

# Council Delivery Plan

ANNUAL REVIEW 2021/22



# CONTENTS

1	Contents .....	2
2	Introduction/Foreword .....	3
3	Policy Statement Updates .....	5
4	Commissioning Intentions.....	15
	• Economy .....	15
	• Highlights .....	16
	• Diversification of the economy into other growth sectors.....	16
	• Developing the talent and future workforce .....	18
	• Improving investment into Aberdeen and Aberdeen businesses .....	18
	• Promoting economic growth in our most disadvantaged communities.....	20
	• People (Children and Young People) .....	22
	• Highlights .....	23
	• Early learning & childcare places.....	23
	• Keeping children safe .....	24
	• Improving health and reducing inequalities .....	25
	• Supporting care experienced and looked after children.....	25
	• Improving pathways and understanding opportunities available .....	27
	• Reducing offending behaviour .....	28
	• People (Adults) .....	31
	• Highlights .....	31
	• Reducing offending and convictions .....	32
	• Housing access and support for vulnerable and disadvantage people.....	33
	• Place .....	37
	• Highlights .....	37
	• Reducing emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change .....	41
	• Developing community resilience .....	38
	• Promoting greenspace and playing areas.....	38
	• Encouraging active travel .....	40
5	How We Do Our Business .....	45

## FOREWORD

This Annual Report provides an overview of progress made in implementing the Council Delivery Plan 2021/22. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a significant impact on the City and the Council's services and workforce during 2021/22. The achievements highlighted in this report 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".

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 2021/22. Not least of these has been the ability of our staff to continue to deliver essential services and care to the people of Aberdeen as the impact of the pandemic continued to be felt, both operationally and through health, social and economic challenges experienced across the city. Specific highlights from 2021/22 include:

- our schools adapting to deliver learning and care during the pandemic, including supporting our senior pupils return to exams and increasing the percentage of pupils leaving school for a "positive destination"
- the completion of expanded early learning and childcare with all families eligible for 1,140 hours
- the opening of Milltimber School
- the range of support provided to families by removing costs from the school day; through successful "Summer" and "Easter" in the City programmes; and by delivering more than 11,000 COVID hardship grants
- delivering improvements to the City and planning further improvements, including the re-opening of Provost Skene's House and progressing the City Centre Master Plan
- actions taken to both protect the environment and support economic growth including establishing a joint venture to develop commercial production of hydrogen, the agreement of a Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap, and the introduction of a Low Emission Zone.





## 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>	<p>This work has been taken forward through the £27m Aberdeen City Region Deal investment in Digital.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City Network was the first project to be initiated, now complete it has transformed Aberdeen into a Gigabit City. The project saw a public sector investment of £2m and a private sector investment of £59m. Approximately 75% of homes in the city have been passed to date (this equates to 79,000 ready for service homes in the City Fibre network) with further roll out by City Fibre continuing into 2023. The benefits to residents also extend to more internet provider choices and market competition, which helps drive down costs.</li> <li>• The Full Fibre Project has one additional connection to Countesswells school to make before completion. Construction is underway for the school and Project close is therefore in summer 2023 once this final connection is made. This project has provided significant community benefits to date. (5 apprenticeships on the project as well as 5 structured work placements, further community outreach activities including five facilitated professional courses for the programme team to upskill the workforce, and 100 hours of staff time working with community organisations).</li> <li>• Aberdeen City Council already operates a duct network (containing fibre optic cables) in the city, and this will be expanded to cover key economic areas. Initially this duct network will be used by the Council, followed by engagement with commercial organisations to encourage them to utilise the expanded network to enhance their fibre offering in Aberdeen City, consequently stimulating the market. Phase 1 will be completed by September 2022. The remaining Phase 2 works on the bridge is still to be undertaken with a completion date of early October. This is due to the works on King George V bridge, as the Queen Elizabeth Bridge is the diversion route. Phase 3 has been approved and design work is underway with construction due to start later in the year.</li> <li>• A digital infrastructure gap analysis has been undertaken which develops a business case for continued investment and intervention, more specifically, it looked at the following aspects;             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessment of commercial infrastructure installed and planned in priority areas;</li> <li>- Review of the public sector infrastructure and requirements;</li> <li>- Assessment of implications for future Aberdeen City Region Deal programmes to address gaps in the market as well as implications for funding and procurement approach.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The full business case will go to the City Region Deal Joint Committee for approval in September 2022.</p>

