

REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 16 MAY 2019

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN 2017-2021 – UPDATE 2018-19

1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Consider and endorse the progress made in 2018-19 on the Economic Development Action Plan 2017-21 as detailed in Appendix 1;
- 1.2 Approve the new format for reporting on the Economic Development Action Plan 2017-21 as outlined in section 2.4 and 2.5; and
- 1.3 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 (Item 16), 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. The Action Plan 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 2018-19. In January 2019 an internal Audit was carried out on the Economic Development Action Plan. One of the recommendations was that this Action Plan shows, "tangible measurable progress". In order to achieve this it is proposed that the section "Priorities for next 12 months" under each action is replaced with "Targets for the next 12 months". In May 2020 progress can be measured against this target.

- 2.5 The Audit on Economic Development also requested that a table be included in the Action Plan Update giving the resources used to deliver the Economic Development service in terms of budget and full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. This information is included in the table below:

Economic Development Resources	2018-19
Number of full time equivalent Economic Development staff	53.11 FTE
Revenue Budget spend	£4,823,000
Capital Budget spend	£297,115

- 2.6 When ISC approved the Aberdeenshire Economic Development Action Plan in March 2017 Members asked that the Action Plan be reviewed in 2019 to update the Plan. On 21 June 2018 ISC approved a new Action Plan which outlines the work that will be done with our **partners** across the City and Shire to deliver the revised Regional Economic Strategy (RES). The revised RES reflects the changing economic context in the north east including the efforts to ensure that the economy is more resilient to severe fluctuations in the oil price and building on the economic opportunities around transformational projects in delivery and development. It was also a response to the regional economy's significant exposure as a result of Brexit.
- 2.7 Due to the need for a review of Aberdeenshire's Action Plan in 2019, and the need to reflect the additional actions agreed with our partners in the RES Action Plan (outlined in Section 2.6 above), there will be proposed changes to the attached Action Plan which will be considered as part of the Budget Scrutiny Programme.
- 2.8 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. There has been no material change in circumstances that would require further assessments to be carried out at this time.
- 4.2 There are no immediate staffing implications arising from this report.
- 4.3. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

- 4.4 The following risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: Budget Pressures; Changes in government policy, legislation and regulation; Working with other organisations; Reputational Management. The following risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level: Community Empowerment, City Region Deal, Regeneration and Economic Development.

Stephen Archer
Director of Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Morna Harper, Service Manager
Economic Development, 4 April 2019

Aberdeenshire Council

Economic Development Action Plan 2017 – 2021

Update of activity 2018-19

Table showing resources for the year

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: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services Timeline: Ongoing 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 and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable: Priority for next period is to continue to work in partnership with ONE to maximise opportunities for economic development and to 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. There are no relevant targets.</p>
<p>1.2 Work closely with neighbouring local authorities to deliver the Regional Economic Strategy priorities</p> <p>Lead Officer: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services Timeline: Ongoing 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; the Invest Aberdeen Region Hub; review and liaison on the delivery of key economic opportunities to promote the area. Outcome: Ongoing good relations, budget sharing and being recognised nationally as a cohesive economic region. Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable: Procurement of the Fibre Infrastructure completed and work underway.</p>
<p>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.</p>

Lead Officer: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services

Timeline: Ongoing

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 Food Hub (NES) Ltd has been set up. Lease negotiations for preferred site commenced with Head of Terms substantially agreed. Recruitment of Food Hub Project Director complete with postholder starting April 2019. Bio Therapeutic Hub has an approved concept design approved by BioAberdeen Board; planning pre-application discussions are underway, site investigations completed. Stage 1 OJEU notice issued for procurement of main contractor. Follow up support continues to be delivered to companies participating in the Pilot Life Sciences Business Support programme through ONE and Partners.

Outcome: Over 115 members of the Solution Centres currently in place, with further expected to join in the coming months. 178 approved Projects in progress, with a total investment of £98m with OGTC share of £39.3m. 50 offshore trials planned, with a number already completed. Wells call on Restoring Shut-in wells launched in Q4 and closed in January with 20 submissions. The National Decommissioning Centre in Newburgh was successfully launch in January 2019. The research themes for both National Centres is being developed in collaboration with the Universities and Industry.

An Annual report was published with update on all CRD Projects

<http://www.abzdeal.com/download/622529/cityregiondealannualreport2018-final-931806.pdf>

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

- Annual Benefits Realisation Plan is due 30 June 2019 where Inclusive Economic Growth Measures are expected.
- Annual Performance Report is due 31 July 2019.
- Annual Conversation will take place September 2019 with Scottish Government and UK Government to review CRD progress.

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 2018 to March 2019, 200 new affordable homes have been completed across Aberdeenshire across all partners. This includes 197 new homes for social rent of which 56 delivered by Aberdeenshire Council and 140 by Registered Social Landlords (RSL) partners; and 3 for low cost shared equity. There was also one acquisition for social rent by Aberdeenshire Council. A further 14 households accessed affordable home ownership through the 'resale' of existing low-cost shared equity properties. The intermediate market for mid-market rent and low-cost shared equity has been more challenging for providers both locally and nationally during 2018/19.

