



REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 10 MAY 2018

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN 2017-2021 – UPDATE 2017-18

1. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Consider and endorse the progress made in 2017-18 on the Economic Development Action Plan 2017-21 as detailed in Appendix 1.**
- 1.2 Instruct the Head of Economic Development and Protective Services to report progress on this Action Plan annually.**

2. Background and Discussion

- 2.1 On 16 March 2017 the Infrastructure Services Committee (ISC) approved the Council's Economic Development Priorities and Action Plan 2017-21 after receiving input from the Area Committees. This Action Plan sets out to deliver the Regional Economic Strategy which had been approved by Council on 16 June 2016 (Item 12).
- 2.2 The Priorities and Action Plan reflects the work to be undertaken by the Economic Development Service and where the service will work with other services to promote and support the Aberdeenshire economy. The priorities reflect changes in the nature of the regional economy and revised Council priorities including regeneration, a transition towards a low carbon economy and a circular economy and Climate Change. It outlines the framework within which the Economic Development function operates to support delivery of the City Region Deal (CRD), Opportunity North East (ONE) and delivery of European Funding Programmes.
- 2.3 The Economic Development Action Plan directly supports the first of the Council's Priorities 2017-22, "Support and strong, sustainable, diverse and successful economy" and the final Priority, "Protect our special environment, including tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions".
- 2.4 Appendix 1 gives progress on delivery of the Action Plan in 2017-18 and indicates the priorities for the next year. When ISC approved the Action Plan in March 2017 they also asked that the Action Plan be reviewed in 2019.
- 2.5 The Head of Finance and the Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted and their comments are incorporated within the report.

3 Scheme of Governance

- 3.1 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section F1.1b of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the approval of resources to support Economic Development.

4. Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment and the Town Centre Impact Assessment are not required as these Impact Assessments were carried out when the Action Plan was approved.
- 4.2 There are no immediate staffing implications arising from this report.
- 4.3 Given ongoing pressures on the Council's budget the Action Plan has been written with the expectation of tighter and more constrained budgets. Therefore, the delivery of the Action Areas will have staffing and financial implications and work that is not included in the Action Plan is likely to be stopped or phased out by the Economic Development Service.

Stephen Archer
Director of Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Morna Harper, Service Manager – Business and Communities
Date: 6 April 2018

Aberdeenshire Council

Economic Development Action Plan 2017 – 2021

Update of activity 2017-18

Lead Officer: *Job title*

HoS – Head of Economic Development and Protective Services

SMBC – Service Manager Business and Communities

SMIS – Service Manager Industry Sectors

TMIS – Team Manager Industry Sectors

BDE – Business Development Executive

Timeline: *Ongoing or Date to Start*

Activity to date: *Activities undertaken*

Outcome: *Result from the activity and any measurement*

Priorities for next 12 Months: *Summary of work programme*

Leadership & Partnership Working

Theme 1: Leadership & Partnership Working
Overview
<p>The Council's role in economic development is to ensure we provide opportunities for our businesses and communities to grow economically, while at the same time ensuring our social wellbeing and infrastructure fabric is supportive to businesses.</p> <p>Partnership therefore is vital to ensure we work for the common goal and ensure our resources are used to maximise the best outcome.</p>
Actions
<p>1.1 Participate fully with our partners on the Opportunity North East (ONE) Board and Regional Advisory Board and relevant sub Boards</p> <p>Lead Officer: HoS Timeline: Underway Activity to date: The Council Leader (or Deputy) attends the ONE Board, The Chief Executive attends the Regional Advisory Board, and the ONE Digital Board, the Head of Economic Development & Protective Services attends the ONE Food, Drink & Agriculture Board. Outcome: Participation and financial support for key projects in particular the Food, Drink and Agriculture Boards work to support the NE Food and Drink Network, Growth Programme and the Food and Drink Awards. Priorities for next 12 Months: Support the Operating Plans for the actions where relevant. ONE's priorities are Oil, Gas and Energy; Food, Drink, Agriculture/Fisheries; Food Tourism, Digital Entrepreneurship; Life Sciences; Tourism; and the Innovation Centres of Excellence under the City Region Deal.</p>

1.2 Work closely with neighbouring local authorities to deliver the Regional Economic Strategy priorities

Lead Officer: HoS

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: A number of work streams and projects where there are joint opportunities to deliver are underway – including management of the City Region Deal and the work streams of Digital and Infrastructure; setting up of the Invest Aberdeen Region Hub; review and liaison on the Aberdeen Events Strategy, and collaboration to co-host the Aberdeen City Region stand at Offshore Europe (2017)

Outcome: Ongoing good relations, budget sharing and being recognised nationally as a cohesive economic region.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Development of the projects in the City Region Deal especially Digital and Roads Infrastructure

1.3 Work with our partners to deliver the City Region Deal and related Government Investment in Oil and Gas, Life Sciences and Food and Drink Technology Centres.

Lead Officer: HoS

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: City Region Deal Joint Committee and the Programme Board provide the governance and oversee the delivery of each work stream. There are regular liaison meetings between the local partners and UK and Scottish Governments. The Oil and Gas Technology Centre (OGTC) has been operating since February 2017. The Bio-Therapeutics Hub for Innovation (BTHI) Business Case was approved in 2017 and is now at the stage of procuring Project Management Services to deliver the Hub with an appointment expected to be made before the end of April. The first phase of the Hub is scheduled to open in April 2020. The Food Hub concept has been finalised and the Strategic Business Case is being prepared.

Outcome: The OGTC has invested £22million into innovation, set up 10 field trials, has 72 projects underway and has 183 industry ideas to tackle key challenges in its first year. More details are at <https://theogtc.com/about-us/2017-a-year-of-delivery/>

Priorities for next 12 Months: Ongoing support for the Food Hub Business Case to achieve final approval stage.

1.4 Support work being undertaken to improve the affordable / mid-market housing infrastructure of the region in line with the City Region Deal Housing theme.

Lead Officer: Head of Housing

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: During the period April 2017 to March 2018, 170 new affordable homes have been completed across Aberdeenshire across all partners: 137 new homes for social rent of which 38 delivered by Aberdeenshire Council and 99 by Registered Social Landlords (RSL) partners; 25 for mid-market rent; and 8 for low cost shared equity. There was also 1 acquisition for social rent by Aberdeenshire Council. A further 11 households accessed affordable home ownership through the 'resale' of existing low cost shared equity properties.

Outcome: 171 new units and a further 11 households assisted.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Meantime works has commenced/about to commence to deliver a further 429 units. 422 of these units will be for social rent of which 114 are to be delivered by Aberdeenshire Council and 308 by RSL partners and 7 for low cost shared equity across Aberdeenshire. Opportunities to utilise the £20m Housing Infrastructure Fund for Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City continue to be taken forward.