2. Continue the TECA development, including anaerobic digestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The P+J Live arena is fully operational and working on securing future programme of events.</li> <li>Both hotels are open and trading and looking to re-establish trade following COVID-19 shutdowns albeit both sites are reliant on the success of the venue.</li> <li>Vacant sites are being marketed albeit market conditions are poor.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provost Skene House opened in Autumn 2021.</li> <li>Delivered 2021/22 events programme and maintained opening of Art Gallery, despite COVID-19 restrictions.</li> <li>Significant works progressed on Union Terrace Gardens. The redevelopment of Union Terrace Gardens is expected to be complete in Autumn 2022</li> <li>Streetscape - visioning exercises completed for key public realm and streetscape improvements as part of the City Centre Masterplan, with business cases now under development.</li> <li>Queens Street – development work is ongoing including discussions with stakeholders across the delivery of the wider development.</li> <li>Marketing process commenced for Aberdeen Market.</li> <li>Development partner/operator to be appointed for Aberdeen Market.</li> <li>Hosting of Grand Depart of Tour of Britain and delivery of 365 events programme.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work has continued on development of a Freeport bid to maximise commercial and economic opportunities from the expansion of the harbour. The submission of a Freeport bid is subject to the port operator's decision to proceed.</li> <li>Final completion of Phase 1 of Aberdeen Harbour South Expansion is on target for October 2022, though phased opening has commenced, with the first vessel entering the new harbour on the 3rd of July 2022. Full opening is due to be complete by summer 2023.</li> <li>The Council is working with Visit Aberdeenshire and Visit Scotland on city centre products for cruise visitors.</li> </ul>
5. Review Council industrial estate to ensure it supports the Regional Economic Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions continue over land requirements for the Energy Transition Zone, Hydrogen Hub and Harbour expansion. In March the council established a joint venture with BP to develop commercial production of H2 in Aberdeen.</li> <li>A review of the Council investment portfolio is planned in late 2022.</li> <li>A number of new leisure and office tenancies have been secured with Marischal Square and the Council's wider estate has supported Shell's relocation to the city centre. This has significantly reduced the level of vacant Grade A office space in the city centre.</li> </ul>
6. Continue to deliver Aberdeen 365 an annual calendar of headline and feature events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2021 event programme was curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, however, a number of successful events were delivered including Nuart, the Tour of Britain, Zandra Rhodes – “50 years of Fabulous”, Spectra, the Christmas Village and a range of other events.</li> </ul>
7. Continue to maximise community benefit from major developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contractors continued to deliver on a wide range of community benefits across the city. Work will continue to implement the policy and look to maximise benefits from all developments throughout 2022/23.</li> </ul>

8. Campaign for the reform of local government finance, including business rates and the replacement of Council Tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers continue to work with colleagues on development of a Transient Tourism Levy and also COSLA work on local powers and levers to support economic growth.</li> </ul>
9. Open negotiations to secure funding for a second Aberdeen City Region Deal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work commenced on the Regional Economic Strategy following the announcement of Scottish Government National Strategy for Economic Transformation. Preparation on investment and pipe-line projects to align with future funding.</li> <li>Preparations are in hand to respond to further announcements on a National Strategy for Economic Transformation, Just Transition, Levelling Up and Shared Prosperity Funding seeking to prioritise and align regional priorities for investment.</li> </ul>
10. Use business loans Scotland to help lift the finance barrier for small and medium enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council has been engaged in the disbursement of £76M in grants to local businesses from funding allocated to support businesses affected by measures to control the spread of COVID-19.</li> <li>The Business Gateway service continued to promote Business Loans Scotland.</li> <li>Council managed £14.3M North East Economic Recovery Skills Fund, with delivery of activities undertaken by the council and a range of partners</li> <li>Disbursement of grants will continue, as required, throughout 2022/23.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>We continue to work with both governments and their agencies to attract new investment to the city region through Scottish Development International and the Department for International Trade.</li> </ul>
12. Support the delivery of the three innovation hubs as part of the Aberdeen City Region Deal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction on the BioHub started at the Foresterhill Campus.</li> <li>A design and build contract commenced for the SeedPod project. The SeedPod project will see a centre of excellence and double the value of the sector with this new industry development hub.</li> <li>The Net Zero Technology had visible presence at COP26 and work continued to support the solutions centre.</li> <li>The new Subsea Centre is due to open in 2022 to drive transformation to a sustainable marine-based economy.</li> </ul>