Outcome: 200 new affordable units and a further 14 households assisted with affordable home ownership.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Up to 425 new affordable homes in Aberdeenshire, 340 of which should be for social rent.

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

Lead Officer: Service Manager, Economic Development

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: Projects that show the commitment to being “open for business” include the Positive Procurement Programme, the creation of Invest Aberdeen, operation of the Town Centre First Principle, delivery of the regeneration strategy and ensuring Economic Development consultation on large commercial planning applications. More information on all these projects are given in the Actions below. In addition, Simplified Planning Zones still being investigated and may be created when the Industry Park at Peterhead Gateway site is developed. 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: Aberdeenshire is known as a Council that is open to new ideas and business friendly.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Economic Development will work with the Planning Service and other services to support the economy of Aberdeenshire.

Allocate the new Scottish Government Town Centre Fund.

Meet with Federation of Small Businesses representatives on a regular basis.

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

Lead Officer: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services

Timeline: Complete

Activity to date: Consultation showed 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. Many industry events supported each year.

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: Service Manager, Economic Development

Timeline Underway

Activity to date: In 2018-19 the SAB Scheme assisted 22 businesses. The Scheme also helped to create 38 jobs and safeguard 3.5 jobs. The funding from the SAB Scheme helped to lever in £605,040 of investment from other sources.

Outcome: 22 businesses assisted and all of budget allocated. In addition, budget was used to assist 21 businesses with the First Employee Grant Scheme.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

To support 25 businesses with SAB grants and loans to enable businesses to take steps in advancing their business.

To award 25 First Employee Grants helping businesses with the difficult task of taking on a first employee.

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: Service Manager Economic Development

Timeline: Complete

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

Outcome: Businesses can now get assistance in taking on their First Employee.

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: Service Manager Economic Development

Timeline: First Employee Grant Scheme launched in September 2017.

Activity to date: 21 grants approved in 2018-19.

Outcome: 21 jobs were created and businesses got over the hurdle of taking on an employee and could afford to spend time training the new employee.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

To award 25 First Employee Grants helping businesses with the difficult task of taking on a first employee.

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 Business Development Executive

Timeline: Phase 1 - March 2017 to December 2018. Phase 2 – Jan 2019 onwards.

Activity to date: Since March 2017 BLS Ltd have promoted and run the scheme along with Council staff and the local Business Gateway advisors. Four Council staff have been on training to enable them to process loans through the BLS system. BLS has now transitioned to phase 2, with BLS now undertaking the appraisal of applications. In 2018 a loan of £25,700 was awarded to a Kincardine and Mearns new-start business. Two other Aberdeenshire applications are now in progress.

Outcome: A businesses that has not been able to raise funding from conventional sources is able to develop and grow.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Target of 2 new loans to be drawn in 2018-19.

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: In 2018-19 all Business Gateway targets were met. Targets were exceeded in workshops delivered, start-ups and acceptances to Scottish Enterprise account management.

Outcome: 1,227 businesses start-ups were supported by Business Gateway in the North East in 2018-19.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

- 1,150 start-ups
- 150 Early stage growth businesses
- 115 high growth businesses
- 290 training workshops delivered

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: Service Manager, Economic Development

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Business Development Executives (BDE) responded to 9 formal consultations from Planning and analysed 28 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 and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

To complete 12 consultations/analysis of plans per annum.

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 Business Development Executive

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Five tender training events were held with an average attendance of 10 attendees. In addition, the service helped arrange one Meet the Buyer event with Robertsons. In addition, 1 to 1 surgeries were arranged with 31 businesses throughout the year.

Outcome: The take up of training events by businesses has started to fall. In addition, Aberdeen City Council may withdraw from the Supplier Development Programme. Therefore, in collaboration with Procurement, a review of the delivery of procurement training is ongoing.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

We will deliver 10 business advice/training events per annum. There are now more online training resources available e.g. the Supplier Procurement Journey and more of the basic training will be delivered using these resources in future. The training events programme will be tailored to deliver training when large contracts are due to be procured with the type of training offered being dependent on the contracts to be awarded.

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 Seafood Centre of Excellence with industry partners; preparations underway for NESFLAG, Seafood Scotland and ONE (jointly funded) strategic study of fisheries sector; seafood industry careers promoted in association with DYW, SSA and others; partnership with industry and representative bodies to promote uptake of quality accreditation standards and also to launch and deliver Workplace Ready programme for new entrants; help address property constraints for processors

Outcome: The industry are better informed and are able to lobby more successfully.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Deliver the 'Future-proof' fisheries strategic study by Mar 2020 (funded by NESFLAG, Seafood Scotland and ONE).