1.5 Work with relevant Council services to provide training and understanding of services roles to ensure Aberdeenshire is Open for Business

Lead Officer: HoS
Timeline; To start in 2017/18
Activity to date: The Town Centre First principal has been the key activity. Online training has been provided for officers, along with Area Committee Member training. Details provided in 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 below. There is ongoing work and liaison between Economic Development and the Planning and Property services to ensure the Local Development Plan and new infrastructure provides the opportunities for supporting local economic development.
Outcome: The Town Centre First Principal is now a consideration on all Committee reports.
Priorities for next 12 Months: Continue to support the Town Centre First Principal, work with the Planning Service and where opportunities exist to support other services to support the economy of Aberdeenshire.

1.6 Engage with businesses across Aberdeenshire, and explore options for an Aberdeenshire Business Forum.

Lead Officer: HoS
Timeline: Begin in 2018
Activity to date: Initial feedback is that the business community prefer to work as a community of interest (i.e. Food and Drink, Tourism, Fishing), and that there are a number of existing forums, communication channels and organisations at a north east level to ensure knowledge and Business to Business opportunities are provided. Two business engagement events will be held in 2018-19.
Outcome: A Council business e-bulletin and social media feed have been introduced.
Priorities for next 12 Months: Ongoing liaison with consultation to scope demand for the concept.

Business Support & Growth

Theme 2: Business Support and Growth

Overview

The small and medium sized businesses of Aberdeenshire are at the core of our economy and at various points in their development they may require support and advice from the Council or our partners.

Business Gateway is a publicly funded national service delivered locally which provides access to free business support services. Aberdeenshire Council is the lead authority in the North East to ensure the delivery of this service. This is a contracted service which is currently provided by Elevator, who give assistance and impartial advice to people starting or growing their business

Actions

2.1 Deliver schemes, including the Support for Aberdeenshire Business (SAB) scheme, to offer financial assistance to individual businesses in order to support the expansion of Aberdeenshire companies.

Lead Officer: SMBC

Timeline Underway

Activity to date: In 2017-18 the SAB Scheme assisted 19 businesses. The Scheme also helped to create 45.5 jobs and safeguard 37 jobs. The funding from the SAB Scheme helped to lever in £3,072,485 of investment from other sources.

Outcome: 19 businesses assisted and all of budget allocated.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Continue to offer assistance to businesses through the SAB scheme. Due to the introduction of the First Employee Grant scheme there will be less funds for the SAB scheme.

2.2 Review the SAB scheme by September 2017 to reduce grants paid by the scheme, in order to fund the First Employee Grants Scheme (FEGS).

Lead Officer: SMBC

Timeline: Complete

Activity to date: On 16 March 2017 ISC approved the introduction of the First Employee Grants scheme and during the year 16 businesses were awarded this Grant. Also simplified the loans on offer through the SAB scheme.

Outcome: 16 businesses encouraged and assisted in taking on their first employee.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Continue to offer loans and grants through the SAB scheme, including the FEG, evaluate and monitor and allocate all the budget.

2.3 Deliver a new First Employee Grant Scheme, which each year will offer up to 25 Aberdeenshire businesses support in taking on their first employee.

Lead Officer: SMBC

Timeline: First Employee Grant Scheme launched in September 2017.

Activity to date: 16 grants approved in 6 months.

Outcome: 16 jobs were created and businesses got over the hurdle of taking on an employee.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Continue offering First Employee Grant and aim to award 25 in 2018-19.

2.4 Introduce a new Business Loans Scotland (BLS) fund and distribute £100k in loans to SMEs before December 2018.

Lead Officer: Banff and Buchan BDE

Timeline: March 2017 to December 2018.

Activity to date: Since March 2017 BLS Ltd have advertised the fund through their website and the Scottish Government put out press releases. There has also been local promotion and the loans are marketed by the local Business Gateway advisors. Four Council staff have been on training to enable them to process loans through the BLS system. Talks have taken place between the Council's legal team and Economic Development on the legal documents that will be needed to process loans.

Outcome: By early August 2017 three Aberdeenshire businesses had registered with BLS and been allocated an Economic Development officer but none of these applications were completed. Take up of the loans has been slow throughout Scotland as access to commercial loans becomes easier.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Officers will continue to publicise the BLS loans through own contacts, Business Gateway advisors and by holding events to publicise funding for businesses. The first of these seminars is to be held in Peterhead.

2.5 Provide management of the Business Gateway programme in the North East which assists start-up and growing businesses. Through this Business Gateway activity, assist 1,000 new starts in the North East per annum.

Lead Officer: Business Gateway Manager

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: This financial year there has been continued, strong start-up activity in the North East and resource was moved from the Business Gateway Local Advisory Service to fund an increase in business start-up support.

Outcome: 1,227 businesses start-ups were supported by Business Gateway in the North East in 2017-18.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Business Gateway will capitalise on high start-up activity by providing continued support for businesses with a high growth potential.

2.6 Assist other Council services with analysis of business plans and completing consultations on planning applications. We will complete up to 12 consultations/ analysis of plans per annum.

Lead Officer: SMBC

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Business Development Executives (BDE) responded to 15 formal consultations from Planning and analysed 18 business plans for Property and other colleagues. In addition, BDEs gave informal responses to queries on Planning Applications and Roads projects.

Outcome: More confidence in the success of commercial and community projects and in the ability of commercial tenants to pay rent.

Priorities for next 12 Months: To continue to assist other services by assessing economic impact of activities and assessing viability of projects.

2.7 Train local businesses in tendering for contracts from the Councils and other large contractors to increase opportunities and success. We will deliver 10 business advice/training events per annum with the City Council and the Central Procurement Unit.

Lead Officer: Formartine and Garioch BDE

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Eight tender training events were held with an average attendance of 27 attendees. In addition, the service helped arrange two Meet the Buyer events one with Siemens and one with Vattenfall.

Outcome: Information on the % share of local spend by the Council will not be available for 17/18 until June. This information will form part of the annual Economic Activity reports to Area Committees later in the year. The continued high take up of places at these training events, however, is a good indication of their value to the businesses registered on the training programme mailing list.

Priorities for next 12 Months: The aim is to have the same number of events. In the future there may be more emphasis on delivering on-line training to businesses.

Industry Support & Growth

Theme 3: Industry Support & Growth

Overview

Aberdeenshire has long been an important area for rural and maritime industries. The Council maintains high level contacts to ensure that lobbying is targeted and well informed and that these industry sectors are supported when required.

Initiatives in primary and secondary food production and processing are supported and encouraged to ensure growth and diversification.

