors.**

*'Respondents were able to list multiple reasons as to why their Council had joined the ASCC. As shown in Table 2 below, there was a spread of responses across the available answers, but the three most common were:*

- *advice and support (53.2%),*
- *information on the activities of Community Councils across Scotland (45.6%) and*
- *strength through collective action (44.8%).*

**Table 2: Reasons for joining the ASCC (all reasons)**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Percentage response (%)</b>
<i>ASCC visits</i>	5.6
<i>Best practice/policy information</i>	41.3
<i>Advice and Support</i>	53.2
<i>Information on the activities of community councils across Scotland</i>	45.6
<i>Insurance cover</i>	31.3
<i>Latest News service/newsletter</i>	24.2
<i>Networking - local, regional and national</i>	30.6
<i>Regional meetings for community councillors/ Annual National Conference</i>	24.6
<i>Strength through collective action</i>	44.8
<i>To access information on Scottish Government policies and initiatives</i>	31.0
<i>To support the national representative body for Community Councils</i>	37.7
<i>Don't know</i>	9.1
<i>Other, please specify</i>	11.1

*Other reasons specified by respondents included:*

- *membership is paid for by the local authority;*
- *to find out what the ASCC do;*
- *to find out if ASCC membership is helpful; and*
- *because 'it seemed like the right thing to do'.*

*Table 3 below shows that respondents' single most important reasons for joining were:*

- *advice and support (15.3%),*
- *strength through collective action (14.1%),*
- *and insurance cover (12.9%).*

*It is also interesting to note that a large number of respondents (15.3%) responded 'Don't know', the same as the proportion who picked advice and support as their top reason. This may suggest a lack of engagement or understanding of the ASCC's purpose from Community Councillors'.*

**Here the Analysts projects a Logical fallacy based on an unwarranted and unfounded comment personal assumption.**

**An alternative logical theory be Community Councillors (15% of respondents = 42 or in context to all CC members 0.65%) were not informed of a joining reason at point of induction or did not request such information from their respective CC's.**

**The question raised is not conducive to Funding Objectives, nor is it a requisite of objectives.**

**ASCC could not be expected to ensure all individual Community Councillors know the specific reason why their CC took a Collective view of initial membership to ASCC.**

**Therefore to suggest lack of engagement only aims to project a negative image of ASCC activities.**

**A logical reason to this outcome is the lack of communication within Community Councils themselves and amongst Community Councillors. As Community Councils and Local Authorities are responsible for Community Councillor Induction then possibly the issue lies elsewhere other than the analyst's projected perception of ASCC procedures, which the analyst has aimed to achieve.**

**Therefore it can be perceived that the aim of the survey is to misrepresent and misinform the reader.**

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

*'The ASCC grant funding objectives include: a programme of national training and development and meetings driven by the National Development Officer; and training needs analysis for Councillors and staff to inform targeted training sessions. All respondents were asked whether they are aware of the training and development offered through the ASCC, and whether they have attended any training or development events. They were also asked as individuals whether they had had any discussion with the ASCC of training needs and if they were aware of any targeted training sessions based on an ASCC training needs analysis'*

All respondents were asked to complete this question on Training. Immediately this question would return a high negative response. As ASCC would only aim to discuss and provide service to members' therefore statistical returns and the comments referring to non members again leads to misinform the reader and to mis represent ASCC.

*'I have to agree with this comment. If this is normal procedure for the ASCC then these questions on training do not take this into account. For these questions to be valid they would have to be included within a separate questionnaire that is perhaps only for members to complete, which would then give a more accurate set of statistics. If the analyser is aware of this, then they have clearly forgotten that the questionnaire was targeted at members and non-members. This would render further assumptions and analysis on training erroneous'. Marketing Consultant*

*Overall awareness and experience of ASCC training and development was low:*

- Only around a third of respondents (36.6%) (105) were aware that the ASCC offered training and development.

**Leading language used to create negative sensation. As all respondents were required to answer it leads again to discredit ASCC performance. It has to be recognised that ASCC would not 'market' training to non members, or undertake and needs analysis with 'others'. It also has to be stated that to do so was not a requisite of funding objectives therefore statistical return is void.**

- The number of all respondents who had attended a training or development event reflected this low awareness at only (25) 8.8%.<sup>1</sup>

**Leading language used again aimed at negative purpose. Once again the return and comments are leaning to create an illogical fact. Illogical on the basis that the ASCC funding objective is for members and not relevant to 'others' Statement should not be included. The analyser continues to project a negative outcome through the addition of a non relevant personal assumption which cannot be based on any factual evidence from the survey. This again discredits the analysis and the analyser. (See ref 1)**

- *'The number of respondents who had had any discussion of Community Council and staff training needs was also very low at only 6.8%.( 19)'*

**Leading language used again aimed at negative purpose. Once again the return and comments are leaning to create an illogical fact. Illogical on the basis that the ASCC**

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<sup>1</sup> This question was a follow up to a question of awareness of training offered by the ASCC, but it is possible that respondents may have been thinking about training in general.