Explore fully the scope for collaboration with SWFPA to create a fishing and seafood centre of excellence in Fraserburgh.

Support SSA to deliver Workplace Ready training for 25 school leavers/new entrants to seafood processing sector.

Support DYW in creation and distribution of career resources for seafood sector to 5 secondary schools in Aberdeenshire.

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: Active support given for specific sectors; dairy, oil seed rape producer group (organic aspirations) and forestry/timber. In business development and next generation-engagement; ongoing support for SRUC led shared modern apprenticeship programme in agriculture (with ONE and other partners); continuing sponsorship of Good Farming Practice Awards; influence maintained of NESAAAG (lobbying and information sharing).

Outcome: More young people enter land-based industries in the north east.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Support increase in number undertaking Shared Modern Apprenticeship programme from 6 in 2018/19 to 10 in 2019/20 in association with partners.

Maintain sponsorship for Good Farming Practice Awards.

Assist Deeside Estates in delivering forestry demonstration days to all S3 pupils at Aboyne Academy.

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 (2018), NE Dairy Sector and Shared Modern Apprenticeship in Agriculture.

Outcome: 44 businesses entered the Food & Drink Awards, with 27 from Aberdeenshire. Increased exposure for north east food and drink producers via Fine Food Digest publication and Boys East Scotland press trip. 12 businesses participating in the Food & Drink Business Growth Programme (2018), with 11 from Aberdeenshire. 12 of BGP 2017 and 2018 now have business mentors, with 10 from Aberdeenshire. NE Dairy Producers Association were supported. Shared Modern Apprenticeship in Agriculture programme designed and initiated with year 1 target of 6 apprentices recruited.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

The areas of focus in 2019/20 are Business Growth; Internationalisation & Market Development; Transforming Food Chains Through Innovation & Digitalisation and New Generation Skills and People Development.

Business Growth Programme 2019 – 6 businesses completed BGP in 2019. A total of 20 targeted BGP cohort businesses on mentoring programme. Three co-funded specialist inputs.

NES Food & Drink Network 2019/20 – maximum of 8 events delivered including clinics on specialist topics.

NES Food & Drink Awards 2020 – celebrate 30-years of innovation and excellence. 45 businesses entering. 300 representatives attending awards presentation dinner.

Shared Modern Apprenticeship in Agriculture – 6 apprentices completed programme in year 1. 10 apprentices recruited for year 2.

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: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services

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:

ONE Food and Drink Board and team have:

- Exceeding target engagement with food and drink businesses (162 versus 150)

- Export programme launched (46 on workshops versus 40 target) and leveraging of the national in-country specialists programme into the NE (£5.5M project)
- 7 technology led supply chain projects operating or scoped
- Number of businesses working on food tourism plans (45) exceeding target (30) and Leader funded post secured
- Business Growth Programme delivered and supporting high growth companies

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

As in 3.1.3

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: Ongoing

Activity to date: Collaboration continues with Aberdeen City supporting a Zero Waste Scotland sponsored circular economy project. Stage 1 report was completed in April 2018 and identified sectors and opportunities. Stage 2 work began April 2018. This project is being undertaken by Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC) team. A series of workshops to raise awareness of benefits of circular economy sustainability and to support companies to progress circular economy projects have taken place in City and Shire.

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

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

To raise additional funding from Zero Waste Scotland to continue the project having learnt from Phase 2 outcomes.

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: Team Manager Business and Industry

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 and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Embed the new tourism strategy "Destination Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire" through adoption by the industry.

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

Lead Officer: Service Manager Economic Development

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Business support officers continue to support third sector and private tourism businesses through advice, support and grants. 13 tourism businesses were awarded Economic Development 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 and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:
Continue to work with VisitAberdeenshire to develop the Aberdeenshire tourism offering.
Support 10 tourism businesses with Economic Development grants.

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

Lead Officer: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services

Timeline: Completed

Activity to date: The Tourism Strategy 2018 – 2023 for Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen was approved by Infrastructure Services Committee 23 August 2018.

<https://committees.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/FunctionsPage.aspx?dsid=95988&action=GetFileFromDB>

The strategy concentrates on the following strengths; Business Events, Cruise, Golf, Culture, Heritage & Events, Food & Drink, Touring and the Great Outdoors.

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

Lead Officer: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services is a member of the Cairngorm Tourism Partnership. The Council has supported Snow Roads project and directing businesses and groups to VisitAberdeenshire assistance on preparing for cruise ship visitors. Council has worked with the Authority to support applications to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund

Outcome: Europarc Conference held in Aviemore in 2018, with Council support, conference included Council speakers and a number of field trips to Aberdeenshire.

Funding secured to upgrade Muir of Dinnet car park, outcome still expected for parking in Braemar, Ballater car park extension was not successful.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Successful funding award and delivery of one Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund project in the area.

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: Team Manager Business and Industry

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 and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Further strengthen relationship with Creative Scotland and promote film tourism within Aberdeenshire. Produce an Aberdeenshire Council 'Film Charter'.