Energy will remain the largest industry in the region during this action plan period and the Council will work with the industry and trade bodies to help maximise the supply chain opportunities for locally located businesses.

Tourism is a fast growing sector and with the creation of VisitAberdeenshire and increased week day bed availability, the region has a great opportunity to improve visitor footfall to the area and its attractions.

Actions - Fishing, Agriculture, Food and Drink

3.1.1 Support the Fisheries Industry through delivery of the North East Scotland Fish Processing Strategy and seek to work on support in the context of the UK's decision to exit the EU. The strategy envisages the creation of a fish processing centre of excellence which will be reflective of 21st century standards and flexibility requirements.

Lead Officer: Industry Support Executive (Rural & Maritime)

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Programme of activity to define and deliver the vision of the Seafood Centre of Excellence. Active council participation in Scottish Seafood Association (SSA)-led, North East Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG)-funded Seafood Training Centre project to upskill existing workforce and promote career opportunities in the seafood sector to new entrants. The council is also partnering Developing Young Workforce (DYW), Skills Development Scotland (SDS), SSA and Seafood Scotland in Fishing for the Future project which aims to inspire and inform young people about the sector and to coach and educate employers on reaching out to the next generation. The council is also committed to encouraging the seafood sector to innovate and adopt new technology in association with its partners.

Outcome: Business Case Assessment of Seafood Centre of Excellence delivered by SAC Consulting in August 2017. 'Matrix' Action Plan created. Approval of SSA-led NESFLAG Training Centre (TC) project in November 2017. Recruitment of Michael Sim to deliver TC project (formerly of Young's Fraserburgh). Seafood processing technology learning journey to Iceland in February 2018.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Progress Seafood Centre of Excellence project. Generate early momentum in TC project. Develop programme of events in association with SSA, Seafood Scotland and other partners to promote technical innovation in the seafood sector. Facilitate improved links between industry and schools.

3.1.2 Support the Agricultural and Forestry industries through delivery of the recommendations of 'The Land-based Industry in NE Scotland – Facing the Future, and in the context of the UK's decision to exit the EU'.

Lead Officer: Industry Support Executive (Rural & Maritime)

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: North East Scotland Agriculture Advisory Group (NESAAG) continues to exercise its influence on policy matters of importance to the sector in NE Scotland. Continuing support for delivery of rural skills teaching by Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) in Aberdeenshire secondary schools and generational renewal in the land-based sector. Active support for local dairy sector including funding (with ONE) of Options Appraisal study following closure of Muller dairy in Tullos in 2015. Advice/information provided on Food Processing, Marketing and Cooperation grant scheme. Financial contribution towards costs of setting up NE Milk Producers Association and continuing support for sector as it explores alternative milk processing opportunities in NE.

Outcome: Engaging with the Animal and Plant Health Agency on behalf of the NE livestock sector and delivering a positive outcome on the issue of cattle brisket tags; lobbying the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board successfully to modify its terms to reflect the needs of the Ringlink Internship (now Pre-Apprenticeship); making representations to the Chief Executive of SRUC for investment in the Aberdeen (Craibstone) campus. Financial support from the council for the SRUC/ONE-led Shared Modern Apprenticeship pilot project.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Continuing support for local dairy sector; develop links with SRUC, ONE, Ringlink and Aberdeenshire schools to promote career opportunities within

the land-based sector. Explore new starter opportunities on council land in association with Property colleagues (Scottish Government Farming Opportunities for New Entrants project). Through NESAAAG, continue to exercise influence on policy issues and work with sector to adapt to post-Brexit future.

3.1.3 Support the delivery of the Scotland Food and Drink Strategy (October 2013) and its successor (Ambition 2030) strategy to maximise opportunities in Aberdeenshire.

Lead Officer: ONE Project Manager – Food and Drink

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Supported the delivery of the North East Scotland Food & Drink Network and Awards, in partnership with ONE. Supported the Business Growth Programme (2017), NE Dairy Sector, Poultry Group and Shared Modern Apprenticeship in Agriculture. **Outcome:** 20 business participating in the Food and Drink Business Growth Programme (2017), with 16 from Aberdeenshire. The Programme generated turnover growth of £147,000 and 2 FTE employees in the first 8 months by the small, owner managed companies. **Priorities for next 12 Months:** The areas of focus in 2018/19 are Business Growth, Market Development, Strengthen the Supply Chain, Skills Development and Innovation & Digital Transformation.

3.1.4 Partner with and support the work being led by Opportunity North East (ONE) to develop the food, drink, agricultural and fisheries sectors.

Lead Officer: HoS

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services sits on the ONE Board for Food, Drink and Agriculture. The Food and Drink Industry Support Executive is seconded to the ONE Food and Drink Team.

Outcome: Extensive work underway to support the North East Scotland Food and Drink Network with 490 attending events in 2017/18,

Food and Drink Awards - 48 business entering (39 in 2017) - 34 Aberdeenshire, 7 Moray and 7 Aberdeen. 16 entering for the 1st time (15 in 2017). There are a total of 89 entries across all categories (76 in 2017) and a total of 86 new products entered (64 in 2017). 290 attended the Awards Presentation Dinner.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Continue to work with ONE on food, drink agricultural projects. .

3.1.5 Continue to support initiatives which promote healthy food, reduces the carbon footprint of food production, and to encourage a circular economy to reduce waste.

Lead Officer: Team Leader, Sustainability and Climate Change

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Collaboration with Aberdeen City supporting a Zero Waste Scotland sponsored circular economy project. Stage 1 report complete 15 April 2018 – identifying sectors and opportunities. Stage 2 work to start April 18, 2018 – project being undertaken by Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC) team. A series of workshops to raise awareness of benefits of circular economy and sustainability and support companies to progress circular economy projects.

Outcome: A number of circular economy projects to be progressed in key sectors including Food and Manufacturing.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Support AGCC in developing key sector projects.

Actions – Tourism

3.2.1 Support the industry through supporting and funding the work of VisitAberdeenshire, in supplying targeted marketing and business development assistance to the industry along

with improving the visitor experience through the promotion of initiatives such as World Host and accommodation grading standards.

Lead Officer: TMIS

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Advocacy, business engagement events, market and product development support, annual tourism conference and annual tourism awards.

Outcome: Region has gained "Destination Status" due to number of businesses gaining World Host accreditation.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Embed the new tourism strategy "Destination Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire".

3.2.2 Continue to engage with and support individual businesses growing or seeking to enter into the industry.

Lead Officer: SMBC

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Business support officers continue to support third sector and private tourism businesses through advice support and grants. Six tourism businesses were awarded Council grants and others were assisted through European funding and Regeneration projects. Also worked in partnership with VisitAberdeenshire to get support and advice to individual businesses.