**funding objective is for members and not relevant to 'others' Statement should not be included. The wording itself is misleading – Staff? Community Councils do not have staff and therefore ASCC could not discuss or provide training to staff. If it is meant to refer to Local Authority Staff this again is misleading to the negative. The question wasn't structured efficiently to differentiate this matter. Therefore discredits the findings of the survey.**

- *'Only 5% (20) of all respondents were aware of targeted training sessions based on an ASCC training needs analyses.'*

**This again uses leading language to 'Imply a fallacy' leading to discredit ASCC performance – Analyst aims to discredit through mis representing ASCC objectives.**

**As the above statement includes all respondents the aim must only be to mislead and misrepresent.**

*'When looking more specifically at respondents from ASCC member Community Councils, there was a small increase in awareness compared to all respondents, but less than half of these respondents (42.5%) were aware of training and development offered through the ASCC.'*

**This statement is beyond comprehension and makes no sense of the supposed outcomes. Even if we analyse the statement as factual it is contradictory – small increase = 148.55 (57.5%)..... Not logical (against 20 (5%) of overall awareness!) If anything this statement projects a positive outcome – if it was at all relevant. – More of the 'supposed' ASCC member is aware of training than non members and therefore a more logical outcome – from this statement ASCC members are better trained and more informed than non members!**

**Here it is evident that the analyser has put a 'spin' on the analysis to project a negative report of the Survey. This again discredits the survey, report and analyser.**

*'The majority of those who had attended training, or undertaken training needs analysis were from ASCC member Community Councils, but numbers were still very small at less than 10% of ASCC member respondents in each case'*

**Again statement has a negatively leading spin, alternatively, if taken at face value one could assume again that ASCC members are better trained and better informed**

**The analyser fails to fully understand the operations of ASCC yet alone the resources available to undertake this work.**

*'A number of respondents also provided additional comments at the end of the survey which related to training and development. A small number of respondents suggested that training was not a priority (often due to time constraints), but others were interested in learning more. A few respondents also commented positively on the appointment of and engagement with the ASCC National Development Officer.'*

*The low awareness and take up of training and development suggests that the ASCC's training and development objectives have not yet been met and that there may be a need for the ASCC to engage more with members to clarify needs and demand for training and development'.*

**The analyst is not qualified to make such a sweeping statement on ASCC performance. They have failed to assess undertakings against outcomes of survey and failed to take the survey in full context. To fully qualify this statement the analyst must assess fully all facts. This statement was aimed at discrediting ASCC to the reader.**

**Comments re Training not being a priority has been skimmed over. The analyst has failed to make this connection. This should be highlighted a 'Cultural' problem with in Community Councillors and not an issue of ASCC but analyst failed to highlight fully as a reason for her portrayal of low uptake. Again the analyst was being selective with their skills.**

*'Again I believe no assumption or analysis can be made because of the low quality of the questionnaire itself.'* Marketing Consultant

## **COMMUNICATION**

*'The ASCC have a number of objectives relating to communication including; producing "The Community Councillor" magazine; holding regional meetings; the Annual National Conference; and the ongoing review of the function, content and role of the website'.*

### **Recent contact**

*'Respondents were asked if they had been in contact with the ASCC in the last 12 months; what form this contact had taken; if they had visited the website and if so, whether they had found it helpful; and if their Community Council received the Community Councillor Journal'*

*There was an even split between respondents who had and had not been in touch with the ASCC in the last 12 months (around 45% each). Of those respondents from ASCC member Community Councils, just over half (56.3%) had been in contact with ASCC in the 12 months, which could be considered low given the ASCC's functions of providing advice and information, and the fact that this was a key motivation for joining'*

All respondents were asked to complete and does not fully respect the objectives which it aims to quantify.

The analyst again leads with a negative statement without qualifying their opinion with full knowledge of activities or culture of Community Councils.

It should be highlighted that this statement does not fully qualify the type of contact each section had therefore negative leading statement.