## PEOPLE

Policy Statement Commitments	Update
1. Completion of school estate review (P1) and development of estate strategy for next 5-10 years (P2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Corporate Landlord set out a proposed approach for school estate in light of changes in demand at the Education Operational Delivery Committee in June 2022. A fuller set of proposals will be submitted to Committee in September 2022.</li> </ul>
2. Development of four new primary schools - Tillydrone, Torry, Milltimber and Countesswells	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milltimber welcomed pupils for the first time in May 2022. The programme for the completion of the new school at Tillydrone is currently under review pending committee decisions to be taken in Autumn 2022. The new schools at Torry and Countesswells are progressing well on site and are expected to be complete at various stages in 2023. The new schools will provide a range of internal and external inspirational and flexible spaces that will support and adapt to current and future curriculum delivery requirements.</li> </ul>
3. UNICEF Child Friendly accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following approval by Community Planning Aberdeen, UNICEF has formally approved the partnership multi-agency log frame which sets the direction of travel over the coming years. This acceptance also sees Community Planning partners move from the 'discovery' into the 'delivery' phase of the programme.</li> <li>Children's rights are now considered as part of the ACC Committee reporting process through the Integrated Impact Assessment to ensure appropriate consideration of children's rights as part of the decision making of Council Committees.</li> <li>Further details of the work undertaken by the Council to uphold children's rights will be presented to Committee in 2023 through the statutory Children's Rights Report.</li> </ul>
4. Work with the Scottish Government to provide flexible and affordable childcare for working families on the lowest incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All eligible families benefited from access to 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) from August 2021. The opening of Duthie and Hazlehead Outdoor nurseries in March 2022 signalled the end of the ELC expansion programme and an evaluation has been considered by the Educational Operational Delivery Committee (EODC).</li> <li>The Education Service has welcomed the opportunity to use Scottish Government Grant funding to expand the provision of childcare to those identified as being most at risk of poverty through the "Summer in the City" programme. This will make registered childcare available to families most in need over the summer holiday period.</li> </ul>

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 over the year including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The successful delivery of 'Lift off and Grow' in partnership with Developing the Young Workforce North East for senior pupils in June 2022.</li> <li>Successful delivery of an exam diet for the first time in two years.</li> <li>Evaluation of the city campus has helped plan a more wide ranging ABZ Campus to be in place from June 2023. Delivery of the ABZ Campus programme will see a broader range of qualification pathways being available to all young people and closer alignment to growth sectors over the next 3 years.</li> <li>An improvement in the quality of grades in the senior phase.</li> <li>Development and launch of a skills framework from 3-18.</li> <li>4 schools are working in partnership with Wood Group as part of their Excelerate Programme and have benefited from study visits to Nashville and XP in Doncaster.</li> <li>Continued development of ABZ Works.</li> <li>Curriculum alignment in our secondary schools to enable closer partnership delivery of vocational courses.</li> <li>More effective transition planning leading to an increase in positive destinations.</li> <li>8% increase in the number of senior phase courses aligned with growth sectors and work is on-going to improve positive destinations.</li> </ul>
6. Explore how the successes of the Sistema project can be shared and spread across the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional weekly afterschool provision was delivered for all Secondary school age pupils at the community venue of Torry St Fittick's church, as well as delivery expanded to cover up to 2 nights for P5-P7s and 3 nights for Secondary school age and returning to nursery delivery at Walker Road.</li> </ul>

