

Council Delivery Plan

ANNUAL REVIEW 2020/21





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FOREWORD

This Annual Report provides an overview of progress made in implementing the Council Delivery Plan 2020/21. Of course, throughout 2020/21 the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on every area of our society and this report serves as a reminder, both of the Council’s commitments prior to the pandemic and that these priorities remain critical as we recover and rebuild in a post-Covid world. The achievements highlighted in this report also stand as a testament to the resilience and dedication of the staff of both the Council and our partner organisations, as well as to the people of Aberdeen themselves.

The Council Delivery Plan is a key element of our commissioning approach and brings together, at the beginning of each financial year:

- Details of the Council’s strategy framework
- Relevant new statutory duties being placed on the Council;
- Outstanding commitments arising from the Council’s approved Policy Statement
- Council commissioning intentions, through which we express the services we will provide; and
- A summary of “How we do our business” including details of our commissioning approach; our transformation portfolio; how we behave as an organisation; and our performance management arrangements.

Importantly, each of these elements of our Council Delivery Plan are aligned to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and represent a statement of how the Council will deliver on its contribution to the implementation of the LOIP.

As this report shows, we have made significant progress in many key areas during 2020/21. Not least of these has been the ability of our staff to continue to deliver essential services and care to the people of Aberdeen during an unprecedented health and social crisis. Some of the specific highlights from 2020/21 are the support for our school children, including the administration of an “Alternative Certification Model” replacing exams, and the closing of the attainment “gap”; the successful expansion of early learning and childcare, ensuring that all families who are eligible for 1140 hours are able to receive it; the agreement of a NetZero Vision and Strategic Infrastructure Plan for Energy Transition; the completion and handover of the Anaerobic Digestion plant; the start of construction for 652 council houses; and the expansion of the city’s fibre network.

At an organisational level, the Council completed the implementation of the target operating model set in 2017; and received a positive Best Value audit report from the Accounts Commission.



ACC Covid Response Highlights

Number of conversations
AB-1 had with residents:

20332



Number of calls for financial
assistance and advice

9089



Pupil attendance levels across
the 2020/21 academic year were

93.7%,

an increase on the prior year and
above 2018/19 levels



Number of telephone
calls to **vulnerable** or
shielded people

2182 incoming
7883 outbound



Number of **visits** to ACC
coronavirus web pages

189,390



Number of **calls** to
Crisis Support Line

50,373



Homeless Support

Number of placements for homeless people

1464 applications
1123 households placed in
temporary accommodation



Number of **cfine**
food deliveries

3252



Over **20,000** applications
against the Scottish Welfare
Fund were processed and

£1.5m

(+43% on 2019/20) in grants
provided



Business Support Grants

8,668 support grant
applications from businesses and
the self-employed were met and
disbursed to a value of **£52,833,590**



Number of **virtual visits** to
libraries increased to over

1 million

(+22%)
for the first time



124 calls made to

vulnerable **Home Service**
users during first lockdown by
library staff to offer support

133% increase
in eBook/eAudio loans



55% increase in
online library membership



Bookbug Online Sessions

116 videos posted online with over
35,000 views





POLICY STATEMENT UPDATES

The table below gives an update on progress with those elements of the Council's approved Policy Statement which were included within the 2020/21 Plan (others having been delivered in previous years). Many of these commitments have been delivered in collaboration with local and national partners.

ECONOMY

Policy Statement Commitments	Update
<p>1. Assess the digital needs of the region, working with our partners to ensure the city has the required infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work has continued throughout the year with the City Network Extension project to extend Aberdeen City Council's fibre network to 57 additional sites across the City. There has been a delay due to Covid-19, however this work is expected to be complete by the end of September 2021 with further commercial investment extended to March 2022. • The Full Fibre project connecting Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and NHS corporate sites to gigabit connectivity has successfully reached the halfway point within projected timescales and budget. • Construction is underway building a new duct network. This work is being taken forward with engagement with commercial organisations to consider utilising the expanded network, such as future innovation opportunities. • Overarching all of the above a detailed gap analysis has been undertaken to inform future planning.
<p>2. Continue the TECA development, including anaerobic digestion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TECA development was a resounding success upon opening on 2 August 2019, hosting a number of significant events. However the global pandemic Covid-19 enforced the closure of the venue. • Both hotels are currently operating, but under strict controls and work practices. • Taken together the development is affording opportunities as a venue to help combat the Covid-19 threat, including its use as a mass vaccination centre. • Handover of the Anaerobic Digestion plant was achieved in December 2020. • The Council plans to market vacant sites at an appropriate time.

<p>3. Increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, including the redesigned Union Terrace Gardens, Provost Skene House and Queen Street development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 has impacted the delivery of all capital projects requiring a review of all delivery dates. This remains a fluid situation. Bearing this in mind; Provost Skene House is expected to be complete in October 2021. • The redevelopment of Union Terrace Gardens is expected to be complete in late 2021, with only seasonal landscaping works to follow. • Queen Street – development work has continued and demolition work has commenced with one of the ancillary buildings, which was complete in May 2021. We are currently in the latter stages of acquiring Police HQ, scheduled to take vacant possession end of January 2022. • Several exciting changes for the city were agreed at committee from the CCMP (City Centre Masterplan) review in August 2021 including major redesign of the streetscape of Union Street, undertaking a building condition survey and repair programme for all properties on Union Street, developing a permanent café culture in Belmont Street and Back Wynd area, and installing outdoor seating outside the Art Gallery.
<p>4. Support the Aberdeen Harbour expansion and work collaboratively to maximise tourism opportunities, including attracting high value cruises and energy transition activity in offshore renewables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of the Aberdeen Harbour South Expansion is facing a 12-18 month delay. The delay to the project is not anticipated to negatively impact on Aberdeen's ability to maximise future green energy opportunities. • Part of this delay aligns with the wider Covid-19 impact across the construction industry. The opening of the new harbour, which will increase tourism, will align with the delivery of other key city attractions. • Work continues to explore the feasibility for a city region freeport/ greenport model to maximise commercial and economic opportunities from the expansion.
<p>5. Review Council industrial estate to ensure it supports the Regional Economic Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council approved its Net Zero Vision and supporting Strategic Infrastructure Plan for Energy Transition in June 2020. • Discussions are underway for two key projects – Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub programme and the Energy Transition Zone around Aberdeen Harbour Expansion South. • Aligning with the above, approaches are being made for support from relevant UK Government sources in support of the offshore renewables sector specifically. • Work continues looking for potential development options across the city.

<p>6. Continue to deliver Aberdeen 365 an annual calendar of headline and feature events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2020 event programme was curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic, with all events cancelled/postponed from April 2020 onwards. • The primary focus now is on planning and development of returning to events later in 2021, as well as any opportunities for any hybrid or test formats in the interim.
<p>7. Continue to maximise community benefit from major developments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite the challenges of delivery of community benefits due to Covid-19 restrictions over the past few months, contractors have proved to be flexible and adaptable. They have used virtual means of delivery, such as recording of short videos with information on different industries and career pathways for school pupils, undertaken online employability engagement activities for those out of work and provided virtual community timebank hours/support for community groups in need of assistance. • Now as restrictions are lifted, in person delivery of community benefits such as 'Meet the Buyer' events, work experience placements and volunteering hours are now being delivered. • Work will continue to implement the policy and look to maximise benefits from all developments throughout 2021/22.
<p>8. Campaign for the reform of local government finance, including business rates and the replacement of Council Tax</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers continue to work with colleagues on development of a Transient Visitor Levy and also COSLA work on local powers and levers to support economic growth. • The Council provided evidence to the Local Government and Communities Committee of the Scottish Parliament in October 2020, exploring the sustainability of local government, specifically in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. This provided the opportunity to highlight the challenges for non-domestic rates. Legislative changes by the Scottish Government, passed as part of Covid-19 response, has delayed the development of Transient Visitor Levy.
<p>9. Open negotiations to secure funding for a second Aberdeen City Region Deal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning with the Regional Economic Strategy the Council is developing business cases to bid for a share of the Scottish Government ring-fenced £62m for energy transition projects. • We will continue in 2021/22 to seek assistance from relevant UK Government sources in support of wider 'green' investments that will support energy transition and decarbonisation, but initially concentrating on the offshore renewables sector specifically.
<p>10. Use business loans Scotland to help lift the finance barrier for small and medium enterprises</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council continues to promote Business Loans Scotland to local businesses through the Business Gateway. • Aligning to Community Planning Aberdeen's refreshed Local Outcome Improvement Plan, we have continued with the implementation of a Socio-Economic Rescue Plan to support local businesses through the Covid-19 pandemic period. • The Council has delivered Covid Business Grants on behalf of the UK and Scottish Governments and provides information, advice and guidance to businesses both in response to Covid-19 and as the economy emerges from its impacts.

