



City Garden Project: Myth-Busters

- **Fiction:** This is Sir Ian Wood's project.
- ✓ **Fact:** The City Garden is not and never has been Sir Ian Wood's project. Redevelopment of the Denburn Valley has been considered by a number of bodies over the years, most recently by consultants working for Aberdeen Beyond 2000 in the late eighties and has been proposed in different forms in three different applications for funding over the last 20 years. The project previously failed to achieve the essential funding and was brought alive again by Sir Ian's offer of £50m.
- **Fiction:** The cost of the City Garden Project will exceed £140m
- ✓ **Fact:** The design teams have been given a defined budget to work to. Final costs, within the £140m budget, will be submitted with each design and will be one of the criteria taken into account when the Jury selects a winning design.
- **Fiction:** The City Garden Project will destroy the only green space in the city.
- ✓ **Fact:** It will create new, bigger, greener and more attractive gardens. It is about gardens and open, distinct spaces on different levels, using the natural slopes, for all sorts of activities.
- **Fiction:** It will destroy our history and heritage.
- ✓ **Fact:** Wherever possible, the project will preserve and enhance our history and heritage. This has been built into the design brief that the design teams are working too.
- **Fiction:** Aberdeen City Council is selling off public land for this project.
- ✓ **Fact:** The land involved will remain in public ownership. The City is not selling and has not sold any land for this project.
- **Fiction:** Aberdeen City Council is spending money it cannot afford on this project, money that could be better spent elsewhere.

- ✓ **Fact:** Aberdeen City Council has not allocated any revenue expenditure to the City Garden Project, over the past year and there is no provision within the City Council's current five year business plan to allocate any funds to this project.
- **Fiction:** The City will be taking on-board future liabilities relating to the construction and operation of the City Garden.
- ✓ **Fact:** The City has agreed to consider a TIF scheme to provide public sector funding for the project. This will involve the City borrowing funds to invest in the project. The project will stimulate new business investment and generate additional extra economic activity in the area, resulting in an increase in the amount of business rates collected in future years. This will be used to repay the loan plus the interest charges.
- **Fiction:** Individuals involved in the project will gain commercially from the development.
- ✓ **Fact:** The City Garden Project is not a commercial development therefore no individuals supporting the project will make any financial gain.
- **Fiction:** The majority of Aberdeen public has voted against redeveloping Union Terrace Gardens.
- ✓ **Fact:** 11,000 people (less than 10% of the population) participated in the public consultation which revealed that just over half were against the proposal. Many of those were basing their decision on mis-information. The majority indicated a need for change and for the location to be more attractive and accessible.
- **Fiction:** The City Garden Project is about a new shopping mall and car park.
- ✓ **Fact:** The project is about creating five acres of new space, of which the majority at surface level will be green space and gardens. There will be an iconic cultural building, café quarter, outdoor space for events and indoor space for a variety of activities. The design teams are following the design brief that states car parking should be sufficient to service the site. Principally this is about creating a civic heart - revenue generating activity will be in support of this and to ensure that the City Gardens is self-financing and sustainable.
- **Fiction:** It will be a flat, concrete square.
- ✓ **Fact:** This is not the case. The design teams have been given a very clear brief that new gardens and space which will have street level access from all four sides will use the existing topography of the site to provide a unique, dramatic and creatively landscaped setting to better reveal and blend with the surrounding historic architecture.