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: Team Manager Business and Industry

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: Attendance at Offshore Technology Conference, Decom Offshore, Offshore Northern Seas under the Invest Aberdeen banner. Exhibited at Skipper Expo International.

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

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Invest Aberdeen, the umbrella inward investment hub for North East Scotland, will lead on the Council's presence at Offshore Europe.

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.

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: Ongoing

Activity to date: Transitioned the Energetica brand to sit under Invest Aberdeen which delivers; investment lead generation and enquiry handling, sector and project specific opportunity promotion, advocacy, one to one company/investor meetings, sign-posting, event attendance and regional promotion. Provided investment specific support/advice to colleagues.

Outcome: Energetica now fully integrated under Invest Aberdeen and Invest Aberdeen established as the single vehicle under which investment is supported and promoted across the region. Approximately £1bn worth of projects have been committed within the Energetica corridor over the next 15 years.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Priorities and targets as set for Invest Aberdeen, see 5.2.1.

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

Lead Officer: Team Manager Business and Industry

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 and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Support companies seeking opportunities in decommissioning market and support industry bodies and key stakeholders in developing business opportunities. Support five engineering businesses to win decommissioning contracts.

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: Team Manager Business and Industry

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Supported ports in securing renewables and decommissioning contracts through product proposition assistance. Supported Peterhead Energy Hub and attended Decom Offshore.

Outcome: Fraserburgh announced as operations and maintenance port for Moray East windfarm.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months: Work with industry bodies and key stakeholders in developing business opportunities. Assist local supply chain to win contracts from the Moray East offshore wind development and Fraserburgh Harbour to develop as O&M port of choice for offshore renewable operators.

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 and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Area Asset Transfer Officer groups to meet quarterly and contribute to Asset Transfer Requests annual report.

Up to six eligible community asset transfers (CAT) will be assisted each year.

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: Review of rural partnership funds presented to councillors at Infrastructure Services Committee in November 2018.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Rural Partnerships to undertake learning journey to explore opportunities for joint working. 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: Marr Area Partnership board supported in restructuring staff resources to build capacity to explore income opportunities.

Outcome: Partnership more sustainable and capacity identified for future opportunities.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Explore community benefit management fund opportunities with rural partnership.

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: Social Enterprise Support (SES) Fund finished March 2019.

Activity to date: Social Enterprise Support Fund panel established and Fund fully committed by November 2018.

Outcome: 22 social enterprises supported and all the budget allocated.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Review of the Social Enterprise Support Fund carried out and used to inform future support of social enterprises.

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: Aberdeenshire Local Employability Partnership (Employment Connect) website created and to be launch in Spring 2019. Social media platforms such as Facebook launched May 2018. Employability Conference held focusing on health and employment in June 2018. Series of four Employment Skills events aimed at public and employers throughout Aberdeenshire held in March 2018, June 2018, October 2018 and March 2019. Employment Connect action plan delivered and reviewed in March 2019.

Outcome: Clear insight by the public of who does what in employability in the north east.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

- Launch Employment Connect in May 2019.
- Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Employability partnerships to create and operate a strategic bridging group to help reduce duplication, share resources (such as CPD), joint decision-making and joint funding applications by June 2019.
- Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Employability Officers to work together to maximise resources for No One Left Behind Employability Fund launched in April 2019.
- Organise 4 Employability & Skills events to be held in Huntly, Banff/Macduff, Peterhead, Fraserburgh.

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: Service Manager Economic Development

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 and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

- Continued attendance at DYW meetings throughout 2019.
- Encourage closer alignment with Scottish Government's No One Left Behind (NOLB) employability priorities via schools engagement (throughout 2019).
- Work with CL&D colleagues to align DYW areas to ensure young people without positive destinations get the best opportunities possible utilising the new NOLB Employability Fund (throughout 2019).

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 2018-19 the Employment Support Team (EST) helped 283 people into employment and 54 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. Created 4 employment and skills events in the past year for employers and those looking for work.

Outcome: People who have multiple barriers to work are able to get the correct assistance.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

- Get 200 people into employment, either full-time, part-time or self-employed
- Increase Aberdeenshire Job Clubs to 16 by August 2019.
- Create Quality Standards for Employment Support Team by June 2019.
- Participate in 4 employment and skills events in 2019-20.

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 for the new Waste from Energy plant at Nigg, Aberdeen.

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

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

- Review CBCs during years 2-4 of Housing Improvement Project
- Assist in monitoring Waste from Energy Project (NESS) once work has begun on the building phase.

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: Service Manager Economic Development

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: 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.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

The Partnership is gathering information to finalise its skills action plan (September 2019). Continue to share and discuss relevant information such as BREXIT, DYW, to assist future planning.

To organise a workshop for partners on the Digital agenda (June/July 2019).

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 Centres Executive

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: 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 second 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 used LEADER funding to create a strategy and community led action plan for the town.