<p>7. Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School profiles have been refreshed to enable school leaders to more effectively identify and address 'the gap' in their school. This development is driving more effective targeting of resource.</li> <li>• In collaboration with the Customer function, the service has made 11,451 COVID Hardship Grants (now the Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments) available to families.</li> <li>• The service provided supermarket vouchers to parents/carers on low incomes when their children or young people were required to self-isolate. Vouchers were also provided during holiday periods for all families in receipt of free school meals due to low income and this is continuing. In the year to date, vouchers provided were equivalent to the value of 300,570 school meals. We estimate that a further 62,400 meal equivalent vouchers will be issued in the year, bringing the total to 362,970.</li> <li>• From August 2021 all curricular costs were removed, this included removing all costs for Music Instruction. The Music service is currently offering tuition to 1,821 learners across the city with a waiting list of 1,480 which shows an increase in demand for the service which is not unexpected. There are an additional 1,294 learners requesting tuition in instruments not currently available in their locality. These figures are being used to look at how allocations will be organised to ensure maximum uptake.</li> <li>• There is a sustained downward trend in the number of exclusion incidents over the past 3 years in Primary and Secondary and the service has successfully met its target. Attendance at school is critical to closing the attainment gap.</li> <li>• Education recovery funding was used to support the provision of Youth Work, Family Learning Workers and Money Advisors in schools. There is a growing evidence base on the impact of these resources which will be maintained through the provision of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding.</li> <li>• As all Money Advisors have been appointed, become more familiar with the scenarios facing families and as awareness of the service has grown the added value increases. The service costs around £13,000 a month to deliver and for March 2020 alone the Financial Inclusion Money Advisors can evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial Gains of £44,319.42</li> <li>- Assisted/Assisting 30 households with debt issues</li> <li>- Helping with total debts of £95,724.44</li> <li>- 49 households given full benefit checks</li> <li>- Assisted 10 households to claim benefits</li> <li>- Assisting 2 household to challenge being turned down for benefits</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<p>7. Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several hundred Ukrainian families were temporarily housed in the city just prior to the summer holiday period. The education service established and delivered summer hubs to ensure that children and young people had the opportunity to connect in a safe environment and play.</li> <li>• The events of the last two years have negatively impacted the poverty related attainment gap, with ACEL data evidencing that the gap increased over school session 20/21 in our primary schools, this is in keeping with international research that highlights that younger children have been more negatively impacted. Schools have worked hard to address this over school session 21/22 and Curriculum for Excellence levels have now broadly returned to pre-pandemic levels.</li> <li>• There is evidence of gradual improvement in the number of young people in quintile 1 achieving 5 or more qualifications at both SCQF Levels 5 and 6. There is also clear evidence that the percentage point difference between those in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 1 and 5 has steadily reduced but our progress is not as rapid as some other Local Authorities including our virtual comparators. There is a need to accelerate work planned to broaden the range of SCQF qualifications to ensure that the increased number of young people staying on in school have an appropriate range of learner pathways. This will be driven through our ABZ Campus programme.</li> </ul>
<p>8. Review of local adult protection arrangements and implement an improvement programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi agency Adult Support and Protection arrangements have been subject to an inspection by the Care Inspectorate, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) and Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) (February – April 2022). The report, which was published on 21st June 2022, was very positive. The main findings were that key processes were effective with areas for improvement. There were clear strengths supporting positive experiences and outcomes for adults at risk of harm, which collectively outweighed the areas for improvement. The partnership's strategic leadership for adult support and protection was found to be very effective, demonstrating major strengths supporting positive experiences and outcomes for adults at risk of harm.</li> <li>• An Improvement Plan is in place and overseen by the multi-agency Adult Protection Committee. The five priority areas identified for improvement as part of the inspection have been highlighted as such and strengthened in the Improvement Plan, albeit the partnership had already previously identified these as areas of focus.</li> </ul>
<p>9. Continue to promote diversion activities for youths and adults in our city with enhanced focused on our three locality areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mastrick Outdoor Hub continues to provide a safe space for young people to meet and take part in a range of diversionary activities. Work is ongoing to determine how this provision could be extended further.</li> <li>• Youth Workers are supporting volunteers at Northfield community centre's drop-in youth group for secondary school age pupils.</li> <li>• An evening club for Primary 6/7 pupils who attend Kirkhill and Abbotswell primaries has been set up.</li> <li>• Work is underway at Tillydrone to deliver the third Cruyff Court in the city.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction works for the Energy from Waste (EfW) facility, located at East Tullos is underway. Delivery of the facility is planned to be fully operational in winter 22/23.</li> <li>• Torry Heat Network Phase 1 will commence construction works to align with the delivery of the EfW plant.</li> </ul>
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## PLACE

Policy Statement Commitments	Update
1. Build up our existing strength in hydrogen technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued to develop and implement the Energy Transition Vision and Strategic Infrastructure Plan for the City.</li> <li>• Established a joint venture and agreed contract award with BP for Aberdeen H2 Hub.</li> <li>• Commenced a conversion plan from diesel to hydrogen for fleet in line with the Climate Change Plan.</li> <li>• UKs first Fuel Cell Electric Waste truck procured.</li> <li>• Promotion of green investment opportunities at COP26.</li> </ul>
2. Support efforts to develop the inward investment opportunities including Energetica corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites continue to be marketed by Invest Aberdeen.</li> <li>• Alignment with potential Freeport bid.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public and stakeholder consultation to identify the main issues to be addressed in the next Local Transport Strategy was carried out in October and November 2021. A review of the previous Local Transport Strategy and changes to the main policies, strategies, plans and projects at National, Regional and Local level was also completed. The main issues report is currently being drafted.</li> <li>• Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) scoping report completed and submitted.</li> <li>• The Regional Transport Strategy, from which the Local Transport Strategy will be informed, was adopted in November 2021.</li> </ul>
4. Cycle hire scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The procurement of bikes has faced delays due to the impact of COVID. The Council is awaiting confirmation of a date for when bikes will be shipped. Alternative solutions are being considered for the short-term to minimise the ongoing delay to the launch of the scheme.</li> </ul>