ASCC cannot be expected – in line with current manpower to be actively contacting 7668 individual members asking if they need advice or support. ASCC does not hold individual contact but rather one contact – usually secretary of ASCC) and therefore it is a cultural defect with in CC's which means individuals do not receive info personally from ASCC.

The analyst again makes personal assumption without taking into account the operational nature of ASCC. It should be noted that the ASCC only sends out mailings to treasurer and Secretary and not individual Councillors – so therefore this form of questioning would lead to a negative return, unless individual Cllrs take it upon themselves to contact the ASCC.

**Or Alternative Assumption: What is suggestive is ASCC information dispatched freely can be deemed adequate for needs.**

*'As shown in Table 4 below, the most common form of contact with the ASCC was 'received a mailing' and the least common was a visit from an ASCC representative or officer'.*

*'In respect to the contact they had had with ASCC, a small number of respondents noted that they had had difficulties in getting a response, or were not satisfied with the answer that they had received.*

*The additional comments question at the end of the survey also gave respondents the opportunity to comment further on their contact with the ASCC. Several of these felt that it would be beneficial for ASCC representatives to attend local meetings (one of the least frequent forms of contact). Others commented on what they felt was a lack of information regarding the National Conference'.*

**Inclusion of several of the statements at this stage only aims to discredit the ASCC performance without taking into account ASCC activities.**

#### **Given opportunity to respond to the inclusions....**

- I. 'a small number of respondents noted that they had had difficulties in getting a response',

**Given that the ASCC is manned by Volunteers and only one part time member of staff then it is logical that some would experience difficulties in contact.**

II. 'were not satisfied with the answer that they had received.'

**Human Nature- ASCC operated to Legislation and Regulation and will only give appropriate advice.**

**Dissatisfaction is meaningless unless we know why / how they were dissatisfied, and the context. It's like saying too many people are unhappy. Being happy is nice but not a right. Making people happy is nice but not a duty. Not liking the answer to a question does not mean the answer is wrong. But it does often lead people to claim unfairness, when their concept of fairness is not being agreed with.**

III. 'for ASCC representatives to attend local meetings (one of the least frequent forms of contact'

**This is not an Objective to be quantified- however it should be noted that ASCC would require an 'invite from Community Councils prior to any visit. It should also be noted that ASCC financial resources and manpower would restrict this activity. Interestingly it would require three visits per night to visit all community Councillors in one year**

IV. 'Others commented on what they felt was a lack of information regarding the National Conference'.

**This statement is really unwarranted and only aimed to discredit. It takes no qualitative or quantitative analysis of ASCC activities but implies poor performance. FACT: The National Conference was advertised in TCC, e newsletters, ANB mailing Website and all relevant info given, Venue, time, registration, speakers, and topics info, eight weeks prior to the event.**

## **Website**

- Nearly half of all respondents had visited the ASCC website (44.1%).<sup>178</sup> However, more than a third of respondents (36.6%) 147 were not aware that the ASCC had a website, including just under a third of those from ASCC member Community Councils. This suggests that there may be a need for the ASCC to further promote its website, at least among its membership.

**Interestingly the analyst again comments without qualifying their statement to promote poor performance of ASCC.**

**Of the 178 (41.1%) of respondents which knew there was a website 172 of these respondents who are aware appear to be members (as qualified by SG) so on what basis does the analyser base their opinion? It is clear the majority of awareness is in membership!**

**Which now again discredits the analyser statement of how ASCC should operate?**

**Web site is promoted in TCC, E newsletters, regional meetings, all other meetings, and on all headed paper, business cards. It is also promoted on Scottish Government Web page ‘Community Councils’ so may also be indicative of Community Councillors not being aware of SG website and they too should also use better marketing tools.**

**Assumption -Could be more appropriate to assume individuals do not read or note information which is not of interest to them? This reflects human nature.**

**For example – at ANC2009, a vociferous bunch of CCLrs wanted all communication only by email as “everyone has it” but a similarly noisy group later said they had no internet enabled members and would have to have post and phone call contact only. Not knowing there is an ASCC website means what exactly? What about the 20% who presumably knew there is an ASCC website but have never visited it? Is there a question about web access – since a respondent without web access has no reason to know anything about who has and who does not have a website! Indeed, what proportion of replies did not come electronically?**

- *‘Of those who had visited the website the majority (48%) found the information helpful or very helpful, while 22.9% found it neither helpful nor unhelpful, and 22.3% found it either not very or not at all helpful’.*