Outcome:

Huntly and District has purchased the ex-bank building in the centre of Huntly for community. A further study on the town centre and leisure offering 'A campus for learning and play' has been commissioned and is underway.

We Are INverurie in partnership with the Inverurie Business Association, Inverurie Environmental Improvement Group and Inverurie Events delivered the wedding weekender, various business support and networking events and the annual Christmas events, which included last year an ice-skating rink for 9 days in the town centre. They have commissioned a company to save all Levy payers monies on utilities and they have commissioned a PR company to market Inverurie and the businesses within it.

Rediscover Peterhead have commissioned a company to save on utilities, they delivered the first successful fishing festival and working with Light Up Peterhead delivered additional Christmas events including a large-scale PR Christmas campaign.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

- Distribution of the Scottish Government Town Centre Fund in Aberdeenshire.
- Work with the Town Team in Huntly to deliver aspects of the Huntly 2030 Strategy
- Work with the Town Team in Ellon to support delivery of the Charrette
- With other local authorities through Scotland, work to deliver a framework of support to strengthen the town centre leadership

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 Centres Executive

Timeline: Underway

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

Outcome:

Impacts Assessments have shown that most committee papers have positive outcomes on the town centre. Officers are now considering those with negative impacts and implementing mitigating actions. A survey carried out in January 2019 has shown that all services are now on board. TCFIA have now been added to the procurement process and are now required along with each business case.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

- Review the Town Centre First Principle guidance and procedures.
- Working with Ambassadors hold a workshop for officers in WWH and at various locations.
- Work with Elected Member Ambassadors to adapt and grow their role.

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 Economic Strategy and Policy

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

Activity to date: Officers are engaging with the Scottish Lottery Officers Group to find out more about non-EU funding programmes. Officers are also gathering information on the resource requirements for such a service.

Outcome: The Council decides whether or not to allocate resources to an external funding unit.

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

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Preparation of a report setting out options for the creation of an external funding unit and recommendations as to whether or not to progress this initiative.

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 Economic Strategy and Policy

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: The Council adopted a position paper on 'post-Brexit funding programmes' on 15 March 2018. This has been used as the basis for consultation responses to the Scottish Parliament in addition to being submitted to the Scottish and UK Governments.

Outcome: The Council is more aware of and better placed to benefit from funding alternatives post-Brexit.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:
Submission of a response to the upcoming consultation on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

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 Economic Strategy and Policy

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: There has been a significant increase in uptake for LEADER and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund monies in 2018-19. Extensions of the ERDF programmes have been approved by the Scottish Government and will now run until 2023. Extensions for the ESF programme have been submitted to the Scottish Government.

Outcome: Approximately 79% of funding secured from the above programmes has been committed.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:
Commitment of LEADER and EMFF programmes to at least 90% of programme award.
Secure approval of extension to ESF programmes to 2023.
Closure of ESF 'phase 1' programme.
Carry out a review of ESF 'phase 1' to allow for efficient delivery of 'phase 2' programme.
Carry out a review of LEADER programmes.

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 Economic Strategy and Policy

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Officers have participated in the Brexit working groups established by COSLA and the North Sea Commission. Negotiations between the UK Government and European Union over the past 12 months have concentrated primarily on the Withdrawal Agreement rather than the future relationship. Aberdeenshire Council supported and participated in an event for EU/EEA nationals and is promoting key information internally and externally. The Council is also regularly contributing to calls for information from COSLA.

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.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:
Respond to relevant consultations on the future relationship between the UK and EU, subject to the UK having left the EU.

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 over the last 12 months have included the Peterhead Area Community Trust, who have secured a package to start investing in sporting facilities near the centre of town, the launch of the Peterhead STEM project (Science, Engineering, Technology and Maths) with a partnership of Hywind, RGU, Aberdeen Science Centre, and Aberdeenshire Council (education and economic development). Rediscover Peterhead have been developing strong partnership initiatives with the council and harbour and delivered a successful seafood event. Other major partnership developments have included the successful Fraserburgh Harbour MOWEL project, the initiation of the Enterprise Hub in Fraserburgh, the launch of The Smiddy in Banff and the investment of North East Scotland Preservation Trust in property on Bridge Street, Banff.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Engagement with 3 partners to deliver activity in the digital economy sector and food and drink sector.

Supporting Robert Gordon's University to develop the Libraries Innovation Network across 3 sites and co- promote business opportunities.

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: Opening of the Enterprise Hub in Fraserburgh, the completion of the Macduff Property Grant Scheme, initiation of the STEM project in Peterhead, major works initiated at Banff and Macduff Harbours, town centre businesses supported through Enterprise fund in Banff and Macduff. Regeneration Capital Grant Funding pursued, but not agreed. Significant activity within Fraserburgh 2021, priority projects including the

resolution of ownership issues at the old John Trail building and the progression of the Faithlie Centre building.