Outcome: Increased confidence in the industry and increasing knowledge of opportunities and support.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Continue to work with VisitAberdeenshire to develop the Aberdeenshire tourism offering.

3.2.3 Carry out, with partners, a mid-term review of the Regional Tourism Strategy in 2017.

Lead Officer: HoS

Timeline: To be completed by summer 2018.

Activity to date: A draft Tourism Strategy was developed and at time of this update is being consulted on. <https://industry.visitabdn.com/home/destination-strategy>

Outcome: Draft Strategy has been published

Priorities for next 12 Months: Aim is for adoption by all partners by end of June 2018. Action plan to be developed with the industry through a series of events and consultations.

3.2.4 Continue engagement with the Cairngorms National Park Authority to support their tourism strategies and plans for the Park economy.

Lead Officer: HoS

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services is a member of the Cairngorm Tourism Partnership. The Council is supporting the roll out of the Snow Roads project and directing businesses and groups to VisitAberdeenshire assistance on preparing for cruise ship visitors. The Council has agreed to support the 2018 Europarc Conference taking place in Aviemore in September. The conference delegates will take a number of field trips to Aberdeenshire, and there will be a conference speech by the Chief Executive. <http://cairngorms.co.uk/europarc-coming-to-the-cairngorms/>

Outcome: Ongoing development of good relations and projects.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Ongoing work and identifying of opportunities for joint work or projects.

3.2.5 Continue supporting the work of the Film Office, which promotes the area as a location for still and moving image photographic productions.

Lead Officer: TMIS

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Advocacy, support to incoming production companies, promotion of locations for filming, promotion of locations for film tourism.

Outcome: Aberdeenshire used as film location for productions including Mary Queen of Scots and Born to Run.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Further strengthen relationship with Creative Scotland, promotion of film tourism within Aberdeenshire.

Actions – Energy

3.3.1 Support the sector through lobbying, promoting Aberdeenshire as a place to invest in, do business and live in and assisting smaller businesses attend trade shows in the UK (Offshore Europe) and overseas, primarily at the Offshore Technology Conference in Houston (annually) and at Offshore Northern Seas in Stavanger (alternate years).

Lead Officer: TMIS

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: Exhibit at Offshore Europe, All Energy, Subsea Expo and Scottish Skipper, attendance at Offshore Technology Conference, Decom Offshore.

Outcome: North east businesses make contact with companies in their supply chain and gain contracts.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Establish Invest Aberdeen as the umbrella inward investment hub for north east Scotland.

3.3.2 Support the work to diversify the energy industry via the City Region Deal and the Oil and Gas Technology Centre.

See update 1.3 on City Region Deal and Oil and Gas Technology Centre.

Lead Officer:

Timeline:

Activity to date:

Outcome:

Priorities for next 12 Months:

3.3.3 Support inward investment into and the promotion of Energetica as the Energy Corridor for the region.

Lead Officer: Inward Investment Executive

Timeline: Up till March 2018 and then work carried out under InvestAberdeen.

Activity to date: Advocacy, supplier events, summer festival, one to one company/investor meetings, sign-posting.

Outcome: Approx £1bn worth of projects committed within the Energetica corridor over the next 15 years.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Transition the Energetica work and establish Invest Aberdeen as the umbrella inward investment hub for north east Scotland.

3.3.4 Participate in planning and actions to maximise decommissioning opportunities arising from the oil and gas industry

Lead Officer: TMIS

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Engagement with Industry bodies Decom North Sea and Subsea UK, attendance at Decom Offshore.

Outcome: Establishment of Decommissioning Centre of Excellence at Ocean Lab in Newburgh.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Support companies seeking opportunities in decommissioning market, support industry bodies and key stakeholders in developing business opportunities.

3.3.5 We will work with our partners and ports to promote and support their efforts to attract work for offshore renewables and decommissioning.

Lead Officer: TMIS

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Support ports in securing renewables and decommissioning contracts, support Peterhead Energy Hub, exhibited Subsea Expo, All Energy, attended Decom Offshore

Outcome: Contracts to support construction of Hywind and European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre secured

Priorities for next 12 Months: Support companies and ports seeking opportunities in renewables and decommissioning markets, support industry bodies and key stakeholders in developing business opportunities

Community Support & Growth

Theme 4: People & Community Support and Growth

Overview

Supporting our communities to help themselves is a key part of the work of the Council. Community Economic Development support is designed to support communities who want to deliver real economic change for their area through building capacity, supporting social enterprises and the third sector.

Aberdeenshire Council has in recent years, seen an increase in demand for supporting people into or back into employment or training. This means helping to develop skills, providing one to one advice and support of our employability services.

Our town centres are often at the heart of our communities, providing access to local services, retail and transport networks. The high street is changing rapidly aligned to changing ways of accessing services and shopping online. Aberdeenshire Council needs to support our town centres and in 2016 signed up to the Town Centre First Principle.

With the reduction in budgets for core services and communities, and the emerging change to the funding landscape from the European Union, it is important we consider how to support Council services and community groups access external funding and sponsorship opportunities.

Actions - Community Economic Development

4.1.1 Continue to support and encourage capacity building to improve the sustainability of communities through community-led economic activity. Up to six eligible community asset transfers (CAT) will be assisted each year.

Lead Officer: Community Economic Development Co-ordinator

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: All Area CAT Groups are supported by economic development staff as part of community support and feasibility activity.

Outcome: Asset transfers in Formartine, Garioch, Buchan and Banff & Buchan supported.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Support development of expression of interests to become asset transfers and input into the Council's first annual report on Asset Transfer Requests as required by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act.

4.1.2 Focus assistance through rural partnerships as community-led bodies that will support local groups in the development of community economic development projects

Lead Officer: Community Economic Development Co-ordinator

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Aberdeenshire Rural Partnership Federation supported and supportive relationship with rural partnerships and Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action developed.

Outcome: Rural Partnerships presented to councillors at Infrastructure Services Committee in March 2018.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Continue to work with rural partnerships on better promotion of the services and support they offer.

4.1.3 Continue the development of the rural partnerships and assist one a year to gain a new source of income.

Lead Officer: Community Economic Development Co-ordinator

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Garioch Partnership developed a modest income stream through checked charities accounts.

Outcome: Income stream developed which will make the organisation more sustainable.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Researching additional training options which would skill up rural partnerships and also social enterprises to open up further income generating opportunities.

4.1.4 Support Social Enterprises in line with the Scottish Government's new Social Enterprise Strategy, through continued support to rural partnerships, through business support activity and through investigating the formation of an Aberdeenshire-wide social enterprise support body.

Lead Officer: Community Economic Development Co-ordinator

Timeline: Started exploring new Social Enterprise Support (SES) Fund in July 2017.