**Merely Human Nature. Comment not constructive to the aims of the survey**

### **The Community Councillor**

*'The Community Councillor Journal is issued to all Community Councils and Community Councillors were asked whether they were aware of their Community Council receiving the journal. A quarter (25.1%) of Community Councillors stated that their Community Council did not receive it, while 36.3% said that their Community Council did receive it and the remaining 38.6% did not know whether their Community Council received it or not'.*

**This question is misleading – It asked ALL Community Council Respondents to answer. As a result it gives a false response. Non CC members only receive the TCC once per year.**

**ASCC can evidence that all Community Council members receive at least two hard copies per issue and all non members one hard copy per year. TCC issues are made available at all regional meetings, and National Conference, and on request – if available to Forum meetings. E copies are sent via e newsletter and available to download via web.**

**This highlights the issue of poor practice within CC themselves and is not indicative of ASCC performance.**

### **REPRESENTATION**

*'The ASCC have several grant objectives related to their representative role including participation in key Scottish Government Working Groups. Nearly two-thirds (62.4%) of respondents were aware that the ASCC works in partnership with the Scottish Government and COSLA as the national representative body for Community Councils in Scotland. The additional comments section below contains further discussion on this representative role, together with the overall views on the ASCC's role'*

**Interestingly how did 252 (62.4%) of respondents know this information when there is such a damning return on information?**

### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

*'Overall, 228 additional comments were received from survey respondents. These provide additional qualitative material in addition to the question responses outlined above.'*

**Disagree with analyst – can only be deemed to be qualitative if all facts are taken into context which is a failing throughout this analysis, and are of the opinion of the analyst and hold no relevance to member opinion as the survey cannot qualify responders.**

*'These comments are discussed below, in relation to common themes across the responses. The majority of comments (159) related to the function and role of the ASCC and how it is perceived to operate by respondents'*

**These comments are not relevant to the survey – as stated the survey is to reflect on the FUNDED objectives. To include unrated items discredits the survey.**

*'A considerable number of comments (44) related to communication and these have been discussed in the relevant section above.*

**19% Considerable? (EOD – definition-large enough in amount or extent to be important)  
Again the analyser uses sensational language to imply a logical fallacy with the intent to discredit the ASCC.**

*There were also a sizeable number of comments (35) relating to engagement with the ASCC, regarding issues such as the location of meetings, and the time required for such engagement.'*

**ASCC through their own survey is aware of the issues around engagement but due to financial constraints and manpower is limited to increasing frequency. However, again the analyst fails to examine in full context which promotes negative performance of ASCC.**

*'Other comments related to: training; funding; relations with local authorities and other partnerships and networks; and awareness of the ASCC. On the basis of some of the comments received it appears that the survey questions may have highlighted aspects of the ASCC's work of which respondents were not previously aware. A number of respondents also provided suggestions for functions or support that they would find helpful from the ASCC and these are discussed at the end of this section. Around half of the comments (112) received could be considered as negative towards the ASCC, with only around 31 positive and the remainder neither positive nor negative'.*

**To include this paragraph into the analysis without justifying is aimed at sensationalising to the negative. Again this statement discredits the survey.**

**Failure by the analyst to highlight 261 comments were considered neither positive or negative only reinforces the analysts aim is to promote negativity in the reader and highlight poor performance of ASCC.**

*'I agree with this point on failure to highlight the other comments. Furthermore the validity of the comments is in question due to the nature of closed questions. A series of scaled questions would have better informed the analysis to say whether the answers were positive, negative, or in between. An assumption like this given the questionnaire it has been gathered from should be disregarded' Marketing Consultant.*

*'It is possible that people with negative views are more motivated to provide comments, and it is not possible from this survey to know how widespread such views are beyond these respondents. However, the comments do provide a useful indication of how the ASCC is perceived and some potential areas for improvement'.*

**Here the analyst managed to put a negative spin on a conceivable statement. They have made a highly condemning statement is not based on fact.**

**The analyst makes a sweeping statement to imply that more people could hold a negative view on the ASCC.**

**Alternatively one could argue that the majority of respondents are happy with the view of ASCC.**

**It is also not possible to know how small a proportion of CCLIs or others hold these negative views. Given that there is evidence for holders of negative views being over-represented in responding to surveys like this, one could assume that there would be counter views to outweigh these views if only one had asked them. These comments do not provide a "useful indication" but they could provide a suggestion of areas to be looked into in future, more representative, better designed, more detailed surveys. They are only a handful of unsolicited comments from an unrepresentative subset of unrepresentative respondents to a brief, rushed pre-xmas survey – it is unjustifiable to place any weight on them and they should be reported in that context.**