11. Work with both governments in order to unleash the non-oil and gas economic potential of the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An inward investment focus on energy transition is being coordinated with the Department of International Trade and Scottish Development International and Invest Aberdeen, along with other industry partners. The Council has participated at various infrastructure investment promotional activity.
12. Support the delivery of the three innovation hubs as part of the Aberdeen City Region Deal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Oil and Gas Technology Centre is supporting technology development with cross-industry organisations to deliver a number of goals that will solve key industry challenges. The BioHub, whose aim is to double the number of life sciences companies in the north-east, is now in the construction phase. Seedpod, an industry development hub, aims to realise the industry's ambition to double the size of north east Scotland's £2.2 billion food and drink sector. A planning application was submitted to Aberdeen City Council in Feb 2021. SeedPod aims to increase sector turnover by 5% per annum. It will help established companies accelerate growth through innovation and technology adoption, market and product development, global consumer focus and provide start-up production space and development facilities for high-growth new businesses.

4. Work with the Scottish Government to provide flexible and affordable childcare for working families on the lowest incomes	<p>The Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Expansion programme was delivered in August 2021. All families who are eligible for 1140 hours are able to receive this entitlement now.</p> <p>All Local Authority ELC settings have been trained in the delivery of PEEP (Parents as Early Education Partners) and the programme will be rolled out from August, this will ensure a comprehensive programme of family support is available to all who are keen to access it.</p> <p>Approaches to digital Quality Improvement have been used over the last year to take account of Covid-19 restrictions. The team will return to face to face approaches in 21/22.</p>
5. Support the implementation of Developing the Young Workforce, seek to gain the highest level of investors in young people accreditation and ensure there is a focus on supporting pupils to excel in STEM subjects	<p>A number of areas have been successfully established and delivered including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Alternative Certification Model (ACM) replacing SQA Exams in 20/21. The use of PowerBi as a significant enabler in the moderation of school attainment data as part of the ACM. 'Lift Off', a 2 day virtual induction programme for all senior phase students, involving a wide spectrum of partners and employers. A one stop-shop learner pathway website for school and post-school young people to navigate the route to skills, training and work. (ABZ Works – to be launched Sep 21). An agreed Pathway Planning approach to be adopted by all partners and schools to coordinate approaches to ensuring positive destinations for all school leavers. The allocation of Developing the Young Workforce coordinators to be based in schools from August 2021. A rise in attainment data for 2020/2021.
6. Explore how the successes of the Sistema project can be shared and spread across the city	<p>Access to Big Noise Digital Resources for all Primary schools across Aberdeen is now in place. Links have been strengthened with the citywide music service. The project has worked with Fit Like Hubs to share learning across partners.</p>
7. Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city	<p>The new education structure and approaches to improvement are realising improvement. A life data set has been developed to further enhance performance monitoring arrangements in 21/22.</p> <p>SQA data for 2020/2021 evidences a closing of the gap, this is currently being analysed to support further improvement.</p>

PEOPLE

Policy Statement Commitments	Update
1. Completion of school estate review (P1) and development of estate strategy for next 5-10 years (P2)	In line with the instruction from Council on 3 March 2021, the school estate review will be completed and submitted to committee for consideration in Summer 2022.
2. Development of four new primary schools - Tillydrone, Torry, Milltimber and Countesswells	Good progress has been achieved on all four new primary schools despite the implications of Covid-19 over the last year. Delivery timescales for each project have been adjusted to reflect the current status. A start on site for the new Milltimber school was achieved in August 2020 with an expected completion in Spring 2022. The three remaining schools are due to achieve a start on site late summer/early autumn 2021.
3. UNICEF Child Friendly accreditation	A log frame plan, which sets milestones and timescales has been developed and agreed with UNICEF to drive our work to become a Child Friendly City. UNICEF will use this to determine our progress. A partnership group has also been established to deliver the Plan and progress is tracked on a monthly basis.

<p>8. Review of local adult protection arrangements and implement an improvement programme</p>	<p>The Aberdeen Executive Group for Public Protection and the Adult Protection Committee are operating effectively and a Chair has been appointed for both Adult and Child Protection Committees.</p> <p>Adult Protection is also monitored at the Public Protection Committee, in April 2021 the Adult Protection Biennial Report 2018-20 was presented. The report highlighted the scale and initiatives over the two year period, the collaborations between partners, the co-ordination between professionals and the positive impacts on those who are or have been at risk of harm. The report also focused on the improvement objectives for the two year period 2020-22.</p>
<p>9. Continue to promote diversion activities for youths and adults in our city with enhanced focused on our three locality areas</p>	<p>The Council's out of school care provision continued to offer an invaluable service to families with additional services designed and delivered as part of the Summer of Play.</p> <p>The Amped (Aberdeen Motorcycle Project for Educational Development) project funding window from "Cashback for Communities" was extended due to the pandemic. The project continued on a smaller scale online during lockdown, and ran from September to December 2020 on a one 2 one basis. Amped resources were utilised during the 2021 Summer of Fun project for the delivery of 'Get your bike summer ready' sessions. Referrals have been received for 2021/22 and the Amped project is ready to restart in September 2021.</p> <p>Street Workers are continuing to be deployed to areas, primarily regeneration areas, to deal with youth Anti-Social Behaviour issues. Senior City Wardens decide where Street Workers are to be deployed, taking into account information from the Community Safety Hub and enquiries/complaints from members of the public.</p>
<p>10. Reduce fuel poverty across our most deprived communities through combined heat and power schemes including the Energy from Waste Plant and supporting community owned energy solutions.</p>	<p>Construction works for the new Energy from Waste (EfW) facility, located at East Tullos is underway with delivery planned for 2022.</p> <p>Torry Heat Network Phase 1 will commence construction works to align with the delivery of the EfW plant.</p>

PLACE

Policy Statement Commitments	Update
<p>1. Build up our existing strength in hydrogen technology</p>	<p>The business case has been submitted to the Scottish Government's Energy Transition Fund to access a further £10.5m for the delivery of the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub.</p> <p>A tender is currently out seeking a private sector Joint Venture Partner to deliver the H2 Hub, for announcement at COP26. Bids are being made to the Green Growth Accelerator Fund to apply for fleet retrofitting.</p>
<p>2. Support efforts to develop the inward investment opportunities including Energetica corridor</p>	<p>Portfolio of development opportunities refreshed, including Queen Street and Aberdeen Hydrogen. These are included in the Scottish Cities Alliance investment portfolio and Aberdeen hydrogen in the Scotland Green Investment Portfolio and have been showcased at various events. Work is ongoing to develop new propositions, including supporting the Aberdeen Energy Transition Zone.</p>
<p>3. Refresh the local transport strategy, ensuring it includes the results of a city centre parking review; promotes cycle and pedestrian routes; and considers support for public transport</p>	<p>A review of the Local Transport Strategy has commenced, with engagement on the main issues which should inform the next strategy to take place in late 2021.</p>
<p>4. Cycle hire scheme</p>	<p>BiS (Big Issue Sharebike) has been appointed to run the cycle hire scheme. Whilst implementation has been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic the project has an indicative launch date of March 2022.</p>
<p>5. Continue to invest to resurface damaged roads and pavements throughout the city</p>	<p>£10 million extra funding was provided in 2020/21, for expenditure over a 4-year period.</p>
<p>6. Development of locality plans across the city in conjunction with communities</p>	<p>Following an extensive development process that started with the production of our revised Aberdeen City Population Needs Assessment for 2021 and Citizens Simulator, and to which all partners contributed, the Community Planning Aberdeen Board on 7 July 2021 approved the revised Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2016-2026 and Locality Plans for North, Central and South. Given the joint partnership nature of these Locality Plans, they were also endorsed at the Integrated Joint Board for Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership on 6 July 2021.</p>
<p>7. Build 2,000 new Council homes and work with partners to provide more affordable homes, ensuring future developments address the needs of a changing population</p>	<p>Construction works are ongoing for 652 units at Summerhill and Wellheads and new construction works will commence for both council owned sites and developer led sites. It is expected that the target of 2,000 homes will be at various stages of delivery in 21/22.</p>



COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS

Supporting delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan through Council commissioning intentions

As part of our commissioning cycle, the Council Delivery Plan sets out a series of commissioning intentions which define the contributions which the Council will make to the delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and which frame the ask of our commissioned services.

These commissioning intentions define the Council's contribution, from a single agency perspective. It should be noted that partners will also have single agency intentions to meet their obligations derived from the LOIP.

The Council Delivery Plan also shows measures for each of the commissioning intentions. A point in time extract of these measures is included as an appendix to this report. It should be noted that performance in a number of areas was directly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. This annual report highlights progress against many of these measures and up to date progress is shown against all of the LOIP and Council Delivery Plan measures in the Aberdeen Outcomes Framework which can be accessed at:

<https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/outcomesframework>

ECONOMY

OUR KEY DRIVERS

- Diversification of the economy into other growth sectors including wider energy related sectors; tourism; food and drink; life sciences; health and social care and construction
- Developing the talent and future workforce necessary to support diversification of businesses and economy
- Improving investment into Aberdeen and Aberdeen businesses
- Promoting inclusive economic growth for our most disadvantaged communities
- Ensuring access for all employers to skilled labour

ECONOMY HIGHLIGHTS



97.4% of young people with a foundation Apprenticeship have moved into a **sustained positive destination**



73.5% of Aberdeen City working age are in employment, **this is higher than the National average (72.8%)**



Aberdeen Art Gallery

received the **Project of the Year 2020 award** from the Aberdeen Society of Architects and won the prestigious **Art Fund Museum of the Year 2020 prize**

Employment in growth sectors has increased by

1,910, increasing our share of Scottish growth sector employment to **14.1%**

Aberdeen's City Fibre Network extended to **57 additional sites** across the city

PROGRESS MADE DURING 2020/21

DIVERSIFICATION OF THE ECONOMY INTO OTHER GROWTH SECTORS

Aberdeen City has one of the largest working age populations of any Scottish local authority areas at 68.4% compared to 63.9% for the rest of Scotland.