5. Continue to invest to resurface damaged roads and pavements throughout the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As at April 2022, £7.3 Million of the £10 Million additional capital investment into roads over 5 years has been delivered, with the remainder due to be spent during 2022/23.</li> </ul>
6. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2021/22 there were 692 affordable housing completions which is the highest number of affordable homes delivered in Aberdeen through the affordable housing supply programme.</li> <li>• This figure includes a further 216 homes at Wellheads and 126 properties purchased through the buy-back scheme.</li> <li>• Auchmill Road, Summerhill, Kaimhill, Cloverhill, Tillydrone, Kincorth are all on site with delivery of Auchmill Road and Summerhill expected in 2022/23.</li> <li>• Work is ongoing developing a Masterplan for Greenferns and Greenferns Landward sites for ACC social rent.</li> <li>• There is a strong development programme ongoing with Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners across the city which includes sites at North Anderson Drive, Donside, Persley Den and Stationfields in Cove.</li> </ul>



## COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS

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### **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 (LOIP) 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. 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

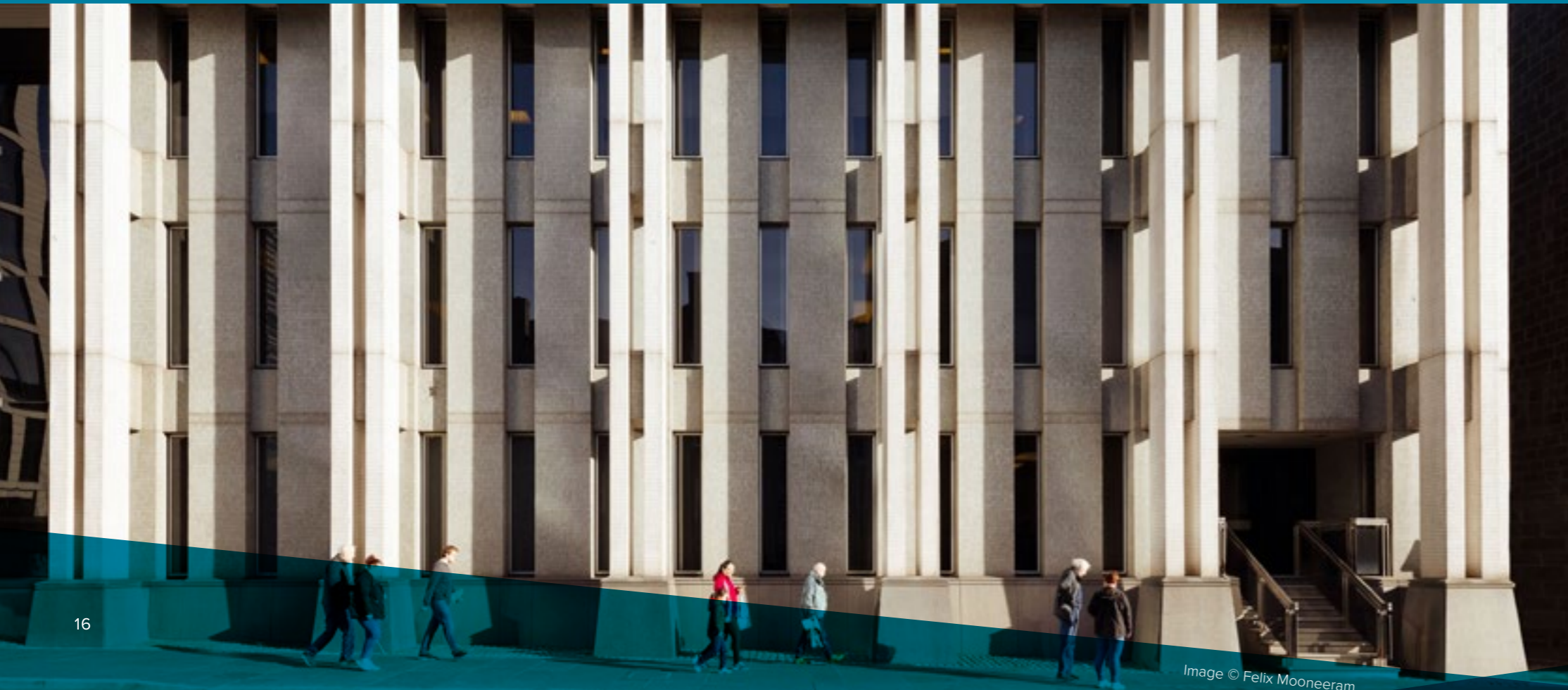


Image © Felix Mooneeram

# ECONOMY HIGHLIGHTS



**Finalists** in 3 categories at Go Awards Scotland **winning the Social Value Award** – City Region Deal Gigabyte Framework



