

REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 17 JUNE 2021

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE PLAN 2021-2022

1 Reason for Report/Summary

- 1.1 To seek input on, and approval of, the Economic Development Service Plan 2021-2022 from the Committee.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Consider and offer comment on the proposed Economic Development Service Plan for 2021-2022;**
- 2.2 Approve the implementation of the Economic Development Service Plan 2021-2022, subject to any amendments or comments that Committee may wish to make; and**
- 2.3 Receive an update on the Economic Development Service Plan in August 2022.**

3 Purpose and Decision-Making Route

- 3.1 Aberdeenshire Council approved its new Council Plan on 7 October 2020 (Item 3) and is continuing to transition to a new Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 3.2 The new Council Plan covers the period to 2022 and recognises the significant and lasting impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the organisation, our partners, businesses, communities and residents.
- 3.3 Following approval of the Council Plan and MTFS, each Directorate and Service is required to produce plans to demonstrate how they will contribute to and deliver against the priorities set out in the Council Plan and within the financial context established by the MTFS. Contributions have also been made to each of the six Area Plans, where geographically distinct projects or interventions are proposed to be delivered.
- 3.4 A summary of the priorities contained within the draft Economic Development Service Plan 2021-22 was considered by the Recovery Reference Group on 25 November 2020 and feedback received from that group has been incorporated into the proposed Economic Development Service Plan, where appropriate.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 Following the Council decision on 23 July 2020 (Item 4) to cease the existing Council Plan, Infrastructure Services Committee took a similar decision to close

off the Economic Development Service Action Plan at its meeting on 20 August 2020 (Item 9).

4.2 The Council Plan has the economy as one of its three pillars, with the Economic Development Service having a critical role to play in delivering, enabling and brokering some of the actions required within that pillar. In particular, the Economic Development Service will lead on the following priorities:

- 1) Supporting Aberdeenshire businesses through the pandemic, Brexit and energy transition;
- 2) The gap between economic, environmental and social outcomes in Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead and the Aberdeenshire average is closed and other towns at risk have avoided becoming regeneration priorities;
- 3) A location of choice that has a diverse economic base of innovative companies with a skilled workforce and return to full employment; and
- 4) Efficient and effective business support, advice and regulation.

4.3 The Economic Development Service Plan proposes objectives and actions to support progress against the four priorities above, noting that some of these will need to be carried forward over a longer timeframe (e.g., structural change in regeneration priority areas requires a longer commitment and many initiatives have a long lead-in time).

4.4 The proposed Economic Development Service Plan is included within this Report at **Appendix 1**.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

5.1 This report helps deliver the Strategic Priority Economy and Enterprise within the Pillar Our Economy.

5.2 This report helps deliver the Strategic Priority Infrastructure within the Pillar Our Environment.

5.3 This report helps deliver the Strategic Priority Resilient Communities within the Pillar Our Environment.

5.4 Actions will also support the following key principles:

- 1) Responsible finances;
- 2) Climate and sustainability;
- 3) Community Planning Partnership (LOIP);
- 4) Tackling poverty and inequalities; and
- 5) Digital infrastructure and economy.

- 5.5 This Report helps deliver on the LOIP Priorities – Child Poverty (Tackling Poverty and Inequality) and Connected and Cohesive Communities.
- 5.6 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	x		
Staffing	x		
Equalities	Integrated Impact Assessment attached as Appendix 2		
Fairer Scotland Duty			
Town Centre First			
Sustainability			
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		x	

- 5.7 An integrated impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included as **Appendix 2** which demonstrates positive impacts throughout the proposals within the new Economic Development Service Plan.
- 5.8 The staffing implications of this report will be kept under review. The proposed Economic Development Service Plan may result in a formal review of the Service structure and this will be undertaken, if required, in line with the Council's standard procedures. The financial implications are contained within existing budgets. However, it should be noted that a core principle of the Service is to identify and draw down third party/external grants where appropriate and where the purposes of such grants aligns well with Service Priorities.
- 5.9 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a [Corporate Level](#):
- ACORP001 budget pressures. Mitigation: active management of the service budget and continued review of external funding opportunities;
 - ACORP005 working with other organisations. Mitigation: clear articulation and understanding of purpose of joint working/partnership engagement/procurement; and
 - ACORP007 social risk. Mitigation: continued active engagement in Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Group, leadership of Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership and regeneration partnerships and greater integration of lived experience into service design.