The need for diversification arises from:

- Oil and gas has helped create enormous wealth, but leaves the region exposed to global shocks outside of its control;
- The oil and gas sector is maturing towards the end of its lifetime;
- The transition to new energy sources is vital to meeting Scotland's and the UK's net zero commitments.

Thus, key to the success of the region's economic future is the transition from oil and gas to green energy and the broadening out of its economic base to sectors outside of energy. The recent focus has included tourism, digital, food and drink and the life science sectors. The diversification challenge is more urgent and further compounded as a result of Covid-19.



The Aberdeen City Region Deal SeedPod project should create opportunities to pilot advanced manufacturing processes and technology, scale-up production, inspire new product development and provide access to global market insights. For life science start-ups and high growth enterprises, custom-built laboratory and office facilities will be provided through Bio Hub, a £40million Aberdeen City Region Deal project. The digital strand of the City Region Deal seeks to deliver digital infrastructure and enhancement projects to meet future connectivity demand, including the aim of Aberdeen to be a gigabit city.

Latest data available at the end of 2020/21 showed that 73.5% of working age people in Aberdeen were in a job, higher than the Scottish average at 72.8% (up from 71.5% at the end of 2020) and employment in growth sectors increased by 1,910, increasing our share of Scottish growth sector employment from 13.6% to 14.1% which is a continuing upward trend.

The number of growth sector enterprises is larger in 2020/21 at 4,850 than the average over the last ten years, giving Aberdeen the 5th highest number of enterprises in Scotland. Although this number represents a small fall of 10 on the 2019/20 figures, given the impact of Covid-19 this is remarkably robust offering the potential for more employment opportunities in these sectors.

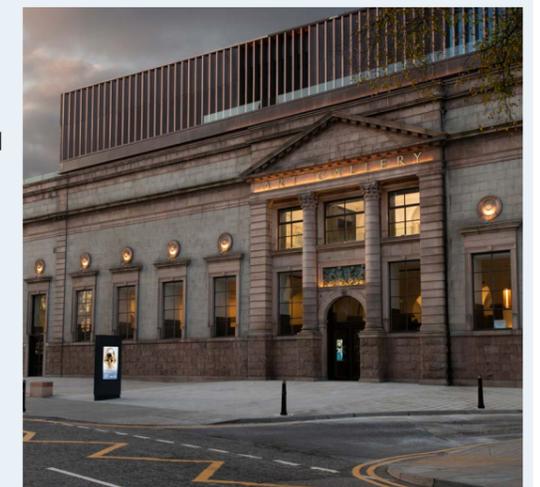
Support diversification of the city's tourism sector

Tourism has, understandably, been hit hard by Covid-19. The UN World Tourism Organisation predicted that world international tourism would fall by between 60% and 80% in 2020. Covid-19 restrictions, particularly early in the summer, shut down many tourism businesses. Hotels in Aberdeen that are more reliant on business or corporate trade have fared particularly badly. Hotels reported a revenue drop of between 60% and 80% compared with 2019. But the sector does have the potential to make a significant long-term contribution to the success of the region, once the challenges of Covid-19 pass.

The region's tourism ambition, as outlined in the Destination Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Tourism Strategy 2018-2023, is to grow visitor spend to £1billion a year by 2023. Through the delivery of the Game Changer Programme for Tourism Business, which offers practical support and business tools to regional tourism business leaders, ONE and Scottish Enterprise enable companies to realise their growth potential and maximise their market opportunities. The rise in demand for staycations is likely to be a trend that continues. The longer-term challenge for tourism is how the offer is sustainable and presented to the consumer.

North East Adventure Tourism (NEAT) aims to capitalise on the area's natural assets and make the region a world-class destination for adventure sports tourism as evidenced by its recent hosting of the Tour of Britain cycling event. Within five years, it has been estimated that projects included in NEAT could add more than 300,000 visitors and 250 new jobs to the region.

Aberdeen has continued to support the development of tourist venues in the city. The Art Gallery reopened in November 2019 and the redevelopment received the Project of the Year 2020 award from the Aberdeen Society of Architects and won the prestigious Art Fund Museum of the Year 2020 prize. Demand for events at P&J live has understandably dropped during the pandemic but the outlook is positive for conferences going forward. Offshore Europe is due to return to the venue in 2022.



IMPROVING INVESTMENT INTO ABERDEEN AND ABERDEEN BUSINESSES

Throughout the pandemic Invest Aberdeen moved much of its promotional activity online, taking part in various webinars, virtual exhibitions etc. An example of this was showcasing energy transition projects in the Scottish Government/ SDI Race to Zero webinar series, including a number of local partner organisations and stakeholders.

For year 2020 - 2021 there were 79 investment enquiries received into Aberdeen City Region, with 19 of these remaining live at the last report to committee. These cover all of the Regional Economic Strategy priority sectors. It is worth noting that the lead in times for investment can be 12+ months and the last reporting period was distorted by Covid-19. The team continues to work closely with all potential leads.

Stakeholder engagement continues with UK Government and Scottish Government and their agencies (Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Development International (SDI), the Department of International Trade (DIT), Skills Development Scotland and local, regional and international stakeholders and industry groups. This ensures investment opportunities gain maximum exposure.

Portfolios of development opportunities have been refreshed, including Queen Street and Aberdeen Hydrogen. These are included in the Scottish Cities Alliance investment portfolio and Aberdeen hydrogen in the Scotland Green Investment Portfolio and have been showcased at various events. Work is ongoing to develop new propositions, including supporting the Aberdeen Energy Transition Zone.

Invest Aberdeen will be taking a Team Scotland approach to COP26, working closely with Scottish Government and Scottish Development International to identify opportunities within the overall Scotland programme (this programme is yet to be finalised). Over the 12 days of COP Team Scotland will showcase businesses who are leading the way, demonstrating Scotland's ambition and innovation. Above that, there is a regional partnership group that meets to ensure messaging is aligned; potential opportunities with Scottish Cities Alliance; and potential opportunities with the Net Zero Technology Centre. Wider fringe activity is also being monitored and additional opportunities sought. There is also a wrap around programme of activity in the lead up to and after COP26.

DEVELOPING THE TALENT AND FUTURE WORKFORCE

There have been significant changes to the employability landscape since the last Delivery Plan report. City Growth's Employability and Skills team is now responsible for delivery of c.£2.5m of Young Person's Guarantee activity providing employability support to 16-24-year-olds.

No One Left Behind is in the transition to phase 2 which will see the end of Employability Fund and Community Jobs Scotland funding streams and those monies instead coming into local authorities to enable a place-based approach through a mixed economy of provision to provide support across all ages and stages of the employability pipeline, with priorities agreed by the Local Employability Partnership. Preparation for this is ongoing and involves considerable engagement with partner organisations and wider groups.

Delivery of the Kickstart scheme continues with the Council acting as both an employer and a Kickstart gateway to support other organisations to access the scheme. Significant Child Poverty Funds have been provided to deliver Parental Employability Support Fund activity, which is designed to support parents experiencing in-work poverty and unemployed parents in poverty to improve their families financial position through employability interventions. Significant additional 'Boost' monies have been made available to support parents with disabilities who are experiencing poverty. However, lockdown has proven particularly challenging for many parents who felt they were unable to engage due to having their children at home during school closures and holidays.



PACE Plus funding has been provided to deliver intensive employability keyworker support to people who have been made redundant or who are at risk of redundancy, this is in addition to the standard PACE response activity the Council is involved in. The pandemic and drop in the oil price have created a particularly difficult employment climate, with the furlough scheme masking the true picture. Aberdeen at one stage accounted for one third of all notified redundancies in Scotland, followed by Aberdeenshire. We have commissioned a range of activities to encourage and support people into employment, these include; the Barnardo's TRIBE programme to provide early employability support to young people suffering from anxiety, other mental health issues and low confidence; extended the RiteWorks programme to support care experienced young people towards and into employment; Project SEARCH to deliver internships and employability training for eight young people with additional support needs; the Council's Creative Learning to deliver confidence and employability-building skills through artistic engagement and activities; CFINE to deliver warehouse training and Cookery/confidence building/life skills activity; Tullos Training to deliver taster sessions in a range of trades roles for people of all ages through Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) and Regional Recovery Funds.

We are also working with Business Gateway to deliver seed funds through Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) and YPG. We continue working very closely with Skills Development Scotland and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and this partnership approach is paying dividends, with increased cross-referrals and improved outcomes for a number of our customers.