Activity to date: Investigated new body while setting up SES Fund and found that there were many support bodies already. In addition, there are local rural partnerships and Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action. There was no call from local social enterprises for another body. However, the Council created a new Social Enterprise Support Fund which launched in Autumn 2017.

Outcome: Continued strengthening of the social enterprise sector in Aberdeenshire.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Allocate the Social Enterprise Support Fund by December 2018.

Actions – Employability

4.2.1 Aim to create an Employability single point of contact (SPoFC) in the Council to help internal and external clients gain the most appropriate support. Continue the close working with partners across the north east to draw down funding and offer employability services to reduce the number of people in Aberdeenshire on benefits.

Lead Officer: Employability Co-ordinator

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Single point of contact is progressing with the creation of an Aberdeenshire Local Employability Partnership (ALEP) web site which is looking to launch in June 2018. The Partnership recently bid for the Fair Start Scotland contract in conjunction with the Aberdeen City Employability Partnership and although unsuccessful it has fuelled further commitment to investigate other joint funding. The ALEP was

successful in securing SDS Employability Fund places for Aberdeenshire and is in the final stages of completing this contract for 2017-18.

Outcome: Clear insight to what a SPofC should look like. Website design begun. Joint working with City and Shire Partnerships.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Establish SPofC, Web site launched alongside social media platforms such as Facebook. Employability Conference to be held focusing on health and employment. Series of four Employment Skills events aimed at public and employers throughout Aberdeenshire and ALEP action plan delivered and reviewed.

4.2.2 Work with partners across the Council to support the Developing Young Workforce (DYW), initiative to reduce the percentage of young people leaving school without positive destinations.

Lead Officer: SMBC

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Within Aberdeenshire Council the main departments involved in employability are represented at the DYW group helping inform and shape what DYW looks like in the Shire. The Council's Employment Support Team (EST) is actively engaged in secondary schools assisting S4-S6 pupils (with SDS and Community Learning and Development) learn about employability skills for the workplace, particularly during study leave. Joint talks have been delivered to Guidance teachers from EST, Employability Service and Opportunities for All showing what is available and what these teams have to offer.

Outcome: Better understanding of employability assistance for Guidance staff, pupils with greater understanding of the job market and a point of contact should they require it (even at a later date or after leaving school).

Priorities for next 12 Months: More employability linked engagement with pupils and teachers. Continue attendance at DYW group to represent the views of employability. In conjunction with Skills Development Scotland formulating a strategy to capture young people before they end up not in positive destinations. Linked to activity in section 4.2.5 below.

4.2.3 Target getting 50 individuals into permanent work per quarter through job clubs, digital training, one to one support and other interventions.

Lead Officer: Employability Co-ordinator

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: In 2017-18 the Employment Support Team (EST) helped 202 people into employment and 76 people into either training or education. EST is engaging with clients on a 1-2-1 basis through Jobcentre, self-referrals, social work referrals and health-referrals. Currently EST operates 15 Job clubs throughout Aberdeenshire. Participated in 4 employability events in the past year including those run by the Scottish Government. Engaged with S4-S6 pupils in class through DYW programme. EST is currently engaging with 397 clients ranging through stages 1-5 of the employability pipeline.

Outcome: 202 people into employment, 76 people into training or education in 2017-18.

Priorities for next 12 Months: 200 people into employment. Participate in 3 Employability Events. Review Job Club operations.

4.2.4 Co-ordinate actions to ensure that Community Benefit Clauses (CBC) are used successfully by the Council to assist people into work.

Lead Officer: Employability Co-ordinator

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Participated in Major Capital Works Group, assisted the Procurement Service with Employability CBCs in new contracts, assisted with monitoring same once

awarded. Assisted with scoring tenders (e.g.HARD FM, NESS Project) on employability CBCs.

Outcome: Improved engagement with contractors, greater awareness of employability in procurement, monitoring processes being developed for employability CBCs.

Priorities for next 12 Months: More development of employability CBCs, assist colleagues with the development of newly formed North East Community Benefits forum. Keep raising awareness nationally of importance of community benefits in all levels of local authority contracts and bring any good practice to attention of colleagues.

4.2.5 Promote awareness and work with partners in the delivery of a North East Skills Strategy addressing the needs of regional employers.

Lead Officer: SMBC /HoS

Timeline: Aberdeen City and Shire Regional Skills Strategy was launched in 2017-18.

Activity to date: The Regional Learning and Skills Partnership was formed to deliver the Strategy and to ensure that the skills requirements of individuals and employers are fully met and that the skills system contributes to improved performance and productivity in the north east. The Partnership is led by the Principal of North East Scotland College and is made up of reps from both Councils' Education and Economic Development services, the Chamber of Commerce, Robert Gordons University, Aberdeen University, Skills Development Scotland, Job Centre Plus and ONE.

Outcome: The key priorities of the Strategy and associated Action Plan will be evaluated and reported to the partners.

Priorities for next 12 Months: To develop mechanisms to support partnerships to meet individual and employer needs, support the region's most vulnerable young people, develop a co-ordinated approach to employer engagement, assist the region's ambitions in relation to Developing Young Workforce and support the workforce planning requirements of regional employers.

Actions – Towns

4.3.1 Provide expertise to business groups and area teams on town centre interventions, best practice and Business Improvement Districts to aid the rejuvenation and sustainability of our town centres. Assist two towns per annum with support to help the sustainability of their town/village centre.

Lead Officer: Strategic Town Centre Executive

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: The focus last year was supporting the business community within Inverurie and Peterhead with the development of a Business Improvement District in each town. Participation in the town teams in Peterhead, Banff and Macduff, Huntly and Banchory as well as assisting area managers with interventions in Ellon, Banchory, Huntly and Portlethen has allowed support to be directed to the stakeholders of the main town centres where required. A retail assistance scheme was created for shops in Ballater.

Outcome: Two Business Improvement District companies have been set up in Inverurie and Peterhead, We Are INverurie and Rediscover Peterhead, both these companies are now in their first year of delivering a five-year business plan for each area. An action plan is underway for delivering projects to enhance the town centre of Banchory and Huntly has successfully been awarded funding from LEADER to create a strategy and community led action plan for the town.

Priorities for next 12 Months:

Work is underway with Architect and Design Scotland to carry out stakeholder consultations through a mini charrette to conduct a spacial planning assessment for three selected areas of Portlethen to create a town centre space for the community.

Working with the area office and the appointed consultants, Huntly will also be a focus for empowering groups to collaborate to deliver an action plan to tackle the decreasing footfall and vitality of Huntly's town centre.

4.3.2 Promote and work with Council services to ensure the Town Centre First Principle is applied in decision making

Lead Officer: Strategic Town Centre Executive

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: The Town Centre First Principle was launched in June 2017, and was rolled out through committee in November 2017. Similar to equalities, officers are requested to consider all decisions that could impact the main town centres.