The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a [Strategic Level](#):

- ISSR002 regeneration. Mitigation: work is ongoing to review and refocus the work of the regeneration team and partnerships in light of the new Government priorities around place-based investment and Levelling Up; and
- ISSR008 economic development. Mitigation: securing agreement for the implementation of this new service plan

6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the [Scheme of Governance](#) and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section F1.1 of the [List of Committee Powers in Part 2A](#) of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to policy issues specifically delegated (Economic Development) to this Committee.

Alan Wood
Director, Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Matt Lockley, Service Manager, Economic Development
2 June 2021

List of Appendices –

Appendix 1 – Draft Economic Development Service Plan
Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment

Economic Development Service Plan 2021-22

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Economic Development Service Plan has been written to confirm Service Priorities over the 2021 and 2022 calendar years, as the economic shocks and opportunities created by the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit continue to emerge and the transition to new economic models accelerates. It should be considered in the context of the Infrastructure Services Plan that flows from the new Council Plan and as such it does not duplicate content contained in those documents. Instead, it focuses on the principles, priorities and outcomes that the service will focus on over the next two years. The Service Plan also aims to test approaches and set the foundations for a longer-term approach to Economic Development from 2023 onwards, when economic conditions should have stabilised and more strategic considerations can be built into future priorities.
- 1.2 The Service Plan responds to the high priority that the Council has given to the economy (one of three 'pillars' in the Council Plan) and proposes how service resources will be focused to deliver on the high-level objectives included in the Council Plan, with outcomes linked back to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework where possible. The Economic Development Service will also be contributing to priorities under the 'Our Environment' pillar and these are included in this Service Plan.
- 1.3 Clearly the Service Plan needs to be deliverable in terms of the Council's financial position and will be responsive to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Any changes to the staffing structure that may flow from the new Service Plan and its priorities will be developed, consulted on and implemented in accordance with the Council's Standard Procedures for Service Redesign.
- 1.4 The Service Plan is the result of service-wide consultation and consultation with senior members and officers through the Recovery Reference Group and an informal session with members of Infrastructure Services Committee; a review of external activity, national and regional policies and strategies; partner organisations' priorities and understanding of changes to the grant funding environment and mainstream funds coming to the Council. Given the rapid pace of change externally and within the Council, the Service Plan and service actions will remain under active review and where required, any material changes will be reported to Infrastructure Services Committee.

2 Guiding principles and objectives

- 2.1 Economic development is an important function of local authorities and this is well recognised through both the Scottish and UK Governments and through national networks such as COSLA and Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development (SLAED). Aberdeenshire Council's Economic Development

service operates a blended model of direct delivery, facilitation of investment and interventions and administering grant programmes on behalf of the Scottish Government. Much of the services work is in the development, ongoing facilitation of and active contribution to partnerships to ensure that our economic development and inclusive growth ecosystem delivers against local, regional and national priorities.

2.2 The Council Plan has four main priorities for economic development over the next two years:

- Supporting Aberdeenshire businesses through the pandemic, Brexit and energy transition
- The gap between economic, environmental and social outcomes in Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead and the Aberdeenshire average is closed and other towns at risk have avoided becoming regeneration priorities
- A location of choice that has a diverse economic base of innovative companies with a skilled workforce and return to full employment
- Efficient and effective business support, advice and regulation

2.3 These form the basis of the proposals within this new Service Plan.

2.4 In addition, the following guiding principles will provide the framework for the service and its ongoing development:

- Building and sustaining community capacity so that community ownership, engagement and lived experience is embedded in the design of service initiatives and projects
- Providing a corporate focus and resource for trialling approaches to community wealth building and place-based investment
- Actively engaging in strategic and operational partnerships where there are tangible benefits to Aberdeenshire's businesses and communities
- Focussing on continuous improvement and innovation to design and deliver new models of service provision
- Learning from the Covid-19 pandemic and factoring this learning in to future growth initiatives and priorities
- Optimising public and private sector investment into Aberdeenshire with a focus on improving inclusive growth and fair work outcomes

3 Priority actions

- 3.1 The following actions are identified as areas of focus over the following 18 months, all with a view to delivering against the priorities in the Council Plan and establishing a refocussed service into the longer-term. Note: this is not an exhaustive list and is not listed in any particular order of priority.
- (i) Wrap up Covid-19 related business, in particular the administration of grant schemes:
 - a. Ensure all reporting to the Scottish Government is concluded and relevant audits are undertaken (internal and external).
 - b. Compile lessons learned log.
 - c. Scope out future solutions to e.g. business grant administration and ensure digital options are designed and optimised.
 - (ii) Establish a new Investments and Projects Team, with appropriate budget provision for staff and technical resources, to ensure that the Council and Community Planning Partnership have improved success in bidding for UK and Scottish Government grants:
 - a. Secure and adapt capacity and develop technical expertise to enable the Council and its partners to submit compelling and credible bids to UK and Scottish Government funding streams (e.g. Levelling Up/ Shared Prosperity Funds).
 - b. Lead a corporate culture change to ensure that common objectives and priorities are clearly understood and that funding is sought to deliver against long-term objectives.
 - c. Build an invest to save model, whereby the future costs of the team are partially offset by grant income.
 - (iii) Redesign the Council's approach to direct business support:
 - a. Procure a new Business Gateway service that is future-focussed and that embeds within it priorities around local enterprise and value-driven growth (e.g. Fraserburgh Enterprise Hub).
 - b. Pause the existing Aberdeenshire Council BRASS (Business Resilience and Sustainability Scheme) business grants scheme and explore the potential for funding allocated to this to be used in a different way.
 - c. Encourage greater joint working with Finance, Property and Planning services with a view to developing a corporate business offer for growth companies and investors that might include rates and property flexibilities and accelerated planning.

- (iv) Support sector growth in areas where the Council can make a difference:
 - a. Review our approach to key sector support and encourage distributed leadership across business networks and with the primary stakeholder organisations.
 - b. Focus on maximising and leveraging investment through the City Region Deal and continue to lobby for the benefits to extend to all parts of Aberdeenshire.
 - c. Lead workstreams relating to the business opportunities created by the net zero and energy transition agendas.
- (v) Create new focus and capacity to drive digital investment in Aberdeenshire and support the digital inclusion agenda:
 - a. Build new relationships with the UK and Scottish Governments in terms of their digital policies and investment programmes.
 - b. Influence investment priorities and maximise commercial investments and opportunities with the main network operators.
 - c. Ensure that Aberdeenshire has a competitive proposition for future rounds of investment into 5G (and beyond) technology.
- (vi) Build on the work of the Regeneration and Town Centres team and associated partnerships to:
 - a. Co-design (with communities of interest) an Aberdeenshire approach to community wealth building, piloting activity where opportunities exist.
 - b. Develop a place approach which brings together regeneration, Local Place Plans and town centre development. Deliver the Place-Based Investment Programme, maximising positive change in areas of deprivation, rural communities and town centres.
 - c. Support the further development of the Business Improvement District model.
- (vii) Manage and further develop the Council's approach to the provision of employability services:
 - a. Maintain strategic relationships with the Scottish Government through SLAED and continue to influence the No-One Left Behind (NOLB) agenda.