Outcomes: Over 24 properties have been improved across the towns through a combination of enforcement and encouragement. At least 4 of these in the last year have been brought back into use from being empty. This has resulted in outcomes of improved civic pride in areas such as Shore Street in Macduff and Low Street in Banff. Energy and momentum is being created through various initiatives including the STEM project in Peterhead which has engaged with 81 young people and over 90 participants. The Enterprise Hub in Fraserburgh has engaged with 71 individuals, referred 18 businesses to Business Gateway, and delivered 13 workshops and events which engaged with 197 individuals on encouraging enterprise.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

3 buildings options appraisals for properties in Peterhead town centre and an Expression of Interest for external funding for a major enhancement project in Peterhead town centre. Submission of Scottish Government Regeneration Fund for the Vinery, Banff. Engage with a suitable operator for the development.

Engage 30 participants in the development of Fraserburgh Beach.

Completion of harbour works in Macduff and Banff and secure funds for further business case work.

Engage over 20 businesses and individuals in digital and food and drink sectors.

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: Key items of progress include completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) which fully opened February 2019, construction works on the Aberdeen to Inverurie Rail improvement works, and Kintore Station (due to open May 2020). Work on assessing options for the dualling of the A96 between Aberdeen and Huntly has commenced, led by Transport Scotland. Aberdeenshire Council continues to progress appraisal work (alongside partners) on key corridors such as A947, Aberdeen-Ellon-Peterhead-Fraserburgh strategic study, and on key routes into Aberdeen City affecting Aberdeenshire residents (such as A956 Wellington Road and A944).

Aberdeenshire Council officers, supported by Nestrans, also are providing significant input to the reviews of the emerging National Transport Strategy, the national Strategic Transport Projects Review, the Regional Transport Strategy, and policy work in Aberdeen City which has a regional context (eg Roads Hierarchy Review and Cross City Connections).

The City Region Deal (CRD) contains commitments to undertake a Strategic Transport Appraisal (considering the most appropriate long term regional transport strategy post-AWPR opening) and improvements to external linkages to the new Aberdeen South Harbour. The first phases of work on the strategic transport appraisal have been completed (pre-appraisal stage, option generation and sifting), and this will be followed by option appraisal work. Quantitative modelling and appraisal will be undertaken on these options using post-AWPR modelling information.

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 has been selected, and draft orders are due to published in Autumn 2019. 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 and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Provide an informed and evidence-based response, promoting the transport, land-use, and economic needs of Aberdeenshire Council to an anticipated consultation on the draft National Transport Strategy during 2019.

Continue to support Nestrans' regional transport strategy, by fully participating in each stage of its development during 2019, providing evidence of Aberdeenshire transport, land-use and economic needs.

Support the Scottish rail industry in the delivery of the re-dualling of the railway line between Aberdeen and Inverurie, to facilitate improved services between Inverurie and Aberdeen by December 2019.

Support Network Rail and Transport Scotland with substantive progress in the delivery of Kintore Station, aiming for completion in May 2020.

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: Business Development Executive – Formartine and Garioch

Timeline: Ongoing.

Activity to date: Economic Development have contributed to the consultation on a variety of Major Planning Applications including the proposed high-profile development at Menie Estate. Over 2018-19 Economic Development staff responded to **28 consultations** on planning applications.

Economic Development officers fed back on The Main Issues Report for the Strategic Development Plan (SDP).

Outcome: Business needs are considered and included in the LDP and the SDP.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Continue to act as a consultee for all planning applications that require an Economic Development input.

Contribute to the process to agree a new LDP, this will include providing feedback on draft proposed LDP.

Work with partners to deliver the next Strategic Development Plan. Examine the impact 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.

Lead Officer: Service Manager Industry Sector

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 another £25 million into the programme. The Gainshare element of the contract committed Openreach to reinvest in additional fibre to extend the reach of the programme if uptake of fibre enabled broadband exceeded 20% in three years. More recently, the Department of Digital Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) has indicated that they would like any future investment to be on "fibre to the premises" infrastructure rather than "fibre to the cabinet", which was the preferred methodology deployed previously.

The Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband programme outcomes (before Gainshare was taken account of) were reported to Aberdeenshire Council on 7 March 2019. This report

included a detailed account of how the Council's £16 million contribution to the programme was spent and what it added to the programme's reach in Aberdeenshire.

Outcome: Gainshare tranche 1 monies, were in the main, used to bring those Local Authority areas with below national average rates of premises passed by fibre up to nearer the national average. Aberdeenshire was a major beneficiary and the DCMS policy statement has meant that Gainshare monies being deployed between now and the conclusion of the programme on 31 March 2020, are being moved towards building "fibre to the premises" (future proofed) connections.

R100, the successor programme which will make the offer of a 30 Mbps connection to every premise in Scotland, will see wide deployment of fibre to the premises in rural areas of Aberdeenshire – the contracts for R100 are expected to be awarded later in 2019 – at the date of writing, three contractors remain in contention for each of the three lots which make up Scotland.