In partnership with Integrated Children's and Family Services we commissioned the ABZWorks website to create a one-stop employability shop showcasing a range of support, career pathways, and much more. Care experienced young people helped shape our ABZ works site. The website provides local accessible information and was launched officially in August 2021 after soft market testing with young people in June 2021. The site focuses on local growth and Aberdeen City Council has worked in partnership with North East Scotland College (NESCol), Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Bon Accord Care, The Developing the Young Workforce Board, universities and other training providers to show pathways into these sectors through apprenticeships, college and university courses and other work-based qualifications.



Aberdeen City Council is the lead accountable body for delivery of the £14.3million North East Economic Recovery and Skills Fund, which encompasses a range of accelerator and employability projects, including targeted support for young people who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education, but who are too young to leave school and a £2m package of paid six-month work experience placements for city residents aged 25+ who are further removed from the labour market. Hardship Funds were secured to purchase Chromebooks and my-fi devices to support people to engage in training and job seeking activity, as well as to remove barriers to employment by helping individuals to meet initial childcare costs, purchase interview clothes, cover transport costs, and more. The service successfully bid for Connecting Scotland devices in the third phase of the scheme, which was focused on employability, and supported some clients to access earlier phases of the scheme. A media campaign has been launched by the Council, using the ABZWorks brand, in partnership with the Aberdeen Employability Training Providers Forum to promote the breadth and range of services across the city. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and community benefits activities continues, with guidance being provided to organisations to help them ensure they can make the best impact from CSR activity and donations.

PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN OUR MOST DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Despite a challenging year, ACC out of school care provision has continued to offer an invaluable service to families with additional services designed and delivered as part of the Summer of Play. These additional sessions supported children with additional support needs and their siblings and were valued by families.

One parent commented that:

'My son D recently attended the Countesswells Summer of Play holiday club, and we were delighted that there was something such as this that he was able to access and enjoy, whilst we could work and relax knowing he was in safe hands within a group who understand his needs.'

D attended this holiday club not only as someone with additional support needs himself but also a sibling to my older son who has complex needs. I feel that this has been a great opportunity to develop his confidence and independence and additionally has removed the stress we often encounter as we try to enrol him in mainstream activities.'

We await national guidance on the expansion of out of school care, but are pleased with the increase in registered childminders. This increase helps provide real choice to families in how they access their entitlement to 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare. We anticipate some national guidance on expanded provision of free breakfast clubs for some families in the near future.

Increase the range and number of accredited courses being provided by schools and partners

A number of new partnerships have been established to help provide pathways into care and construction for example. New partners provided exceptional support for young people over the last academic year and course completion rates are high. There are some changes to the funding streams for Foundation Apprenticeships and Officers are currently working with Skills Development Scotland and Further Education providers to consider the implications of this.



A partnership with Health colleagues will see the development and delivery of a pathway into health and care at Northfield Academy in August 2022.

Staying on rates have significantly increased, although this is thought to be linked to concerns around post school opportunities. There are signs that employment opportunities are increasing and this may impact on our live destinations data.

Early discussions with Microsoft are considering how we could develop a 'classroom of the future' to help fully utilise new technologies in our senior phase offering.

New partnerships have helped schools develop new shorter Foundation Apprenticeship models which are popular and helping to improve attainment. Plans are in place to share the innovations being developed at individual school levels to help spread best practice and pool resource.



Community Learning and Development Services

With schools and community buildings closed for much of 2020/21, the number of interventions/programmes were reduced significantly from 2019/20 figures, 200 reduced to 47 in 2020/21. As schools have reopened the number of interventions has begun increasing.

Services over the last year moved from group work to mostly 1-1 work, initially virtually via phone or online, due to Covid restrictions which challenged our ability to support individual learners. Online learning sessions were developed and delivered virtually. Learners were supported to become more digitally able with some supporting groups online. As restrictions lifted, 1:1s were able to be conducted in person in outdoor spaces where available, or through walk and talk sessions. When able to, groups ran with small numbers and no volunteers. Healthy Minds volunteers learned new skills to support some groups virtually.



Impacts of Covid-19 on the annual programme has led to a decrease in the number and type of opportunities available, the number of opportunities reduced from 323 (2019/20) to 169 (2020/21) and a downturn in participant numbers (737 to 339 participants).

Significant additional funding from a variety of sources including partnership forums and 'Branching Out' allowed us to develop outdoor learning opportunities such as the Coastal project and community garden, this funding assisted in developing the programme that was delivered when restrictions allowed.

PEOPLE (CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE)

OUR KEY DRIVERS

- Ensuring that families receive the parenting and family support they need
- Keeping young children safe
- Supporting early speech, language and literacy
- Improving health and reducing inequalities
- Improving the knowledge, understanding and skill of the universal workforce to recognise and respond to emerging mental wellbeing vulnerability
- Increasing children's and parents' knowledge and understanding of their own physical and mental wellbeing
- Early intervention and prevention of self-harming behaviours through timely and effective support for those with mental health issues
- Improving education outcomes for care experienced children and young people
- Supporting care experienced children and young people who sustain care placements which meet their needs and sense of identity
- Ensuring children, young people and families understand the pathways available to them and skills required for future
- Supporting children and young people to understand and access multiagency throughcare and aftercare services
- Improving physical and emotional health outcomes for care experienced young people
- Improving pathways to education, employment and training for identified groups (including Care Experienced Young People and those with Additional Support Needs)
- Supporting young people, families, carers and communities to better understand the opportunities available to their children upon leaving school
- Ensuring children, young people and families understand the pathways available to them and skills required for future
- Secure required six UNICEF badges to gain Child Friendly City Status Equality and Inclusiveness
- Young people receive the right help at the right time through provision of a strong universal offer alongside availability of multi-disciplinary targeted interventions (using a trauma-informed approach) to improve outcomes for young people at risk of becoming involved in the Justice System

PEOPLE (CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE) HIGHLIGHTS



210 young people & **420** professionals currently using 'Mind of my Own' App



All eligible children are able to access **1140** hours of **Early Learning & Childcare**



2 day virtual induction held for S5-S6 pupils across Aberdeen



Throughout the coronavirus crisis over **96%** of children on the child protection register were seen personally by a professional **on a weekly basis**



216 care-experience children and young people **currently being supported by MCR pathways**

PROGRESS MADE DURING 2020/21

EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE PLACES

All eligible children are able to access 1140 hours of Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) from August 2021. A fully flexible offer has been designed to offer real choice to families. The children and staff are very positive about the new build and refurbished settings.

A high quality professional learning offer is available to all Early Learning and Childcare settings. Settings are ably supported by Locality Leads. There is clear evidence that our approach to quality improvement is leading to improved quality. The service will continue to be agile in order to respond to the changing needs of children and young people and take account of any changes in inspection frameworks.

Offer PEEP (Parents as Early Education Partners) universally across all Local Authority settings

Five Excellence and Equity Practitioners, who have been attached to settings serving areas of deprivation, have been delivering PEEP remotely or outdoors over the last school year. All ELC settings have been trained in PEEP over session 2020/21 and will begin the universal roll out of PEEP from August 2021.

Supporting early speech, language and literacy

All Excellence and Equity Practitioners have been deployed in areas of deprivation and have provided invaluable support to help close the poverty related attainment gap.

ELC and school staff continue to offer Early Talk and Talk Boost to support oral language development. The impact of this approach will be reviewed and enhanced over school session 21/22. Oral language features in the education National Improvement Framework Plan for 21/22.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Comprehensive multi-agency guidance on identifying and addressing neglect has been published. This is supported by a multi-agency training package focussing on raising awareness and confidence amongst the workforce to both identify and work with families where neglect is present.

A joint medical pathway for neglect has been developed and now forms part of both the guidance and training on neglect which remain a core focus of the training programme. Quality assurance measures indicate that the guidance and training has a positive impact on practice in terms of raising awareness and confidence in staff to both identify and respond to neglect appropriately.

Local reviews of cases continue to take place in line with national and local guidance and the learning is disseminated via well-established structures.

Numbers of children registered under the category of neglect were high during the coronavirus crisis as professionals adopted a cautious approach to ensure visibility of vulnerable children. Those numbers have reduced and are expected to continue to stabilise.

Multi agency practice guidance and training packages on child protection and domestic abuse have been developed and implemented. Expertise is drawn from practitioners in this field, and in collaboration with the CPC (Child Protection Committee), the AVAWP (Aberdeen Violence Against Women Partnership), Grampian Women's Aid, Caledonian Project and Criminal Justice.

Comprehensive multi agency training packages on emotional abuse have also been developed and are being delivered throughout the City.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion is a priority recognised across the partnership in Aberdeen and this forms part of the Council's contribution to the CPC programme 2021 – 2024 in line with delivering on the [Promise](#).

Numbers indicate appropriate professional responses across the range of child protection concerns. High levels of conversion from referral to registration (84%) indicate that professionals are correctly identifying and acting upon concerns.

Strength based practice is recognised as embedded in practice in Aberdeen City. A variety of approaches to meet families' and professionals' need can continue to develop in case conferences. Digital approaches to case conferences have been successful and are likely to continue. Partners can work together to identify and improve the physical environment of the case conference venues.

Significantly, the strength based practice approach across Aberdeen City was noted and commented upon positively throughout the Report of the Joint Inspection of Children's Services 2019, from which the Council can be satisfied that this approach is well embedded in Aberdeen City.