- b. Optimise funding streams related to employability and develop the Employment CONNECT and Digital CONNECT proposals further, with a view to their ongoing sustainability.
 - c. Explore the scope for an employment brokerage model to be established by the Council, linking sectors with high levels of job vacancies or hard-to-fill vacancies with unemployed people and those who can be upskilled into higher level roles through skills academies and recruitment incentives.
- (viii) Lead the Invest Aberdeen initiative:
- a. Ensure opportunities in Aberdeenshire are actively developed, marketed and managed with partners and stakeholders.
 - b. Actively contribute to spatial initiatives such as Greenports and the Levelling Up agenda.
 - c. Build relationships with key inward investment agencies and partners.

COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES AND KEY INDICATORS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 2021-22

	OUR ECONOMY Economy & enterprise	LGBF PERFORMANCE 2019-20 [red = worse than Scottish average; amber = approx. Scottish average; green = better than Scottish average]	Target end 2022	OUR ENVIRONMENT Infrastructure Resilient Communities	LGBF PERFORMANCE 2019-20 [red = worse than Scottish average; amber = approx. Scottish average; green = better than Scottish average]	Target end 2022
Local Government Benchmark Framework outcomes	% unemployed people assisted into work from Council operated / funded Employability Programmes	9.6%	15%	Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	82%	90%
	Number of Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	25.5	23	Town centre vacancy rates	11%	10%
	Investment in Economic Development and tourism per 1,000 population	£137,694	£130,000	Immediately available employment land as a % of land allocated for employment in the LDP	23%	36%
	Proportion of people earning less than the Living Wage	19.2% in 2019-20, down from 22% in 2018-19 [data for 18+ PAYE workers from Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings]	18%			

	OUR ECONOMY Economy & enterprise	Latest performance data	Target end 2022	OUR ENVIRONMENT Infrastructure Resilient Communities	Latest performance data	Target end 2022
Local outcomes	Number of companies operating in Aberdeenshire is equal to the December 2019 figure	13,940 total enterprises (2019); 13,865 (2020) [Nomis]	13,940	Number of vacant units brought back into use in priority towns through direct Place Based interventions	7	5
	The level of economic activity in Aberdeenshire is equal to the March 2020 level	March 2020 – 144,900 economically active (82.6%) Sept 2020 – 141,800 (80.7%) [Nomis]	144,900 or 82.6%	Number and value of projects delivering reductions in carbon	Nil – new outcome	4
	Value of tourism spend	In 2019, combined spending by day visitors and overnight visitors was £730 million	£730 million (i.e. return to pre-Covid levels)	Number of superfast broadband connections delivered through voucher schemes	Nil – new outcome	250
	Inward investment enquiries managed by Invest Aberdeen	19 live enquiries at March 2021	50	Community wealth building pilot projects initiated	Nil – new outcome	2
	Unique number of Aberdeenshire businesses supported	1,628 in 2019-20	3,000			
	External grants secured for AC projects	£551,440	£15million			

	OUR ECONOMY Economy & enterprise	Latest performance data	Target end 2022	
Local outcomes	External funding administered by the service and invested in third party projects	£1,435,271	£1.5million – depends on SG/UKG plans for future LEADER and post EU funds	

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Economic Development Service Plan 2021-22

Assessment ID	IIA-000004
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Subject Matter Experts	Audrey Michie, Susan Forbes, Joel Evans, Lynne Gravener
Approved By	Paul Macari
Approved On	Wednesday June 02, 2021
Publication Date	Friday June 04, 2021

1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

Assessing the proposed Economic Development service plan covering 2021-22

During screening 6 of 10 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 4 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty
- Health Inequalities
- Sustainability and Climate Change
- Town Centres First

In total there are 24 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 0 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 1 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by paul.macari2@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	Yes
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	Yes
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy reduce inequality of outcome?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	No

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Not Required
Climate Change and Sustainability	No Negative Impacts Identified
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	No Negative Impacts Identified
Health Inequalities	No Negative Impacts Identified
Town Centre's First	No Negative Impacts Identified

4. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

4.1. Protected Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Age (Younger)	Yes			
Age (Older)		Yes		
Disability	Yes			
Race		Yes		
Religion or Belief		Yes		
Sex		Yes		
Pregnancy and Maternity		Yes		
Sexual Orientation		Yes		
Gender Reassignment		Yes		
Marriage or Civil Partnership		Yes		