Outcome: Ambassador officers and Elected Member Ambassadors have been nominated. All training material and guidance is in place. 130 officers have completed the training on this principle. Impacts are being recorded and monitored.

Priorities for next 12 Months: All current policy and strategy will be reviewed and any with potential impact to the main town centres will have the Town Centre First Principle embedded into the procedures. Work will be done with Heads of Service and authors of new policies and strategies to ensure the Principle is embedded where required.

Actions – External Funding

4.3.3 Explore the advantages of creating an external funding unit to support the Council and its communities to access funding and sponsorship opportunities.

Lead Officer: Team Manager, European Policy and Programmes

Timeline: Activity to start once details of funding post-Brexit are known.

Activity to date: Information has been gathered on the approaches of other Local Authorities to external funding. However, further information is needed on what funding programmes, if any, will be introduced to directly replace EU programmes in the UK.

Outcome: N/A

Priorities for next 12 Months: Information gathering on external sources of funding for Council and third sector organisations.

4.3.4 Engage with agencies responsible for any successor funding schemes following the UK's exit from Europe, which may be developed within the UK and which could benefit Aberdeenshire.

Lead Officer: Team Manager, European Policy and Programmes

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: The Council adopted a position paper on 'post-Brexit funding programmes' on 15 March 2018. This has been submitted to COSLA and the Scottish Government.

Outcome: The Council is more aware of alternatives post-Brexit.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Putting forward the Council's view on domestic replacement programmes for EU programmes.

4.3.5 Deliver the allocated funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) including managing the delivery and monitoring of regional LEADER and fisheries programmes.

Lead Officer: Team Manager, European Policy and Programmes

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Commitments of funding from the above programmes to projects are ongoing, with 2 temporary Project Development Officers having been recruited to work up

projects in thematic areas where there have been few funding applications from external applicants. Work is ongoing to bid for extensions to the ESF and ERDF programmes.
Outcome: Approximately 53% of funding secured from the above programmes has been committed.
Priorities for next 12 Months: Commitment of remaining 47% of funding and securing extensions for ESF and ERDF activity.

4.3.6 Where possible, work to influence negotiations on the UK's decision to exit the EU to maximise the benefits to Aberdeenshire.

Lead Officer: Team Manager, European Policy and Programmes

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: A meeting took place with Mike Russell, Scottish Government Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place In Europe where current developments and areas of interest were discussed. Officers are actively participating in a CoOSLA working group which aims to co-ordinate Local Government activity on Brexit. Officers are working with the Scottish Government and Aberdeen City Council to arrange an event providing non-UK European Economic Area nationals with an opportunity to engage with local authorities and the Scottish Government on their status post-Brexit.

Outcome: Aberdeenshire Council's agreed positions on Brexit have been highlighted to policy makers/policy influencers.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Assessing implications of transition deal and continuing to put forward Council views to policy makers.

Investment & Regeneration

Theme 5: Investment & Regeneration

Overview

The Regeneration Strategy for Aberdeenshire, "From Strategy to Action: Developing Excellence in our North Coast Communities", 2016, focuses on our four northern towns of Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead. The opportunities and assets of these towns will be capitalised on.

Inward investment is a key element of economic development and can be from home based growth, company relocations from within Scotland and the UK or foreign direct investment. Being able to promote and direct enquiries to the appropriate locations is vital.

Actions – Regeneration

5.1.1 Deliver the Regeneration Strategy for Aberdeenshire, as approved by Infrastructure Services Committee on 17 March 2016, which concentrates regeneration effort in the four towns of Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead.

Lead Officer: Regeneration and Town Centres Manager

Timeline: Regeneration Strategy and budget approved for 2016-2021.

Activity to date: All four Development Partnerships have progressed and developed and are now taking ownership of their plans.

Outcome: Partners are engaging in the four towns including those that have previously had limited involvement. Major partnership developments include the work of Peterhead Port Authority in their £50 million investment in the harbour and the work of the Community Planning Partnership in their participative budgeting project, Your Voice Your

Choice, has begun to develop more community confidence to take on more developments.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Ensuring more services and partners are involved in the formation and delivery of actions. Ensuring that a full complement of staff are in place to deliver the Action Plan.

5.1.2 The four Regeneration Action Plans have many targets within their Plans and these will be reported to Area Committees and Infrastructure Services Committee.

Lead Officer: Regeneration and Town Centres Manager

Timeline: Throughout 2016-2021 reports will be presented to ISC and Area Committees every six months.

Activity to date: Major funding projects include the South Links Sports Trust, Faithlie House containing the Enterprise Hub, Compass Point, Peterhead and compiling funding applications for harbour works in Banff and Macduff. Work has continued on major renovation projects to be supported by the Property Investment Fund.

Outcome: The outcomes achieved to date have varied from improved town centre business resilience achieved through a retail support programme to people being supported into jobs through Compass Point in Peterhead and community groups benefitting from investment and confidence from the Your Voice Your Choice initiatives in Peterhead and Fraserburgh. There has also been increased marine business in Macduff Harbour resulting from early actions in the Macduff Harbour Masterplan.

Priorities for next 12 Months: The main priorities are opening of the Enterprise Hub, Fraserburgh, completion of Drummers Corner public realm, Peterhead, launching of the Silversmithing project in Banff and completion of funding applications for Banff and Macduff Harbours and initiating the work that will lead to higher paid jobs, an enhanced digital economy and career development.

5.1.3 Support partners in the delivery of the approved and emerging National, Regional and Local Transport Strategies in building a transportation infrastructure that is supportive of the needs of business in the area and delivery of the City Region Deal transportation investments.

Lead Officer: Head of Transportation

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Progress on delivery of existing local, regional, and national transport strategy outcomes are regularly reported to Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee and Nestrans Board. Key items of progress include progression of Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) which is due to open Autumn 2018, progression of Aberdeen to Inverurie Rail improvement works, and Kintore Station (due to open December 2019). With a longer term delivery programme, work on assessing options for the full dualling of the A96 between Aberdeen and Huntly has commenced, led by Transport Scotland. Aberdeenshire Council's continue to progress appraisal work (alongside partnership with others) on key corridors such as A947, Aberdeen-Ellon-Peterhead-Fraserburgh, and on key routes into Aberdeen City (such as Wellington Road, A944 and Bridge of Dee).

Aberdeenshire Council officers supported by Nestrans also are providing significant input to the reviews of the emerging National Transport Strategy, national Strategic Transport Projects review.