Supporting children to remain in their community

This year 2020/2021, 306 children had a placement type of being looked after at home or with friends/relatives at some point during the reporting year and that amounted to 46.93% of the looked after population. This year's figure indicates a 1.95% increase in the overall percentage of looked after children who are being supported to remain in placements with parents and extended family members which is positive in striving to achieve children remaining within their communities.

The number of children and young people remaining in placement between 16-18 years has also increased this year - 71 in 2020/21 compared to 66 the previous year. These numbers indicate a steady increase in young people remaining in placements. With improved Continuing Care provisions, this pattern is expected to continue.

IMPROVING HEALTH AND REDUCING INEQUALITIES

The pandemic impacted on children's access to physical activity out of school hours and limited access to Duke of Edinburgh experiences. The service is currently working with Arm's Length External Organisations and partners to help mitigate associated risks and ensure a full programme of activity for the 21/22 academic session.

A newly established Aberdeen PEPAS (Physical Education, Physical Activity & Sport) Team have agreed aims which, through joint partnership working, will support and improve the offer of physical education, physical activity, and sport within Aberdeen, ensuring equitable opportunities for all children and young people. Service Leads, National Governing Bodies and professional experts from Aberdeen City Education Service, Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust, Russell Anderson Development School, Sport Aberdeen, Scottish ClubSport, Scottish Disability Sport, and Sport Scotland have come together to form Aberdeen PEPAS Team. The collective efforts of the Team will ensure increasing numbers of children and young people will continue to benefit and achieve success from their participation in a range of sport and physical activities. This will support both the physical and mental wellbeing of all and improve life chances.

As part of the Summer of Play a range of physical activity was offered to allow children and young people to reconnect with friends over the summer holiday period. Children and young people appreciated and enjoyed the activities on offer with an average rating of 9.5/10 being awarded by the children.

There has also been a focus on the use of the 'Mind of my own' app to increase the physical and emotional outcomes for care experienced young people. The app was specifically designed to listen to care experienced young people and learn from what they tell us about their experiences in our care. It allows young people to provide a 'real time' view on their experiences of care. Young people share their views prior to attending forums where their plans are reviewed and updated, this gives them a voice and presence. The use and adoption of the app by care experienced young people and professionals continues to grow, from 173 young people accounts in 2019/20 to 210 currently - similarly for professionals from 374 in this period to 420 currently.



Furthermore, as part of our plans to improve health and reduce inequalities there is an ongoing construction project in place to deliver the refurbishment and enhancement of Northfield swimming pool. There was a slight delay in this work commencing, however this has now started in September 2021. An 11 month build programme is planned with reopening of the facility likely to be in late 2022. The project is being managed jointly by Council and Sport Aberdeen officers in conjunction with appointed consultants.

SUPPORTING CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN

** Care Experienced is the collective term for anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life*

*** Looked After refers to children/young people who are currently 'legally' looked after.*

MCR Pathways supports 216 care-experienced and vulnerable young people between S1-S6 in Aberdeen. In S1 and S2, young people participate in weekly Group Work sessions facilitated by their Pathways Coordinator focusing on emotional literacy, wellbeing, teamwork, employability skills and self-awareness. From S3, young people are carefully matched with a mentor who meets with them for a period every week, for a minimum duration of one academic year (in fact, most of our mentored relationships last for three years).

MCR pathways is fully operational and supporting young people in most of our secondary schools. The increase in the number of young people receiving a bespoke education support pathway reflects the additional schools who now have MCR Pathways, 21 in 2019/20 compared to 112 in 2020/21. Our Partnership with Sport Aberdeen has won a national award and positively impacts the physical and mental wellbeing of our care experienced children and young people.

The roll out of Connected and Compassionate communities in all schools and a focus on wellbeing through the recovery phase is also positively impacting. Live data evidences a significant reduction in levels of exclusion and overall, the attendance for secondary pupils has increased over the last 3 years which is extremely positive, having increased to over 80%. There is recognition that young people, especially in the senior phase, may have experienced further disruption to certification due to periods of self-isolation, but this has been mitigated well across City secondary schools. Ensuring young people are attending provides structure, increased opportunities and strengthens relationships which support wellbeing. The opportunities include accessing mentoring through the MCR programme as well as support from Skills Development Scotland, Developing the Young Workforce and the ABZ works programme. These effective interventions will be maintained over session 2021/22. Particular groups (including Care Experienced) have been carefully considered in determining the best use of the Covid-19 recovery funding with young people due to be able to access support from Youth Workers in session 21/22.

During the two periods of national lockdown, we continued to provide mentoring (and in some schools Group Work) through virtual platforms. Pathways Coordinators followed a scheduled programme of regular contact with young people on the programme (through video call, email, text or phone call; dependent on young person choice) to check-in and provide wellbeing support where needed.

Throughout the two periods, Pathways Coordinators have maintained over 85% cohort participation rate in interactions with young people meeting with mentors (36 interactions over the first comparable period of lockdown; rising to 120 during the second). Overall, interactions with young people between the first and second lockdown increased by over 1500% and over 81% of the cohort participated in interactions.

Currently the Pathway Coordinators are tracking the destinations of 37 leavers (29 of whom are Looked After or previously Looked After), have been actively supporting applications to college, university and employment and liaising with other agencies such as SDS to identify those at risk of a negative destination.



Each young person who had not entered a positive destination was actively supported through Skills Development Scotland, the Employability team and the Virtual School and this approach has greatly aided our young people. This approach will be maintained over 2021/22. Despite the dip in destinations data due to the Covid-19 pandemic, destinations data has remained consistent for those who are care experienced.

The Service are keenly aware that children and young people (and particularly those who are care experienced) are likely to require significant additional support to thrive in school after the unsettled 18 months. As part of the strategic plan to further improve attendance of our young people, youth workers have been employed to work in our secondary schools for session 2021/22. Being based within the schools will enable relationships to be developed.

Family Learning workers have also been employed to support families in predominantly, but not exclusively, primary schools. This resource will help build on the universal roll out of PEEP across ELC and will help to support families at an early stage. These supports will target those who are Looked After at Home and on the edge of care with the aim of reducing the risk of not attending as well as supporting attendance. It is hoped that this intervention will address the risks associated with the dip in attendance evident in primary schools as a result of periods of self-isolation.

In recognition of the changed circumstances as we recover from the pandemic, the Virtual School will take a more significant role in the design and delivery of bridging activities for some young people as they return from out of authority placements to schools in the city.

IMPROVING PATHWAYS AND UNDERSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the local economy. The opportunities available to young people in some sectors continues to change and this uncertainty presents a number of challenges for young people, their families and for staff working to support young people into a positive destination. A 'single point of truth' has been developed to enable young people to make choices with more confidence.

A 2 day virtual induction programme 'Lift Off', was held in June 2021, this was our first online induction event for the senior students of Aberdeen City who now, more than ever, need us to work together to help them prepare for this next phase in their journey. The on-line event promoted post-school pathways for new S5 and S6 pupils from across Aberdeen and highlighted the unique skills young people have acquired over the 18 months and led young people to consider their CV more fully. The event was used not only to promote career pathways, but also to identify additional support services available to young people as they move on from school and to build on employer engagement and relationships.



Working Rite

In October 2020, Aberdeen City Council and MCR Pathways started working together on a pilot project with Working Rite, an organisation which supports young people between the ages of 16 - 24 who are struggling to overcome significant barriers in their lives. By individually matching a young person to a small business work placement provider, for up to six months, the young person is guided by an older mentor within the workplace, in addition to being supported by a Working Rite Project Coordinator. The Pathway Coordinator at Hazlehead Academy has introduced 2 school leavers (who are engaged in the Young Aberdeen Talent programme) but at risk of not finding a positive destination to the Working Rite programme.

Mental Health and Wellbeing focus

At Dyce Academy, the Pathway Coordinator produced materials to support young people in S1 and S2 with their mental health and wellbeing. These resources have been shared with our national group work development team and will be used in the 2021/22 academic year to increase the range of mindful activities young people can engage with.

Big Noise Torry Project (BNT)

In 2020-21 Covid-19 impacted on in-school and face to face sessions with a variety of delivery models for BNT programmes developed from 1-2-1 and small group sessions in-school and to larger scale open sessions online.

The online sessions were recorded and available after the session and also included “Facebook live” sessions which were open to all. There were 645 children who participated in the ‘Big Noise Torry’ programme in 2020/21, however, this does not include the open online sessions as data is unavailable for these.

Due to restrictions 2020-21 includes P1-P7 for in-school delivery however there were no nursery sessions. Instead video classes were provided for the nursery staff to do alongside the children.

REDUCING OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR

Our focus on young people receiving the right help at the right time to improve outcomes for young people at risk of becoming involved in the justice system has continued. ‘Refreshing the Whole System Approach Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2023’ has been developed along with the Partners of the Youth Justice Improvement Group and what the local data indicates are the key areas for development. It is written with cognisance to the National Youth Justice Vision and Action Plan as well as the new Youth Justice National Standards, EEI (Early and Effective intervention) Core Elements, Secure Care Standards and revised FRAME guidance.



EEI is a key thematic area of the new strategy and action plan. There are a further three thematic areas: Diversion, Children’s Rights and Participation, Higher Support Young People and Community Alternative to Secure Care and Custody. The action plan includes the charter mark development.