**As the analyst only comments on the negative we can assume that the aim is to promote a destructive perception of ASCC performance.**

**The statement 'It is possible that people with negative views are more motivated to provide comments, and it is not possible from this survey to know how widespread such views are beyond these respondents' followed by 'However, the comments do provide a useful indication of how the ASCC is perceived and some potential areas for improvement only indicates the analyst's intention to promote a negative and destructive perception of ASCC performance.**

**The analyst again has discredited the survey by adding personal assumption.**

### **The role of the ASCC**

*This category refers to the purpose of the ASCC, its activities, relevance and representative role. The summary of comments below is intended to give an indication of range of the views expressed by respondents, rather than an indication of the weight of opinion.*

*The positive comments received about the role and functions of the ASCC, noted:*

- *an appreciation for the work that the ASCC do,*
- *the necessity of having a national body to share information and to represent Community Councils at national level*

- *the importance of having a representative body for the lowest level of elected representation*
- *its provision of advice and support,*
- *a way of strengthening and promoting the work of Community Councils,*
- *the value for small Community Councils in being part of a larger organisation;*
- *networking;*
- *and a useful additional source of information for Community Councils.*

*There were also a few general reflections on the job that the ASCC do and that it is a much improved organisation.*

*There were also a considerable number of negative comments relating to the function and role of the ASCC, in some cases expressing very strong opinions. Several respondents questioned how far the ASCC is representative of Community Councils (in part because not all Community Councils are members, and also due to a perceived lack of consultation). Questions were also raised as to:*

- *what the ASCC offer in addition to insurance cover*
- *what the benefit of the ASCC is to local Community Councils,*
- *a recognition of the potential usefulness of the ASCC but not in its current form,*
- *a concern that the leadership is not focused on co-operation,*
- *a suggested remoteness from Community Councils,*
- *the relevance to small Community Councils,*
- *a lack of support provided,*
- *too much focus on matters internal to the ASCC that are of less interest to the wider membership,*
- *a concern over the provision of inaccurate information and a top-down rather than grassroots approach.*

*A small number of respondents contrasted the ASCC to other networks or partnerships in which they participated. One respondent noted that their regional Community Council forum did not seem to be related to the regional structure of the ASCC. Another noted that in their short time as a Community Councillor they had not noticed any impact from the ASCC, but that their local area partnership had been very useful. Another raised the issue that the ASCC does not recognise federations of Community Councils and disagreed with this policy, as they felt that such federations were an important approach to joint working.*

**The inclusion of this paragraph is consistent to promote negativity- the comments have no relevance to the funded objectives,**

*'I don't understand or see the relevance of this section. Where in the questionnaire has this information come from?'* Marketing Consultant

**The analyst states that they have received these statements yet show no examples to quantify or qualify as**

- a) comments are not relevant to objectives,**

**b) Analyst states they do not as weight to the survey yet continues to add sensationalising language to emphasise negatives.**

**This whole statement only adds weight to discrediting the survey**

**How the ASCC operates**

*'A large number of comments (around a third of all comments) were received that referred to how the ASCC operates – the recent elections, and participation and consultation of members. The majority of such comments were negative, raising concerns over the accountability and transparency of how the ASCC functions'.*

**This whole statement has nothing to do with the objectives and should be excluded.**

*'The positive comments that were received expressed a view that the ASCC has made good progress in representing the interests of Community Councils through its work with Scottish Government and local authorities, its website and newsletters, and regional meetings. Comments also expressed a view that the ASCC has limited resources to undertake wide ranging work, and may require more funding to work more effectively. However, there was also a view from a small number of respondents that ASCC funding should instead go directly to Community Councils.*

*A concern was expressed by some respondents that the internal politics of the ASCC deflected from its work, and that there is a need for it to operate more democratically and to consult more with members. The recent elections and National Conference formed the basis for such comments in many cases. A number of respondents felt that there was a lack of transparency in the recent ASCC office bearer elections, and were dissatisfied at not having a choice between nominees. Several also felt that it was unnecessarily difficult to submit motions at the annual National Conference.*

*Others had found difficulty in getting access to documentation such as the ASCC constitution, minutes of meetings and full accounts. Some also suggested that constitution itself lacked clarity, and inhibited engagement. Several respondents also felt that they had encountered a confrontational attitude when attempting to engage with the ASCC, that it was hard to raise opposing views, and that it was a difficult organisation to work with'.*