4.2. Socio-economic Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Low income	Yes			
Low wealth	Yes			
Material deprivation		Yes		
Area deprivation	Yes			
Socioeconomic background	Yes			

4.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Age (Younger)	The Economic Development service is managing significant employability funding aimed specifically at younger people (Scottish Government funds through the Young Person's Guarantee) during the 2021-22 financial year. This will create additional capacity and innovative new approaches to employability and skills for younger people at risk of disengaging.
Disability	Projects delivered by the service include town centre regeneration initiatives (largely capital) that seek to improve access to town centres and incorporate provisions to support disabled access. In addition, activities such as the Vinery project in Banff are specifically targeted at people with mental health issues and will provide a safe space and support services.

Impact Area	Impact
Area deprivation	A key part of the service is the work we do in the 4 north coast regeneration towns. This is driven by SIMD data and is focussed on improving the quality of life, life chances and investability of these areas.
Low income	The Economic Development service plan has a core focus on inclusive growth and on community wealth building, both of which are focused on raising income levels and supporting the tackling poverty agenda. The Economic Development service hosts the Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership, which brings together employment and training providers to support skills development and improved income levels.
Low wealth	The service has secured external funding to support financial inclusion activity in GPs surgeries and community settings, which is focussed on supporting people to maximise their income and reduce their outgoings. In addition, a major part of the work of the service is in supporting business growth and entrepreneurship, which will ultimately support wealth generation.
Socioeconomic background	The service leads on employability activity and initiatives such as No-One Left Behind, Kickstart and the Young Person's Guarantee, all of which are aimed at improving access to sustainable, well-paid employment. The Scottish Government's Employability Pipeline underpins all of this work, and has a focus on skilling people up for Fair Work opportunities that can be sustained through in work support and access to ongoing skills development.

4.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Data	SIMD	Nationally recognised deprivation data	Helps us to understand the communities we should be targeting for projects, initiatives and investment
External Data	SDS - Regional Skills Strategy	Sets out current and future skills gaps and demands and has data on unfilled / hard-to-fill job vacancies	Helps us to target the work of the employability team and the leadership role we have with the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership
External Data	Business Gateway	Performance data for the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Business Gateway contract. Provides information on the number of businesses supported, their size, sector and growth aspirations.	Helps us to design and develop new services and products for the next Business Gateway contract

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Data	Covid-19 grants data	Tells us about the businesses that have been most badly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic	Helps us to target future business support and grant solutions to businesses that need it the most

4.5. Information Gaps

Digital inclusion

4.6. Measures to fill Information Gaps

Measure	Timescale
Undertake baseline mapping of digital inclusion metrics as part of the work of the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities group	Autumn 2021

4.7. Engagement with affected groups

Internal - engagement with staff in the service and Elected Members through the Recovery Reference Group and an informal ISC session.

External - engagement undertaken on a project-by-project basis

4.8. Ensuring engagement with protected groups

Undertaken on a project-by-project basis, not at plan level

4.9. Evidence of engagement

Undertaken on a project-by-project basis, not at plan level

4.10. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

The work of the service and the proposals in the service plan is focused on the Inclusive Economic Growth and Fair Work agendas. Our work is closely aligned to Government policies around Levelling Up, place-based investment and Community Wealth Building, all of which have the improvement of equalities outcomes as central objectives. Much of the funding that we manage and deliver on behalf of our partners is directly aimed at addressing inequalities and closing the gap between areas of disadvantage and Aberdeenshire level outcomes.

4.11. Improving Relations

New projects and initiatives are co-designed with communities, where possible, and proportionate levels of consultation are undertaken with community groups, partner organisations and the lived experience forum. Grants programmes and/or investment in new projects are scoped with a review of potential stakeholders and partner organisations with the aim of ensuring that interventions are locally owned where possible. Opportunities for joint work amongst different third party groups and / or across multiple areas are explored routinely.