**10** further **hydrogen buses** added to fleet



**138,836 Annual visitors** to the Art Gallery and museums



**42%** increase in young people participating in **foundation apprenticeships**



**338** vacancies advertised through Kickstart scheme, with **220 converting into placement starts**

## PROGRESS MADE DURING 2021/22

### DIVERSIFICATION OF THE ECONOMY INTO OTHER GROWTH SECTORS

Aberdeen City Council is focused on supporting diversification into new energy markets, and in particular work to support the Strategic Infrastructure Plan – Energy Transition and projects capitalising on offshore renewables and hydrogen. This is also supported by City Region Deal delivery of Oil and Gas Technology Centre (OGTC), and other innovation projects in that programme. In 2021/22 ETZ (Energy Transition Zone) Ltd was established, the ETZ Ltd is focused on supporting supply chain skills and capabilities, working in partnership with the local community and creating the Energy Transition Zone. The ETZ Ltd will be a location for the development of a net zero cluster to attract new investment and deliver net zero, focusing on floating offshore wind and other renewables including hydrogen.

The Energy Transition Fund (ETF) submission was confirmed with the Scottish Government to enable future phases of hydrogen development for Aberdeen City Council. 2021/22 saw the phased introduction of 10 further hydrogen buses, bringing the total fleet up to 25 and ACC launched the first hybrid refuse vehicle. ACC also had successful application for Green Growth Accelerator funding pilot phase and launched the 'Hydrogen is Here' city branding to promote the sector.

#### Support diversification of the city's tourism sector

The tourism priority for Aberdeen City Council is to optimise the returns from significant investment in assets that in turn will drive recovery and growth into Aberdeen. These include council investment in completed projects including P&J Live, Aberdeen Art Gallery; Music Hall; Provost Skene's House and Aberdeen Science Centre; fruition of current projects such as Union Terrace Gardens, and events that provide profile for the city, including the return of the Tour of Britain in September 2022. Specific priorities to plan for in 2022/23 include preparation for cruise arrivals in summer 2023, and to maximise the value of VisitScotland Expo in Aberdeen in April 2023.



Image © Felix Mooneeram

Working with partners in Visit Aberdeenshire and Visit Scotland, key markets for tourism were identified and targeted with regional, national and international marketing campaigns. As part of the ongoing COVID-recovery work the domestic market was a primary focus for 2021/22, with the foundations of the city's offer for international tourism and travel trade being laid with investment in a Tourism Officer post and Service Manager: Commercial Development within City Growth.

With the reopening of visitor venues over the past year, messaging had 'open for business' and 'ready to welcome you' at its core. Continued support through ACC direct funding and officer engagement for Culture Aberdeen, Aberdeen Inspired, Aberdeen Performing Arts ensured the reestablishment of the city's offer.

Provost Skene's House reopened following redevelopment in October 2021 and Aberdeen Art Gallery was recognised as Scottish Building of the Year and nominated for European Museum of the Year in 2021, adding to the value of the City's tourism portfolio.

Scottish Government funding has allowed for partnership working with Visit Scotland to focus on Aberdeen's cultural offering as part of city centre recovery plan. This activity has included marketing activity to promote Aberdeen Art Gallery and the Galloway Hoard exhibition (30.7.22-23.10.22), Aberdeen Maritime Museum and Provost's Skene's House. This has allowed us to target a market through channels we previously would not have had access to and promote Aberdeen as a must visit for a cultural weekend break. The campaign launched the 29 July 2022 and runs until September, where the results will then be evaluated. In addition, Visit Aberdeenshire also received funding and we have partnered with them to promote the city centre, with particular focus on the Art Gallery and the Galloway Hoard Exhibition.

Investment in the Aberdeen Art Gallery shop and café has been made, resulting in a larger footprint for both this has allowed us to continue to develop and grow our visitor numbers.

Longer term, the aspiration within the city centre masterplan, including development of the beach front and improvements at the heart of the city should make a visit to Aberdeen an even more attractive proposition.

### DEVELOPING THE TALENT AND FUTURE WORKFORCE

#### Commission new employability activity

Combined keyworker support and commissioned services continue to provide a broad offer. Commissioned services cover a wide range of provision targeted at different groups, and align with LOIP priorities. 123 employers were supported by the Council to access Kickstart, resulting in the advertising of 338 vacancies, with 220 of those converting into placement starts.

The Council employed 83 Kickstart interns, 13 of whom have gone on to secure permanent roles within the authority to date. The Waste and Recycling Team reported particular success in filling traditionally hard-to-fill roles and attracting young people into an ageing workforce.

A Local Employability Partnership has been formalised in line with Scottish Government funding conditions and a Delivery and Action Plan developed. A commissioning framework will be developed to meet demand as employability services are increasingly delegated to Councils by Scottish Government, with the final stage of No One Left Behind strategy to be rolled out next year.