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 and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Gainshare cash will be deployed until the end of the 2019/20 financial year.

Monitor delivery of additional connections being delivered by Gainshare.

Appoint a single point of contact within the council for the R100 programme.

Contribute to the associated aligned interventions programme, which will address those premises not getting "fibre to the premises" connections within the R100 programme.

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: Have delivered the following: Investor lead generation and enquiry handling, sector and project specific opportunity promotion, advocacy, one to one company/investor meetings, sign-posting, event attendance and regional promotion. Provided investment specific support/advice to colleagues

Outcome: Sector propositions developed and promoted, property investment opportunities developed and promoted at relevant events/to investors, support of incoming investor delegations, information provided to investors and agents to support inward investment decisions/case making for this region, new companies supported into the region.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Develop and launch soft landing package for incoming investors/companies.

Extend property offer on Invest Aberdeen Website to showcase up to 12 key strategic opportunities.

Enhance the Aberdeenshire property investment offer with colleagues in Property Service to include at least one property investment opportunity within the Invest Aberdeen pitch book.

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

Lead Officer: Service Manager, Economic Development

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Through the following projects and partnerships Aberdeenshire is promoted as a key location:

Creation of the ABZolutely Facebook page and social media feed that uses new ways to promote the culture, events and activities in the north east.
Invest Aberdeen works to attract and assist those looking to invest in the north east.
Regeneration projects continue to create the conditions for investment.
VisitAberdeenshire continues to build on the strong assets of the area for promotion.
Economic Development grants support 13 tourism businesses in 2018-19 mainly with marketing support.
Outcome: Tourism numbers grow and Gross Value Added figures increase.
Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:
Develop actions from the Regional Narrative work including the ABZolutely programme.
Grow awareness and credibility of Invest Aberdeen.

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. **Complete.**

Activity to date: Social media and web promotions plus Offshore Europe, Subsea Expo, Offshore Technology Conference attendance and promotion. See 5.2.1.

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 2019/20 was approved in February 2019. The Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) has been to Sustainability Committee and issues around Governance addressed.

Outcome: Emissions reported on in the 2017/18 Climate Change Duties Report highlighted a 7% reduction in emissions from the previous year. This was achieved by both projects and reductions to electricity emission factors. The carbon budget process has also supported engagement across different services.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Ensure actions within the Carbon Budget 2019/20 are on track and monitor progress.

Set up a working group for the SEAP and identify a Chair.

Reduce the Council's emissions by 3400 tCO₂e in 2019/20.

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: Team Leader, Sustainability and Climate Change

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: Have started a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) pilot focusing on SMEs in the region. This is being funded through a grant from Scottish Government and being delivered by a consultant with support from Aberdeenshire Council officers. Also provided ad hoc advice to village halls and other community groups on energy efficiency and renewable energy project development and signposted businesses and communities to organisations like Resource Efficient Scotland and Energy Savings Trust.

Outcome: Communities are becoming more engaged in minimising environmental impacts and accessing funding. For example, Huntly and District Development Trust have been awarded CARES funding for a feasibility study on generating hydrogen from their community turbine with support from Officers at Aberdeenshire Council on potential opportunities for use within the organisation.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Work with communities will continue ensuring that appropriate sources of funding are identified for the groups where possible. Complete LHEES pilot and feedback results to Scottish Government as part of their decision making for the process to become a statutory requirement for Local Authorities.

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: Team Leader, Sustainability and Climate Change

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: Development of the Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) for both Aberdeenshire and the wider North East of Scotland (covering Moray, Aberdeen City and Angus).

Outcome: The action plan contains a variety of projects across the region to be considered.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Set up a working group for the SEAP and identify a Chair.

Identify resources to be able to support the SEAP.

Continue to engage with colleagues across the other Local Authorities involved.

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: Team Leader, Sustainability and Climate Change

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. This is being run through Circular Northeast a project sitting within Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce. 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. A Resources and Circular economy is being developed for the Council along with a Framework giving guidance on how this can be achieved. As part of the Community Empowerment Act the Council has also been creating a Local Food Growing Strategy to make it easier for residents to grow their own food.

Outcome: A number of circular economy projects are being progressed in key sectors including Food and Manufacturing across the region through Circular Northeast.
Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:
Officers enable the Council to reduce waste through re-use and recycling.
Encourage a reduction in trade waste by the private sector through promoting Government schemes.
Support Circular Northeast and work on at least two community reuse projects.

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: Team Leader, Sustainability and Climate Change (external projects)
Engineering Services Manager (internal projects)

Timeline: Ongoing

Activity to date: 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. 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 capital budgets. Current projects include lighting upgrades and heating control upgrades. Photovoltaic panels (PV) have been installed on 42 buildings. The installations continue to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs. Biomass boilers have been installed in 18 buildings. The installations continue to reduce carbon emissions.