4.12. Opportunities of Equality

All of the work of the service is underpinned by tackling poverty and deprivation. The Service Plan's focus on new job creation, regeneration, business support, employability activity and

digital inclusion is all in line with the Council's wider efforts to advance equality of opportunity.

5. Health Inequalities Impact Assessment

5.1. Health Behaviours

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Healthy eating		Yes		
Exercise and physical activity		Yes		
Substance use – tobacco		Yes		
Substance use – alcohol		Yes		
Substance use – drugs		Yes		
Mental health		Yes		

5.2. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Healthy eating	Projects such as the Vinery in Banff are about bringing horticultural space back into productive use for local communities. It will have a community cafe and courses on healthy cooking and eating. Other investments through our business grants scheme are supporting local food producers and manufacturers to develop new products.
Mental health	Work in the employability team is linked to wider mental health support services, recognising the significant positive impact that a supported return to productive employment and/or skills training can have for people with mental health issues.

5.3. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Other Evidence	Community plans / regeneration plans	Community and regeneration plans have a focus on health and wellbeing, recognising the specific health inequalities of certain communities in Aberdeenshire.	Health inequalities data is not a primary driver for the work of the Economic Development service but it does form part of our wider partnership work (e.g. with the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Group and through projects such as the Vinery in Banff) and as such is kept under review.

5.4. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

The service aims to support the development of inclusive economic activity and social and community regeneration, much of which has health and wellbeing as a central feature or as a secondary beneficiary of project delivery or funding investment. For example, the new approach to place-based investment includes looking at 20-minute neighbourhoods and how policies and investments related to this can support better health outcomes (e.g. through active travel

policies).

6. Sustainability and Climate Change Impact Assessment

6.1. Emissions and Resources

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Consumption of energy		Yes		
Energy efficiency		Yes		
Energy source		Yes		
Low carbon transition	Yes			
Consumption of physical resources	Yes			
Waste and circularity	Yes			
Circular economy transition	Yes			
Economic and social transition	Yes			

6.2. Biodiversity and Resilience

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Quality of environment		Yes		
Quantity of environment		Yes		
Wildlife and biodiversity		Yes		
Infrastructure resilience		Yes		
Council resilience		Yes		
Community resilience		Yes		
Adaptation		Yes		

6.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Circular economy transition	The service has a leadership role around the circular economy and works closely with Circular North East to promote and develop initiatives that focus on the economic benefits of the reuse / recycle philosophy.
Economic and social transition	Policy drivers such as net zero and energy transition are particularly important in the North East of Scotland, given its importance for the UK energy sector. Investment from the UK and Scottish Governments has been secured for the Energy Transition Zone in Aberdeen and for the Carbon Capture project in St Fergus, and the Economic Development Service Plan recognises that these will be important areas of work going forward.

Impact Area	Impact
Low carbon transition	The service works with industry to promote low carbon initiatives and energy transition opportunities in Aberdeenshire. We are particularly involved with the proposals for the Energy Transition Zone and the wider scope of this in Aberdeenshire is being explored, possibly to be delivered through the concept of a Greenport. St Fergus CCUS is an exciting project that is being supported by the Council which would anchor CCUS and green hydrogen production in North East Scotland. The service is also heavily involved with internal initiatives to cut carbon, including those relating to building use and fleet.
Consumption of physical resources	The service plan focuses on issues such as community wealth building and the circular economy, recognising that these are nationally significant policy areas and that Aberdeenshire has a wealth of opportunities to lead in these areas. Pilot activity such as the Remakery concept is being developed, alongside bids for funding to support the development of a circular economy toolkit for businesses, to help them better understand the opportunity.
Waste and circularity	See comments in resources section on the circular economy.