The City Region Deal (CRD) contains commitments to undertake a Strategic Transport Appraisal (considering the most appropriate regional transport strategy post-AWPR opening) and improvements to external linkages to the new Aberdeen Harbour. The first

phases of work on the strategic transport appraisal are now nearing completion (pre-appraisal stage), and this will be followed by option development and generation. Post AWPR opening, quantitative modelling and appraisal will be undertaken on these options. Funding announced by Scottish Government at the same time as the CRD includes commitments to provide a grade separated junction for Laurencekirk. A preferred option is anticipated to be announced during 2018. The funding announced alongside the CRD also includes £200m for the delivery of journey time improvements by rail between Aberdeen and Central Belt, and a national working group has been established to identify the variety of options to deliver these improvements within the 10 year timescale of the plan.

Outcome: A Transportation Strategy to take the region to 2040 which can be fed into the national strategy.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Delivering Kintore Station and progressing towards the development of the Laurencekirk junction.

5.1.4 Assist colleagues to deliver an efficient planning system and contribute to consideration of Major Applications and others of economic significance.

Lead Officer: BDEs

Timeline: Ongoing.

Activity to date: Economic Development have contributed to the consultation on a variety of Major Planning Applications including the proposed high-profile relocation of Aberdeen Football Club to Kingsford and developments on the A90 south of Aberdeen. The service also contributed to the Council's position statement on the route options for the dualling of the A96.

The Main Issues Report for the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) was issued in February 2018 and Economic Development will be represented on the group to finalise the Plan and have also contributed to the formation of the Main Issues Report for the next Local Development Plan (LDP).

Outcome: Business needs are considered and included in the LDP and the SDP. Economic Development will carry out an Economic Impact Assessment to evaluate the opportunities and threats to businesses in Westhill as a result of the relocation of Aberdeen Football Club.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Contribute to the process to agree a new LDP, this will include providing feedback on the Main Issues Report and draft proposed LDP.

Work with partners to deliver the next Strategic Development Plan. Examine the outcomes of the new Planning Act, on businesses, once it has been enacted.

5.1.5 Continue to work with Digital Scotland to help ensure effective delivery of the Rest of Scotland broadband infrastructure upgrade programme in Aberdeenshire (now extended until December 2017).

Lead Officer: SMIS

Timeline: Ongoing.

Activity to date: Because of high rates of uptake of fibre broadband, the Gainshare provision in the contract with Openreach was triggered. This has injected a further sum of over £20m into the programme. The Gainshare element of the contract committed Openreach to paying back (for reinvestment in the contract) a sum of money, triggered by uptake of fibre enabled broadband exceeding a threshold of 20% within 3 years.

Outcome: Gainshare monies are in the main, being used to bring those Local Authority areas with below national average rates of premises passed by fibre up to nearer the national average – Aberdeenshire is a major beneficiary.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Gainshare cash will be deployed until the end of the 2018 calendar year. The Digital Scotland programme will see financial close in Q3 of the 2018

calendar year. The anticipated outcome for Aberdeenshire is for around 89% of premises to be passed by fibre – a significant uplift from the starting point of 20%, in 2014.

Actions – Inward Investment

5.2.1 We will work with our partners including Aberdeen City Council and Scottish Development International to develop a co-ordinated approach to attracting and securing inward investment opportunities for Aberdeenshire especially Regeneration towns and the City Region Deal area.

Lead Officer: Inward Investment Executive

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Invest Aberdeen has been set up and staff resource recruited

Outcome: Team, structure and governance in place to begin activity

Priorities for next 12 Months: Grow profile/credibility and develop operational action plan.

5.2.2 Promote Aberdeenshire as a key location for energy, tourism, food, drink and agriculture and land based industries

Lead Officer: Head of Service, Customer Communications and Improvement

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Invest Aberdeen was launched during the year. There was a call from the Chamber of Commerce to "Talk up the area" and in December 2017 the Vanguard Conference was held to establish projects and development to showcase the area.

Outcome: Growth of Energetica Festival since inception. New inward investment body with agreed funding.

Priorities for next 12 Months: To develop actions from the regional narrative work, to continue to grow awareness and credibility of Invest Aberdeen work and to ensure that the Energetica Festival continues to deliver under a new governance model.

5.2.3 Promote Energetica as a key location for investment opportunities in the energy and decommissioning industries.

Lead Officer: Inward Investment Executive

Timeline: Up to March 2018.

Activity to date: Social media and web promotions plus Offshore Europe, Subsea Expo, Offshore Technology Conference attendance and promotion.

Outcome: Growth in activity and awareness in the Energetica corridor. Decommissioning Centre of Excellence within the Energetica corridor recently announced.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Continue to support and promote opportunities generated on the back of existing investments in centres of excellence under the InvestAberdeen work.

Low Carbon Economy, Health, Equality, Quality of Life

Theme 6: Low Carbon Economy, Health, Equality, Quality of Life

Overview

The state of the environment is of concern to all: now and for the future residents of Aberdeenshire. The Council is demonstrating leadership in adopting technologies and changing behaviours to reduce the Council's own climate change emissions, reduce energy and waste, promote biodiversity, encourage active travel and better use of technology.

We can also help businesses respond and take the business opportunity to work towards a low carbon economy and enhancing quality of life through best practice, design, and innovation.

Actions - Sustainable Development & Climate Change

6.1.1 The Council will work to reduce its climate change emissions through the delivery of a Council Carbon Budget, Sustainable Energy Action Plan, revised Climate Change Action Plan and Environmental Policy.

Lead Officer: Team Leader, Sustainability and Climate Change

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: The Climate Change Action Plan 2020 and enhanced Environmental and Climate Change Policy were approved by Committee in November 2016 with actions already underway. The Carbon Budget for 2018/19 was approved in February 2018. The draft Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) is currently undergoing a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Outcome: Emissions reported on in the 2016/17 Climate Change Duties Report highlighted an 8% reduction in emissions from the previous year. This was achieved by both projects and reductions to electricity emission factors.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Ensure actions within the Carbon Budget 2018/19 are on track, update Climate Change Action Plan 2020 with midway progress and complete SEA for the SEAP.

6.1.2 Continue to promote sustainable energy practices based on the principles of minimising demand through efficient design and minimising environmental impact in community projects.

Lead Officer: Sustainable Development Officer

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: Ad hoc advice to village halls and other community groups on energy efficiency and renewable energy project development.

Outcome: A number of community projects in development including Johnshaven Village Hall where external wall insulation has been installed, renewable heating (air-source heat pumps) is in progress and Solar PV panels planned.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Work with communities will continue ensuring that appropriate sources of funding are identified for the groups where possible.

6.1.3 Promote the area's energy needs being met with sustainable local solutions before considering national or international options such as turbines owned by the Council.