Outcome: A number of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects have been implemented both internally and externally.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Build on relationships with external support organisations.

Council projects reduce energy consumption - target of 200 tCO₂e.

Utilise the results of the LHEES to determine future projects which benefit the council building stock, business and community buildings.

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: Head of Service Planning and Building Standards

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Aberdeenshire Council has recently (March 2019) completed the delivery of a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) in Banff, in association with Historic Environment Scotland, with a further regeneration scheme ongoing in Fraserburgh. The improvements will have a significant effect on the regeneration aspirations of these towns. A new Historic Churches trail leaflet has been produced showcasing 12 of the best Historic Churches in Aberdeenshire. Six new/replacement interpretation boards have been installed at historic asset sites as part of the Historic Asset Management Project. The Council's Ranger Service delivered 85 public events which engaged 1,375 adults and 1,149 children in 2018/19. The NE Local Biodiversity Partnership launched the short film, 'The Wild North East: Scotland's Natural Gem' highlighting the beauty of the region's wildlife and wild places in Aberdeenshire. The

promotion of Aberdeenshire's unique natural and built heritage assets is embedded in the approved Built Heritage and Access Strategies and associated Action Plans.

Outcome: £670,729 and £1,754,678 of funding has been spent in Banff and Fraserburgh, to date, respectively. The Historic Churches Trail leaflet has promoted some of Aberdeenshire's best built heritage assets encouraging more tourists to come and visit the area. The interpretation boards have provided information to visitors on the importance of our historic assets. The delivery of the Council's Ranger Service public events programme has raised awareness and understanding of Aberdeenshire's natural and cultural heritage. The Wild North East video was launched in April 2018 and has now had over 350,000 views on all platforms published on the internet. The Built Heritage Strategy and Access Strategy has ensured a structured and coordinated approach to the Environment Teams promotion of Aberdeenshire's built and natural heritage and the delivery of path improvements and upgrades.

Priorities and targets for next 12 Months: Ongoing delivery of CARS/TH in Fraserburgh in accordance with project programme. Submit expressions of interest for CARS and other regeneration funding for Peterhead.

Increase the display and distribution of all three archaeology trail leaflets – Stone Circles, Pictish Stones, and Historic Churches. This is being undertaken by a private marketing services company which has displays at over 54 locations including Aberdeen Airport, ferry terminal, railway stations in Aberdeen, Inverurie and Huntly, and attractions across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Over 26,000 leaflets have been printed for distribution and the target is to have them all picked up off the displays in 2019.

To install at least 5 new/replacement interpretation boards at historic asset sites.

Ranger Service to prepare and deliver an annual programme of 90 public events throughout Aberdeenshire in 2019/20 and engage over 1,400 adults and 1,150 children with Aberdeenshire's natural and cultural heritage.

To ensure increased usage of the Deeside Way and on the Formartine and Buchan Way through delivery of at least 2 path upgrades and bridge repairs.

To deliver Doors Open Day 2019, with the aim of achieving 3,500 visitors to 45 buildings of architectural and cultural interest throughout Aberdeenshire.

Increase visitors to Tullich Kirkyard, through the restoration of the historic kirk and construction of a display shelter to house carved Pictish symbol stones. A people counter will be added to the site to monitor visitor numbers.

To finalise and approve a Natural Heritage Strategy 2019-2022 and commence the delivery of the associated 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: Team Manager Economic Strategy and Policy

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: Attendance at Offshore Technology Conference, Decom Offshore, Offshore Northern Seas under the InvestAberdeen banner. Exhibited at Skipper Expo International, Aberdeen with appropriate marketing material. Co-partner in North East Scotland Food & Drink Network Events and annual Food and Drink Innovation Awards, co-partner in Shire Connections Events, 2018 and 'Too Good to Waste' pilot waste (resource) initiative launched at Taste of Grampian. Hosted Huntly, Business Engagement Event.

Outcome: Aberdeenshire industries are assisted in regional, national and international business development.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Production of a marketing and events action plan setting out priority activities and communication messages.

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

Lead Officer: Team Manager Business and Industry

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 and Targets for next 12 Months: Support Visit Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen Convention and Events Bureau and The Event Complex Aberdeen in efforts to secure business tourism visitors.

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: Team Manager Economic Strategy and Policy

Timeline: Underway

Activity to date: 2017/18 Annual Review completed and promoted with preparations for 2018/19 review ongoing.

Outcome: Stakeholders, partners and Councillors are made aware of the work of the service and how the service can assist their organisation or business.

Priorities and Targets for next 12 Months, these targets should be measurable:

Refresh design and format of Annual Review and publish the 2018/19 review.

Increase on-line followers and readership of publications which promote 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: Team Manager Business and Industry

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: Businesses are becoming "cruise ready". The development of the NE250 has been supported.

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

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: Head of Economic Development and Protective Services

Timeline: Complete

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

Outcome: Businesses were made aware of the initiative and the advantages of being part of "Healthy Working Lives".