**Opening this paragraph with negativity is deliberately conducive to promote a destructive approach.**

**Inclusion of these comments has to be questioned as it is entirely an internal matter and not reflective of the funded objectives – which was the aim of the survey as stated in the opening paragraph of the survey.**

**Even the positive comments are reported in negative terms, “not as bad as it was before “is the implication.**

**To qualify these comments the analysis needs to take a contextual approach which has not been attempted, instead again the analyser sensationalises language to the negative.**

*'Some further comments on engaging with the ASCC provide further information on respondent's experiences of working with the ASCC. These comments raised the issues of:*

**This is a totally inappropriate statement with an aim again to discredit**

- *a lack of time for Community Councillors (whose work is voluntary), to engage with the ASCC,*

**The analyser fails to clarify the meaning of this statement therefore not valid within the context of the survey - Do Councillors not have time – or ASCC not have time for Councillors? (ASCC is operated by volunteers)**

- *the difficulties attending meetings due to location and expense,*

**Meaning? Accessibility problems for individual councillors or implying ASCC poor administration?**

- *and addressing the different issues facing urban and rural Community Councils.*

**Meaning? Again not relevant to the aims of the survey.**

- *More than one respondent suggested that it would be beneficial for the ASCC to engage more directly with Community Councils by attending local meetings.*

**Again not relevant to the objectives and included here to sensationalise and imply ASCC failings.**

**Inclusion of these comments has to be questioned as it is entirely an internal matter and not reflective of the funded objectives – which was the aim of the survey as stated in the opening paragraph of the survey. To validate these comments the analyser would need to qualify against the objectives, operations and resources of ASCC.**

**These comments reflect issues for CCs not for ASCC.**

## **Funding**

*'Comments on funding relate to funding for the work of the ASCC, as well as the memberships costs for Community Councils themselves. A question was raised by several respondents as to whether ASCC membership constituted good value for money. A minority also suggested that funding for the ASCC itself was not worthwhile. Others held the opposite view that increasing funding for the ASCC would allow them to provide a better service and that there is a need for the ASCC to have more paid staff'.*

Again the analyst chooses labour on the negative promoting negativity towards ASCC in the reader.

How much value would a CC like to achieve for £15.00 per annum? Note that TCC costs about 50 p per copy, and member CCs get 3 copies normally in a mailing with other relevant inclusions when needed, and postage around £1.50. So £8.00 of their £15.00 covers the cost of their four TCCs per annum. ANC is open to all CCllrs in Scotland but if places are limited, members will get priority. Attendance is free. The total cost is typically around £5000, which is in effect £7.00 per member CC. So beyond TCCs and ANC, everything else is free to CCs. Our insurance too costs just over half what some CCs (or LAs) pay, so you could say that for £15.00 an insured CC gets £60 worth of value, for TCC, ANC, insurance. And everything else is extra value. The whole value for money thing is a total nonsense!

### **Suggestions**

Several respondents made suggestions for actions that they felt would be helpful from the ASCC:

- *Direct engagement by attending Community Council meetings*

### **Restrictive due to manpower and financial constraints**

- *Providing an information pack for new Community Councillors (or newly joined Community Councils) to inform them of the work of the ASCC and the support available.*

### **Feasible but constrained to financial and manpower resources**

- *Lobbying local government to raise the profile of Community Councils and increase their role in local asset management*

### **ASCC does this**

- *Alerting members when new information has been added to website, and adding a separate heading on training and advice for members on how to access training. Circulate a summary of discussions at regional and other meetings to members*

**How? ASCC already does this through e newsletter, TCC – anything else would be cost restrictive**

- *Provide information on forthcoming legislation and policy changes of interest to Community Councils, particularly in relation to planning.*

### **This is done through TCC, E Newsletter and website**

- and adding a separate heading on training and advice for members on how to access training

**This is reasonable and planned to happen when material and LMS available.**

- Circulate a summary of discussions at regional and other meetings to members

**This happens -Those in attendance should take the responsibility to report back to their respective Community Councils.**

- *Provide a Code of Conduct for members*

**We did, with Scot Gov and CoSLA.**

**Whilst the ASCC welcome constructive comments the analyser chose to include these comments without providing ASCC with an opportunity to put the comments into context. This could be aimed to imply that the ASCC is not in tune with ASCC members or actively looking to improve its performance.**