Additional activity has been carried out through the £14.3m North East Economic Recovery and Skills Fund, for which the Council is the lead accountable body. An employer recruitment incentive scheme will be launched in summer, and a long-term unemployed scheme providing 115 paid placements in third and public sector is running.

### IMPROVING INVESTMENT INTO ABERDEEN AND ABERDEEN BUSINESSES

In 2021 Aberdeen City Council secured £20m from the UK Government Levelling Up Fund towards the redevelopment of the Aberdeen Market and former BHS retail unit and associated public realm works on Union Street as part of the City Centre Masterplan delivery. In 2022 ACC are working towards submitting an application for a further £20m towards the transformation project at Aberdeen Beachfront as part of the Beach Masterplan.

#### Aberdeen Harbour Expansion

Throughout the year work has continued on development of a Freeport bid to maximise commercial and economic opportunities from the expansion, a decision is expected in September 2022.



#### Business Gateway

The Business Gateway continues to support people considering starting up in business and established business to sustain and grow. Where appropriate the service liaises Scottish Enterprise, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Scottish Development International (SDI) and Opportunity North East to draw upon wider support.

Going forward into 22/23 a greater emphasis will be placed upon working with businesses and people in our most disadvantaged communities with a dedicated business adviser embedded in the areas.

### Support delivery of affordable housing

Delivery of Council Housing across three developer led sites is continuing, 985 units currently under construction and delivery of further council housing across four council led sites are at various stages of deliver (416 units). Consideration of their 'outstanding packages' next steps is underway to achieve best value.

### Invest Aberdeen

The Invest Aberdeen team continues to collaborate with a range of partners, including ETZ Ltd, Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA), Department for International Trade (DIT) and Scottish Development International (SDI), and other council services to develop a pipeline of opportunities. During the year the team cooperated in the development and publication of a NE Scotland H2 High Potential Opportunity statement. This sets out the area's ambitions and highlights projects seeking investment and is used by SDI and DIT field officers when they engage with potential investors.

Other development opportunities under development include the Energy Transition Zone, Low Carbon District Heat Connection, Council Domestic and Public Buildings – Energy Efficiency, CCUS at Ness Energy Waste Facility and Net Zero Retrofit, Maintenance and Training Facility.

### Leverage external funding to deliver Council economic priorities

In August 2022 Aberdeen City Council will submit an investment plan to unlock our indicative allocation for the period 2022-2025 for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Investment Plan will specify which of the 51 interventions available in Scotland are to be included as these need to be narrowed down to enable prioritisation of the funds. It is expected that ACC will be in a position to begin to spend these funds late in 2022 once the IP has been approved and a grant agreement signed between ACC and the UK Government.

## PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN OUR MOST DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

### Increasing the value of the Council's community benefits programme

Contractors continue to work to deliver community benefits across Aberdeen City and have achieved good outcomes.

[Aberdeen City Annual Procurement Report](#) provides a summary of the key performance indicators and highlights from the current reporting period.

### Community Learning and Development Services

Education recovery funding has secured additional youth work provision in local schools. This provision has extended the reach of the Youth Work team and increased the number of programmes being delivered in schools from 47 in 20/21 to 233 in 21/22.

There is considerable evidence of positive impacts of such provision on individual young people such as the increase from 17 to 465 vulnerable young people reporting they feel more confident, resilient and optimistic about the future following engagement with the Youth Work team. This provision will be maintained through use of Scottish Attainment Challenge and Family Wellbeing resource for school session 22/23.

Education recovery funding has also secured additional Family Learning resource. This has extended the reach of the Family Learning team and is ensuring that all communities across the city are able to access early support through a wider range and number of learning opportunities (169 in 20/21 to 285 in 21/22). This provision is being maintained over school session 22/23 and is thought to be critical to our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic as we move towards a model of Family Support.

The Healthy Minds team supported 102 participants with a diagnosed mental illness in the community and within the forensic unit at Cornhill Hospital. This amounted to 1,121 learner hours. Work is continuing to involve learners and stakeholders in future planning.

Lockdown and measures for reduced contact brought immense challenges for adult learning. Our reach with learners was impacted as our important face to face and small group work approach has been affected. We developed creative solutions and workers have mobilised themselves in other ways, including the development of digital and outdoor learning approaches to deliver their core work. As services open up the blended approach is continuing to have a positive impact.

Increasing numbers of adult learners report they are confident, resilient and optimistic for the future with the number, of those who engage with the service, reporting improved skills rising from 85% in 20/21 to 89% in 21/22.