6.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Data	Climate Change declaration and policy	The Council's climate change declaration and policy set out our overall objectives for leadership and direct interventions to deliver carbon reductions and work towards net zero targets.	The service has a lead role for working across services to encourage carbon reduction activity and the implementation of the carbon budget.
Internal Data	Departmental carbon budgets	Departmental carbon budgets have been implemented to focus departments on their contributions towards the council's corporate Carbon Budget.	Carbon budgets set targets for carbon reductions which will drive better practice in terms of the council's delivery of services, procurement of contracts etc

6.5. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

The service has a lead role for net zero, carbon reduction and climate change, both internally and in terms of supporting the development of the energy transition sector of the local economy. No service level interventions would support activity that increases carbon production.

7. Town Centre's First Impact Assessment

7.1. Local Factors

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Town centre assets	Yes			
Footfall	Yes			
Changes to road layouts	Yes			
Parking	Yes			
Infrastructure changes	Yes			
Aesthetics of the town centre	Yes			
Tourism	Yes			
Public safety	Yes			
Town centre business	Yes			
Cultural heritage and identity	Yes			
Social and cultural aspects	Yes			

7.2. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Aesthetics of the town centre	investments made through Regeneration and other funding streams will enhance public realm and seek to mitigate the problems of long-derelict buildings in some of our key town centres.
Cultural heritage and identity	Investment in anchor historical buildings in town centres (e.g. Victoria and Albert Hall Ballater; John Trail in Fraserburgh and the Vinery in Banff) is a core objective of the Regeneration and Town Centres team.
Footfall	Footfall will be enhanced by capital investments in new facilities and in bringing premises back into use. The continued support of the Scotland Loves Local scheme and initiatives such as local loyalty cards will also encourage people to use their local independent shops and suppliers.
Infrastructure changes	Investments made through the service will have a positive impact on town centre infrastructure, supporting communities to realise their aspirations.
Parking	Some of the investment through Regeneration Budgets and the Place Based Investment Fund might be in creating new car parking and/or improving existing parking. The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund will also be considered for investment in parking to mitigate pressure points (e.g. in Ballater / Braemar and at Sandend).
Public safety	Investment in CCTV and in public realm to design out crime opportunities will continue to be a priority.

Impact Area	Impact
Changes to road layouts	The Place Based Investment Fund could potentially be invested in public realm activities, some of which will include changes to road layouts and traffic movement.
Social and cultural aspects	Investments such as those in Banchory Library and the Arc cinema in Peterhead will bring new cultural facilities and jobs to town centres. Social benefits will be created by projects such as Drummers Corner, which will reduce anti-social behaviour and create new outdoor events space.
Town centre assets	Property Investment Fund, RCGF and Place Based Investment Funding all have the potential to support the redevelopment and re-use of town centre assets.
Town centre business	Projects such as the Phoenix Fund are specifically designed to support local business partnerships to improve their local areas and design new schemes to attract shoppers to our town centres. Covid-19 grant programmes have also been heavily focussed on town centre businesses.
Tourism	The Regeneration Team is leading on tourism initiatives in Banff and Fraserburgh. Investment in tourism is also secured through the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund and the service funds Visit Aberdeenshire as the local destination marketing organisation.

7.3. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Data	Unknown - Kantar?	Town centre vacancy rates	Indicates how many town centre retail premises are occupied and vacant, which is a good proxy indicator for the vitality of town centres
Internal Data	Footfall counters	Tells us how many people are active in town centres	High footfall indicates vibrant town centres, with decreasing footfall a potential indicator of decline.

7.4. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

Interventions agreed through the Economic Development Service Plan always consider the Town Centre First Principle and as lead service for the town centre first approach, we are keen to continue to demonstrate leadership for other council services.

8. Action Plan

Planned Action	Details
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Planned Action	Details
<p>Agree indicators to capture data on equalities and sustainability that can inform the development of the next service plan from 2022 onwards.</p>	<p>Lead Officer Matthew Lockley Repeating Activity No Planned Start Monday May 17, 2021 Planned Finish Friday July 30, 2021 Expected Outcome indicators agreed and reporting mechanism / timescale established Resource Implications Absorbed within existing capacity</p>