It is important that support is provided to young people who received an EEI, are diverted from prosecution or receive community payback orders. Numbers of 16/17 year olds being diverted from prosecution have seen an increase across the country. Locally we have seen 16/17 year olds undertaking the DfP (Diversion from Prosecution) with Barnardos RAFT service, RAFT (Reaching Aberdeen Families Together) is a social work commissioned service, who provide time limited support for children and young people to prevent escalation of concerns. It is a consortium led by Barnardos with Foyer, APEX, Alcohol and Drugs Action and Homestart. Charter work on DfP indicated that care experienced are underrepresented in DfP, and over represented in the category of CPO’s (Community Payback Orders). Work with Social Work, Youth Justice Management Unit (YJMU) and Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) is ongoing to ensure that COPFS have the required information to try to increase the number of young people being appropriately given a DfP disposal.





PEOPLE (ADULTS)

OUR KEY DRIVERS

- Taking an effective, trauma-informed, problem solving whole system approach to offending by 16- and 17-year olds
- Tackling antisocial behaviour in problem areas with appropriate and effective interventions
- Ensuring a targeted approach to diverting over-18s from prosecution to effective interventions aimed at reducing the likelihood of reoffending, where appropriate
- Changing attitudes about domestic abuse in all its form
- Taking targeted interventions aimed at specific offending
- Ensuring people on community sentences and liberated from prison have better access to services
- Ensuring people in the Justice System diagnosed with mental illness or suffering from mental ill health receive access to the right support at the right time
- Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups
- Increase support for children and young people at risk of developing drug and alcohol problems
- Reduce levels of harmful alcohol consumption across the whole population through “making every opportunity count” approaches
- Enhance early intervention and preventative treatment for those at greatest risk of harm from drugs and alcohol
- Increase visibility and support of recovery in our communities

PEOPLE (ADULTS) HIGHLIGHTS



Mastrick Hub

Multi-partner Project set up engaging young people who may be at risk



5% decrease in households accommodated in temporary accommodation



Tenancy sustainment level of **90.6%**, which is above the national average



Two online webinars held for staff awareness of domestic abuse, with **80 attendees**



2% decrease in homeless applications

PROGRESS MADE DURING 2020/21

REDUCING OFFENDING AND CONVICTIONS

Youth Work

Covid had an impact on the ability of youth workers to engage face to face with young people. The youth work service is a partner with the Fit Like Hubs, and young people at risk of developing drug and alcohol problems may be picked up through Requests for Assistance.

The area around Tesco on Lang Stracht has been an area highlighted in relation to youth activity and antisocial behaviour. Over the last year the Mastrick Hub project has been developed, within the store grounds, and is now up and running, this is a multi-partner project which engages young people in this area. The hub gives youths a safe place to go, whereby they have access to WiFi and shelter.

Youth Workers and ADA (Alcohol and Drugs Action) staff have been using the Hub space, to engage with young people and have conversations about drugs and alcohol. Street Sports are also in the area once a week with high levels of participation. Recently some of these young people took part in a "street art" project, creating an art mural, this encouraged the young people to feel empowered and have their say on how their hub would look.

Domestic Abuse

Over the last year we have continued to try and raise awareness of domestic abuse through frontline staff training to try and increase reporting of domestic abuse issues. We have held two online webinars for staff around domestic abuse awareness, the first webinar saw 35 attendees and the second webinar 45 attendees. Work has also started around increasing staff confidence to report domestic abuse.



We continue to work towards increasing the number of secondary schools with Mentors in Violence (MVP) in place. Unfortunately, over the last year this number has not increased and remains at 4 due to disruptions to schools throughout the pandemic. There are however a number of schools looking to be involved with the programme in session 2021/22, therefore this number is likely to increase over the next year.

Cuckooing

As part of the LOIP there was a project in place aiming to 'Increase the number of individuals who are involved in cuckooing incidents who undertake effective interventions or who are referred to relevant support services in priority localities by 2021.'

The project aimed to identify individuals who were 'victims' of cuckooing. Staff from the Council's Housing and Children's Services would go on joint visits with Police to engage with individuals and offer them advice and support to help them get out of the situation they have found themselves in, and to try and protect and maintain their tenancy, by referral to appropriate services.

The changes have resulted in improvement overall as the problem had never been targeted previously. Work tackling cuckooing has raised awareness amongst support agencies as well as amongst the victims who now know where to turn for help. Fortunately work to raise awareness prior to the Covid-19 pandemic has not been affected.

A target engagement rate was set at 30%, which has been exceeded since the early stages of the project. This engagement rate accurately records victims dropping in and out of engagement due to their chaotic lifestyles. This project was brought to a close in 2021 when the LOIP was refreshed.

Priority Families

Priority Families has continued to deliver services to local families impacted by multiple issues including offending behaviour, antisocial behaviour and issues relating to school attendance and attainment. Through offering intensive key worker led support with partner agencies, the service works in collaboration with families within their homes, schools and communities, to give parents the tools and confidence to set appropriate routines and boundaries, address reasons for school non-attendance and provide diversions from offending and antisocial behaviour. During Covid this work has continued ensuring that there were safeguards and mechanisms in place to support the challenges faced by families, including the impact on mental health and wellbeing and financial hardship. As a result of this coordinated intervention and whole family approach, the service had significant impacts, for example, a 70% reduction in demand on Police services and parents also reported that they felt more confident in managing their child's behaviour and understood how to communicate with them, lessening the conflict and difficulties within the family home.



HOUSING ACCESS AND SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE AND DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE

We have continued to improve our integrated practices for Care Experienced Young People. We have targeted the support offered to Care Leavers in terms of tenancy sustainment, by introducing a co-located housing support worker based in the Care Leavers team within Social Work to ensure comprehensive targeting of housing accommodation.

Against the backdrop of Covid-19, Aberdeen City Council's Housing Access and Support Service illustrate a strong position, with excellent progress towards delivery of Scottish Government's Rapid Rehousing Plan.

Whilst we did not experience the reduction in demand for services as greatly as other Local Authorities, the Council did excel in continuing to secure positive outcomes for homeless households, and these results are in stark contrast to performance nationally.

Homeless applications reduced by 2% on the previous year, to 1646. Households assessed as homeless similarly reduced by 2% to 1215. Repeat homelessness reduced by 1.2% to 4%, against a national trend of 5%. Aberdeen City Council achieved a tenancy sustainment level of 90.6%, which is higher than the national average of 89.9%.

The average length of time taken to assess a homeless application reduced by 6 days, to 9 days, against a national time of 16 days. Alongside Glasgow City Council, this makes Aberdeen City Council the best performer in this category.



The average length of homeless journey increased slightly, by 4 days to 144 days. Whilst it is disappointing to note this small increase, the complexities of operating within Covid-19 restrictions on void path return mean that we compare extremely favourably at almost half the national average, with the second best time recorded in Scotland, behind Perth & Kinross at 95 days. However, it is worth noting that their homeless demand is less than half of the level in Aberdeen.

Households accommodated in temporary accommodation at 31st March has reduced by 5%, which again, compares very well against an increase nationally of 12%. Aberdeen has outperformed the national average in this category by 17%. The average time spent in temporary accommodation is 131 days, against 199 days nationally. Of Scotland's four major cities, Aberdeen City recorded the lowest time, 3 days shorter than Dundee (134), 97 days shorter than Glasgow (228) and 151 shorter than Edinburgh (282).

A total of 490 breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order were recorded across Scotland in 2020/21. Aberdeen City Council recorded no breaches.

This clearly highlights the strong performance achieved by Aberdeen City Council across a vast range of areas that link not only to national strategic homeless priorities, but to local actions as set out in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. While there are many areas of strength, what is consistently evidenced is the strong performance achieved by Aberdeen City Council in securing settled outcomes for all homeless people as quickly as possible.



PLACE

OUR KEY DRIVERS

- Increasing food resilience at individual and community level by establishing self-governing community co-operatives to offer further supportive ways of providing food.
- Developing and supporting community efforts in making our green space productive and resilient.
- Reducing emissions across the city through delivery of Aberdeen's Sustainable Energy Action Plan 'Powering Aberdeen'.
- Developing a bottom up approach to community resilience to encourage greater ownership and independent action towards preventing and mitigating impact of climate change.
- Supporting different ways for active travel in everyday journeys, using partners and volunteers to address safety, infrastructure, fitness, well-being, and confidence.

PLACE HIGHLIGHTS



100 food packages
delivered over Christmas period to
86 families including **180 children**



1,200 representations
received during consultation
of the Proposed Aberdeen
Local Development Plan 2020



7 Green Flags
awarded



140,000
flower bulbs planted by
volunteers across the city



193 salt bags delivered to
communities and **20 community salt**
bins provided

PROGRESS MADE DURING 2020/21

REDUCING FOOD POVERTY AND INCREASING FOOD RESILIENCE

Food Pantries

Due to the Pandemic the expansion of Food Pantries/Larders and Co-operatives has not been possible. From March - June 2020, most settings were effectively closed. Cummings Park Cubby was able to arrange a special Christmas delivery of 100 packages - meat, groceries, fresh vegetables and selection packs - to 86 families which included 180 children. This was made possible by donations and grants applied for.