Lead Officer: SMIS

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: On 28 February 2018 following a report to the Sustainability Sub Committee it was agreed to apply for planning permission to place a 400Kw capacity wind turbine at Burnside Quarry, which is owned by the Council. This was the only project to be

taken forward after CKD Galbraith examined 11 possible Aberdeenshire Council sites for wind turbine development.

Outcome: One site to be taken forward for a possible wind turbine development.

Priorities for next 12 Months: The Sustainability Sub Committee agreed that the "Developing Wind Turbines on Council Sites Project" will cease once the outcome of the Burnside application is known.

6.1.4 Build on the work being done in Sustainable Food Regions, Positive Procurement, Buy Local, the reduction of waste and the promotion of locally produced renewable energy in pursuit of the principles and delivery of a circular economy.

Lead Officer: Sustainable Development Officer

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: A series of workshops were held during the year to raise awareness of benefits of circular economy and sustainability and support companies to progress circular economy projects. The Council has employed an officer to help reduce waste within the Council by increasing the use of Warp-It and getting other public sector partners involved. There are no figure yet for trade waste in Aberdeenshire in 2017-18 but as costs have risen the amount of waste has tended to reduce. In addition, trade waste has reduced due to the economic downturn. The Council supported the Chamber of Commerce "Buy North East" campaign and in 2017-18 the 500th business joined the campaign. As part of the Community Empowerment Act the Council has created a Local Food Growing Strategy to make it easier for residents to grow their own food.

Outcome: A number of circular economy projects to be progressed in key sectors including Food and Manufacturing.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Support officers in reducing the Council's waste through re-use and recycling. Encouraging a reduction in trade waste by the private sector through promoting Government schemes.

6.1.5 Continue to support the promotion and adoption of energy reduction and energy management policies and technologies and support the promotion and adoption of appropriate renewable energy technologies which will contribute to the Council and Aberdeenshire transitioning towards a low carbon economy.

Lead Officer: Sustainable Development Officer (external projects) Engineering Services Manager (internal projects)

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: External - Working with Resource Efficient Scotland (RES) and external energy auditors to identify and progress energy efficiency and renewable energy projects with companies (SMEs) and community groups. Includes supporting RES in awareness raising and workshops such as those undertaken during Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Sustainable Business week (20-24 Nov 2017). Continue to support the work of the East Coast Renewables Group and Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group in promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency and low carbon transport projects.

Internal - Energy consumption (kWh), costs (£) and carbon emissions (Tonnes) are monitored and published for each operational Council building through Arcadia. Energy efficiency measures continue to be carried out and funded through the Central Energy Efficiency Fund or other capital budgets. Current projects include lighting upgrades and heating control upgrades.

Photovoltaic panels (PV) have now been installed in 36 buildings. The installations continue to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs. Biomass boilers have now been installed in 18 buildings. The installations continue to reduce carbon emissions.

Reducing Council energy costs.

Outcome: A number of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Example – identify cost savings in electricity consumption for Garioch Heritage Society.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Continue and build on relationship with external support organisations. Continue with Council projects to reduce energy consumption.

Actions - Quality of Life and Promotion

6.2.1 Continue to support initiatives in Aberdeenshire which promote the natural, built and preserved heritage assets of the area.

Lead Officer: HoS

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Aberdeenshire Council is currently operating two Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS) in association with Historic Environment Scotland in Banff and Fraserburgh. The improvement will have a significant effect on the regeneration aspirations of these towns. The Council is working with Scottish National Heritage to identify opportunities to support the protection of wildlife while promoting the option to support tourism at the same time such as the Heads up for Seal in Newburgh.

Outcome: £150,000 and £711,000 of funding has been spent in Banff and Fraserburgh, to date, respectively and the two projects have attracted £4million of match funding. A feasibility study for the Heads Up for Seals project is nearing completion. The NE Local Biodiversity Partnership have launched a film highlighting the beauty of the regions wildlife.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Ongoing delivery of CARS in the two towns and explore gaining CARS funding for Peterhead. Identify opportunities to promote the regions biodiversity and assets to support sustainable tourism. Produce Pollinator Strategy and update and implement Pollinator Action Plan.

6.2.2 Contribute to the design and delivery of marketing material, publications and exhibition material in support of the Council's presence at industry, trade and other relevant events.

Lead Officer: TMIS

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Exhibited at Offshore Europe, All Energy, Subsea Expo, attendance at Offshore Technology Conference, Decom Offshore and Scottish Skipper with appropriate marketing material.

Outcome: E newsletter launched, social media promotion of Economic Development launched, new suite of promotion banners produced.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Increase on-line followers and readership of publications, promotion of Economic Development activities.

6.2.3 Engage with stakeholders to support their marketing activities relating to the benefit of doing business in Aberdeenshire.

Lead Officer: TMIS

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Tailored supportive letters provided to AECC to assist in securing conferences, hosting Aberdeenshire Mountain Bike Development Co-ordinator post.

Outcome: Exact outcome of supportive letters unknown but Council getting reputation for supporting good projects.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Continue to support Visit Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre in efforts to secure business tourism visitors, deliver the Aberdeenshire Mountain Biking Action Plan 2018 – 2020.

6.2.4 Compile an Annual Review of Economic Development Activity in order to lead on communicating the work of Economic Development and raising awareness of business engagement initiatives, grant schemes and other funding opportunities.

Lead Officer: TMIS
Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Participated in Aberdeen 365 (a body of organisations involved in putting on events in NE Scotland), e-newsletter launched, social media promotion of Economic Development launched and new suite of promotion banners produced.

Outcome: Annual review published and circulated to stakeholders.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Increase on-line followers and readership of publications, promotion of Economic Development activities.

6.2.5 Work with partners, including Scottish Enterprise, Aberdeen City Council, VisitAberdeenshire and VisitScotland on targeted initiatives promoting Aberdeenshire as a location for events of regional, national and international significance.

Lead Officer: TMIS
Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Took part in advocacy, business engagement events, market and product development support, annual tourism conference and annual tourism awards.

Outcome: Support to businesses becoming "cruise ready", support in development of new tourist route, NE250.

Priorities for next 12 Months: Embed the new tourism strategy "Destination Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire".

6.2.6 Work with Council services and partners to promote the economic opportunities that sport and leisure activities and facilities provide, alongside promoting the benefits of Healthy Working Lives.

Lead Officer: HoS
Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Liaison and promotion of the NHS Healthy Working Lives is taken forward as appropriate with speaking to companies. The new Tourism Strategy for the NE includes the economic opportunities to promote the Great Outdoors of Aberdeenshire. The Council is also supporting a LEADER project to develop and promote Aberdeenshire as a Mountain Biking destination and to support the development of a new Mountain Biking venue.

Outcome: Ongoing.

Priorities for next 12 Months: The Mountain Biking Project begins in 2018 for two years.