Tillydrone Foodbank provided foodbank provision in partnership with The Lighthouse and the Trussel Trust. The Tillydrone Food Larder developed from June 2020 initially to reduce food waste by ensuring any items close to their 'Use by dates' did not end up in landfill.

All families and individuals accessing provision at the Cubby and Tillydrone Foodbank/ Larder are offered additional support ensuring they have access to necessary welfare and budgeting support. Suggested recipes and cooking ideas are provided. Covid Recovery grants/funds have supported food provisions across the city and many families have been able to use Meal Vouchers, initially when schools were closed but additionally during school holidays.



Food Growing Strategy and Open Space Audit

The food-growing implementation plan was developed and put in place in 2020-21 following approval of Granite City Growing: a community food growing strategy for Aberdeen at City, Growth and Resources Committee in February 2020. The Implementation Plan is being monitored.

The Open Space Audit had to mainly be paused during 2020-21 due to lockdown restrictions. However, as restrictions eased the work was picked up again and the audit will be completed in 2021-22.

A Biodiversity Duty Report was produced in 2020. This is a statutory report to the Scottish Government on how the Council are delivering on their biodiversity duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Enable greater opportunities for engagement and participation in development planning placemaking

The planning system in Scotland seeks to deliver sustainable healthy communities, and balance social, environmental and economic need. For this to happen there needs to be an up to date Local Development Plan.

A Local Development Plan sets out locations for new homes and businesses, identifies areas for protection, and ensures facilities for good quality of life are in place - such as public transport, schools and open space. The allocations and policies in development plans affect everyday life, for example, how people travel, where people live, shop, work and spend their leisure time. The Local Development Plan also has to assist in tackling global and national challenges such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and inequalities in health and wellbeing.



The Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2020 was approved at Full Council on 02 March 2020, and a 14 and a half week public consultation took place between 20 May to 31 August 2020. Due to the national and local Covid-19 lockdowns all consultation had to take place digitally, however postal letters of representation were still welcome, along with email and consultation hub responses, to ensure all stakeholders could participate.

The consultation was promoted through online and paper media, with adverts in local newspapers, 17,000 neighbour notifications sent and posts on the Aberdeen City Council Facebook page, and the Local Development Plan Facebook and twitter accounts, and a virtual newsletter was sent to all those on the local development plan newsletter list. Community Councils, Key Agencies and other key stakeholders were informed by email. A Storymap was also produced to aid better virtual engagement.

Thirteen meetings were held through Microsoft Teams with ten different Community Councils, the development industry, Key Agencies, and local interested groups.

Nearly 1,200 representations were received during the consultation period. The storymap received 3,200 hits, and the local development plan social media account received 767 engagements.

PROMOTING GREENSPACE AND PLAYING AREAS

Due to Covid-19 many of the activities and events that would normally take place throughout the year to promote our greenspaces and playing areas were restricted or put on hold. Regardless, there has still been positive work carried out across the city in our green spaces.



Clean-Up Aberdeen

Since January 2021 'Clean-up Aberdeen' have increased significantly in numbers with 350 litter picking tongs distributed to our brilliant clean up champions. These have been to individuals, individuals and their friends, families and small groups, exercise groups, community centres, child minders, schools and businesses. As of 3rd August 2021, 383 clean ups have been carried out, 1069 volunteers have taken part with 1821.5 bags being filled.

Communities bring spring colour

Spring 2020 brought splashes of colour thanks to the work of many volunteers across the city. The annual autumn bulb planting took place in 2020, despite Covid-19, which has put paid to so many community activities. Almost 100 groups, schools and individuals took up the offer of free spring bulbs from Aberdeen City Council's Environmental Services. These enthusiastic volunteers managed to plant 140,000 crocus and muscari bulbs in parks, greenspaces and school grounds.

It was great to be able to help communities bring a bit of spring cheer to their neighbourhoods. It had been a difficult year for everyone but the new, fresh colours of spring that the volunteers helped bring to Aberdeen was appreciated by many.

Green Flag Awards

The Green Flag Award scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

Aberdeen had 7 sites awarded with Green Flags in 2020. This is the most we have ever achieved:

- Duthie Park, Green Heritage award
- Hazlehead Park
- Seaton Park
- Johnston Gardens
- Victoria Park
- Slopefield Allotments
- Garthdee Field Allotments



Aberdeen is the first local authority in Scotland to have an allotment site awarded with a Green Flag. We have 2! Garthdee Field Allotment achieved a Green Flag for the first time in 2020. It is a tremendous achievement to be awarded Green Flags. There have been obvious challenges this year but despite this, our parks and green spaces continue to be beautiful, well maintained and accessible to everyone. The awards recognise and reward the hard work of staff, Friends groups and the many volunteers who help in our parks.

Beach Seaside Award

2020 saw Aberdeen retain its Seaside Award. This was the 13th year in a row that our beach has been recognised and awarded in this way. This is a fantastic achievement and recognises and celebrates all the hard work of our staff and the many volunteers who help care for the beach.

The Beach Awards are administered by Keep Scotland Beautiful and started in 1993. The awards aim to celebrate all of Scotland's beaches and coastal communities whilst driving up the environmental standards around our coastline. Awarded beaches demonstrate excellent beach management and environmental best practice ensuring the maintenance of high standards.



ENCOURAGING ACTIVE TRAVEL

During the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of temporary interventions were delivered in the City Centre and in areas of key economic activity to support people to walk and cycle during the pandemic, and adhere to physical distancing guidelines. These measures are due to be phased out as Scotland moves to Level 0 restrictions and beyond in summer 2021.

A number of studies are currently underway on key transport corridors in the city to determine options for allowing them to perform better for all modes of travel, including walking, wheeling and cycling.

A revised Active Travel Action Plan was approved in February 2021.

REDUCING EMISSIONS AND ADAPTING TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Following development in 2019/20, a Net Zero Vision and Prospectus for Aberdeen; and a supporting Strategic Infrastructure Plan (Energy Transition) were approved at Urgent Business Committee in May 2020, to reflect emission targets and the pace of change in relevant legislation and standards.

Also, at Urgent Business Committee in May 2020, a Council Energy and Climate Routemap was approved, setting out the phases and timeline to producing a climate plan for Council assets and operations. This Council Climate Change Plan was approved at Council in March 2021, alongside a Project Register covering over 100 emission reduction and adaptation actions. The plan sets targets for net zero emissions by 2045; with interim targets of at least a 48% reduction by 2025; and a 75% reduction by 2030. It drives a significant increase in actions to reduce carbon emissions and to build resilience, re-shaping our operational activity and defining the approach to decarbonising our public buildings, council housing and fleet.

A Council Climate Change Group is progressing this work which is set out under 5 themed areas Buildings; Mobility; Other Operations; Leadership and Governance; Awareness and Behaviour Change.

In 2020, the Council's Leadership and Governance sub-group agreed to separate the Corporate Climate Risk into 2 risks, one covering compliance and the other climate risks to place. The Council's Risk Board is provided with monthly updates on these. Further work took place to identify climate risks relevant to Council Clusters.

The Council produces an annual Climate Change Report that reports on our corporate emissions and indicates our strategies and plans that include climate change. Several strategic documents were developed in this period and underwent the statutory environmental assessments:

- SEA Screening for the Council Climate Change Plan
- SEA Screening for the Aberdeen Low Emission Zone

In addition, Post Adoption Statements were produced for Aberdeen Adapts the city Climate Adaptation Framework; and Granite City Growing, Food Growing Strategy.

Reduce road congestion to improve air quality and reduce emissions
Congestion and air quality have obviously improved during the pandemic as a result of various restrictions on movement and Government guidance for people to work from home wherever possible. Mean PM 10 concentrations at air quality monitoring sites reduced from 13µg/m³ to 11µg/m³ (this is the average level measured across 6 monitoring sites in 2020). Various strands of work are underway to better understand how behaviours may change on a permanent basis post-pandemic.

Work is ongoing to determine the optimum Low Emission Zone (LEZ) for Aberdeen City Centre, with an LEZ due to be declared by May 2022.

Waste and Recycling

The Covid pandemic has had a significant effect on the waste and recycling service due to physical distancing, staff absences, etc which forced the service to reduce its collection frequency from 2 weekly to 4 weekly for a short period in April and May 2020 due to these issues. In addition, the temporary closure of the city's 4 Household Waste Recycling Centres for 2 months at the beginning of the pandemic also impacted on how waste could be managed.

This, coupled with the increase in people who were at and working at home, and thereby producing more waste, has all placed additional pressure on the service and has had an adverse effect on recycling rates. The 2020 recycling rate is yet to be verified by SEPA, but it is anticipated to have dropped from the 2019 rate of 49.9%.

On a more positive note, the service is beginning to see a recovery from the Covid impacts. The team continues to work hard to continue to improve waste management in Aberdeen and the particular focus is on the communal properties as data shows that recycling rates in those areas served by shared facilities are lower than those using individual bins. This remains an ongoing challenge, but several projects are underway to look at tackling this issue including reviewing infrastructure, considering different types of containers and local engagement and promotion.

The Ness Energy Project continues to make good progress, the contract was awarded to EfW NESS Limited for the construction and operation of the Ness Energy from Waste facility in autumn 2019, with construction work commencing shortly thereafter. Progress has been good and it is expected that the work will be completed in 2022 and the facility will begin accepting waste from then.

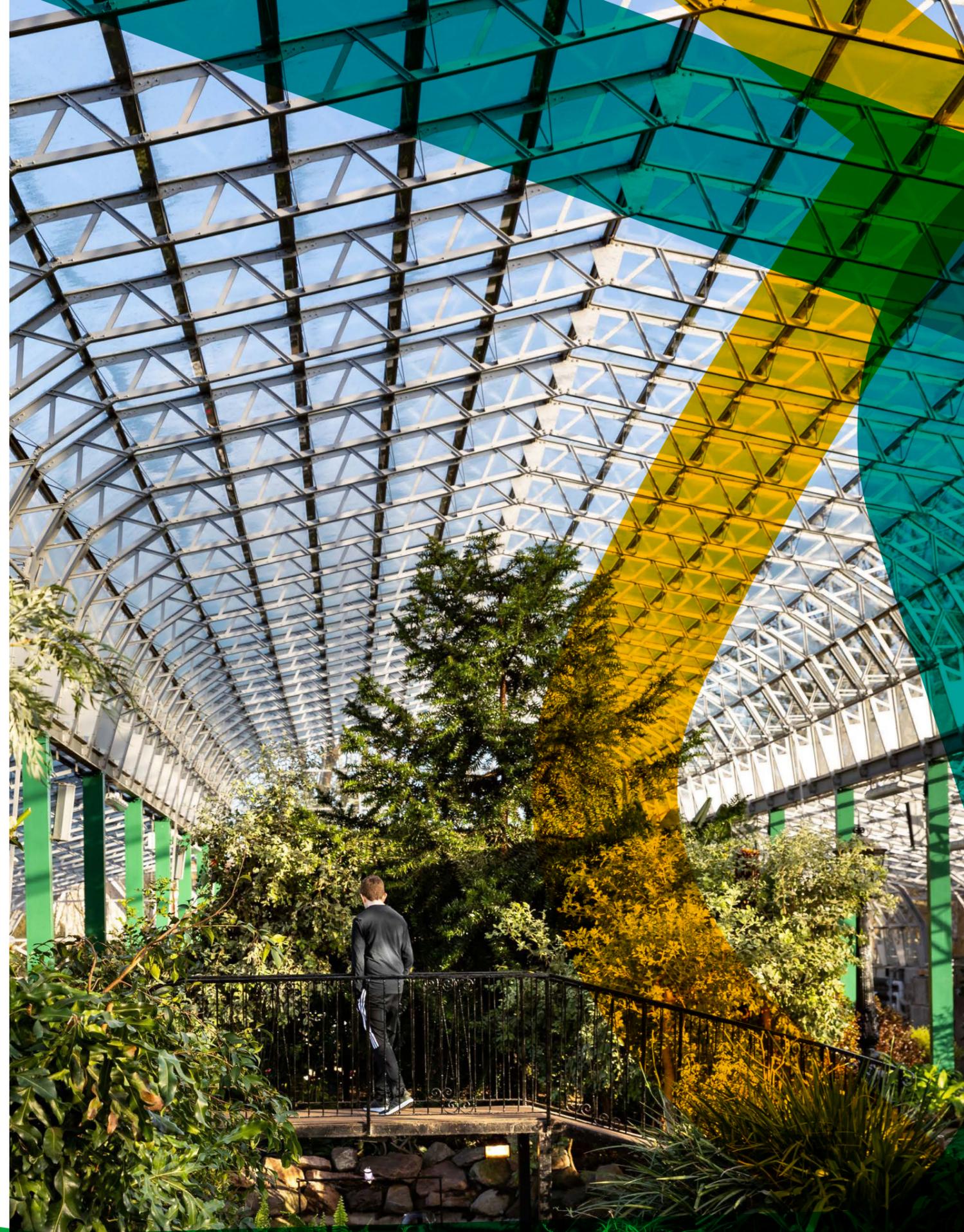


Improving Resilience to Flooding

Over the last two years a considerable amount of work has been carried out in conjunction with SEPA/ Scottish water and the Roads teams to become more proactive in relation to flooding events rather than reactive once they occur.

These events are happening more and more, due to climate change and putting considerable demand on the service. Additional budget was awarded to roads during this last financial year and in future, to expand the staff within the service associated with flooding and to expand the current number of gully machines. This will allow us to prioritise the existing “hakes” within the City along with the gullies to target those with the higher demand.

All this work is being carried out as part of our Flood Risk Management Plans for the whole of the City.





HOW WE DO OUR BUSINESS

COMMISSIONING APPROACH

As set out in the Council Delivery Plan, 2020/21 saw significant progress in the Council’s implementation of our commissioning approach to service planning and delivery. The Strategic Commissioning Committee has considered and approved reports relating to key elements of the commissioning cycle, including the development of the Population Needs Assessment, the refresh of the LOIP, Council Strategies and Outcome Based Performance Management. The Council Delivery Plan 2020/21 and the Council’s budget complete the commissioning cycle as follows:

Council Delivery Plan	The Plan brings together ACC’s annual priorities derived from UK & Scottish Government; City/Region arrangements; the Community Planning Partnership; and as a single agency.
Commissioning Intentions	Commissioning intentions define, annually, the contributions which the Council will make, through commissioned services, to the delivery of the outcomes set in the LOIP and supporting strategies.
Budget	The budget allocates financial resources to support the delivery of commissioned services at the agreed standards of delivery.
Service Standards	Standards define the availability, responsiveness, and quality of, and eligibility for, the services we commission.

DATA LED ANALYSIS OF SERVICE DEMAND AND SERVICE DESIGN

In line with the strategic commissioning approach, the 2020/21 planning and budgeting process was begun in early 2019/20 with a data led, service by service analysis of service demand; statutory duties; workforce; digital transformation; contracts; assets and fees & charges. This provided the basis for designing the services for 2020 onwards which will most effectively deliver improved outcomes.

Demand Management - A systematic approach has been taken to the analysis of demand. This approach has provided a model to classify the nature of demand; gain a greater understanding of how to meet that demand differently; and reduce future demand upon services. This will result in a shift away from responsive “negative” demand to planned “value” demand.

The following classification of demand have been adopted:

- Value demand - these are the demands we want customers to place on the system. These prevent future negative demand through earlier intervention.
- Negative demand - turning off negative demand has an immediate impact on our capacity. Negative demand is further sub-divided into:
 - o Failure demand - demand from service failure or poor design
 - o Avoidable demand - demand arising from behaviours that can be influenced or changed
 - o Excess demand - providing a higher level of service than is needed to meet demand
 - o Co-dependent demand - demand unintentionally reinforced and entrenched by service dependence
 - o Preventable demand - demand which could have been prevented by intervening earlier

Each of the Council's services have undertaken this demand analysis and it has underpinned the design of services for 2020/21 and beyond which a) will reduce negative demand and b) include the identification of related options for reducing cost to ensure the service to be commissioned, and the standards at which these are delivered, are affordable within available resources.

TRANSFORMATION PORTFOLIO

The Council's environment continues to be extremely complex and multi-dimensional, with significant demand and a high ambition for improvement. This places pressure on how we resource all elements of Council activity to the desired level and where funds are deployed for best value. The events that have occurred in 2020/21 because of the global health pandemic have made this even more challenging. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out assumptions regarding the ongoing short-term implications of Covid-19 in terms of financial year 2021/22, and then goes on to make some informed assumptions for financial years 2022/23 – 2027/28. The overall financial challenge ahead is likely to sit within a range of financial scenarios.

Regardless of the challenges ahead, the foundation for the Council's transformation remains our collective vision for the future of Aberdeen and our understanding of the strategic outcomes we need to address, as articulated in our strategies, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and the Council Delivery Plan. Nevertheless, taking account of the emerging fiscal and economic challenges, the scale of service redesign will have to increase. Transformation is not only about delivering the necessary savings, there is an even more crucial need for organisational culture to be strategically oriented towards the capabilities embedded by the Council's Target Operating Model (TOM) e.g. preventing customer demand, anticipating demand, supporting customers to manage their demand, and in the event, we respond to demand, ensuring that staff are working with a focus on outcomes.

A very deliberate attempt has been made, and will continue to be made, towards influencing the culture of the organisation as well as ensuring that all staff have the right skills and working environment to operate within our changing operating model.

The Transformation Portfolio was reviewed during 2020 and refocused on the capabilities and actions to support deeper and broader service redesign that will be required to ensure financial stability in future years. The below are priorities for the next phase of the Transformation Portfolio:

- Taking full advantage of opportunities presented through the rapid acceleration of digital technology, the availability and management of data and how this can support both planning and transactional services for our customers.
- The flexibility of our workforce and the ability to respond to different demands and a different environment. We will continue to invest in the culture, training and development that will deliver a diverse and inclusive workforce for the future.
- The use of our physical assets to support transformation of our services and deliver an increased return for the Council.
- Working closely with our partners, customers and communities to deliver inclusive, whole system redesign.