A flexible approach is leading to swift and effective responses to emerging needs. Most recently, for example, Community Learning and Development (CLD) have not only taken a lead in work with partners to scale up ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) provision for refugees but have developed bespoke provision to meet wider learning needs

### Young People

Recognising the need to ensure that the curriculum; meets the needs of all young people and allows them to fulfil their potential, gives them an opportunity for a meaningful certificated pathway irrespective of intended future vocation, and taking account of the changing economic and industry landscape, secondary schools have been reviewing their senior phase offer. This is beginning to be evident in the individual school offer. As part of this, secondary schools have begun work on a major new initiative to overhaul the City Campus arrangements in favour of a new offer from 2023-24 – ABZ Campus. ABZ Campus will be a partnership approach to providing new growth sector focused courses across HNC, NQ, Foundation Apprenticeships and Employability options for young people across Aberdeen.

Attainment data evidences gradual improvement over time and a real time improvement when comparing current data with that of 18/19 (pre pandemic and different assessment methodologies). Officers anticipate greater improvement as the ABZ Campus officer is operational from June 2023.

The provision of Foundation Apprenticeships continues to rise with 135 young people participating in 21/22 compared to 95 in 20/21. There is clear evidence that those undertaking a Foundation Apprenticeship go on to secure a positive destination. Work based elements have been compromised due to the Public Health restrictions in place over session 21/22 and it is hoped this can be rectified for 22/23.

### Childcare Provision

The provision of childcare is being extended as part of the Summer in the City to ensure appropriate supports are in place for those most at risk of poverty. It is anticipated that this offer will gradually expand over time.

An increasing number of schools are offering informal breakfast club provision which has increased the number of available spaces from 1,249 last year to 1,530 this year. Over 40% of schools are now offering a service to meet the needs of their school community. This will be further extended over session 22/23. Almost all funded and non-funded private nursery provision has been maintained despite the considerable challenges of the last year and associated impacts of the expansion of early learning and childcare.

## 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



**20,051** bookable opportunities made through Summer (2021) and Easter (2022) of Play



Exclusions of care experienced young people **reduced by 86%** compared to 2020/21



**ABZ works** has had **4100 hits** since its launch in September 2021



Initial positive destinations have increased to **95.3%**, the **highest rate** ever recorded in the city



**11,541** COVID Hardship grants (now the Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments) **made available** to families

## PROGRESS MADE DURING 2021/22

### EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE PLACES

From August 2021 all three and four-year-old children and eligible 2-year olds, have been entitled to up to 1140 funded hours of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) per year. As a result of this far more eligible children now access provision.

Families can access up to 1140 funded hours of high quality ELC at a local authority nursery and/ or from a funded provider with a wide range of offers available to support individual family circumstances. On-going engagement with parents and carers suggests that the wide choice is appreciated and helping families secure provision appropriate to their needs. 38.7% of respondents (from a representative survey of parents and carers) suggested that they had more money/ disposable income as a positive impact on their family and 28.5% are now considering a return to work or study.



Established systems are in place to support and quality assure provisions. The most notable challenge facing Early Learning and Childcare settings over the past year has been the impact of reduced core staff due to staff requiring to self-isolate. This has impacted on the quality of provision due to unfamiliar adults supporting children and has reduced quality assurance capacity across the central team. There are signs that staffing is starting to become more stable (June '22).

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

All ACC ELC settings have at least one member of staff who is PEEP trained and settings have offered PEEP sessions where staffing has allowed. The universal roll out of PEEP has been impacted by the staffing shortages over the last year and many settings plan to begin delivery in session 22/23. As a result, we anticipate a substantial increase in PEEP sessions over school session 22/23.

A new ELC Delivery Plan, which takes account of feedback from stakeholders, was presented to Committee in June 2022 and will guide our work over the next two years. This will help drive a more extensive roll out of PEEP from approximately 50% to all Local Authority settings over session 22/23 now that staffing is starting to stabilise.

The success of the partnership approach to delivery at the Links Hub will be developed further over the coming year as we continue to strengthen the alignment between the universal services of health and education.

The Stronger Families Series (SFS) launched in August 2021 and provides focused learning to support the wellbeing needs of all. The Series has been shaped in collaboration with parents, head teachers, family practitioners and third sector partners.

347 parents have accessed support through either PEEP or the Stronger Family Series so far.

#### Supporting early speech, language and literacy

Excellence and Equity Practitioners have continued to support targeted ELC provisions however, at times this resource had to be redeployed to help maintain business continuity.

Discussion with health colleagues has guided our planning to roll out the use of the CIRCLE framework. Following the successful piloting of the approach last year, the approach has been included in the proposed

Education Service Plan for 22/23. It is thought that a focus on environmental factors will best support our children in the longer term across a number of developmental areas including early language and emotional regulation.

The pandemic impacted on primary "Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level" data for 20/21. Officers have monitored data closely over session 21/22 and expect that validated data will return to pre-pandemic levels.

### KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

The number of children on the Child Protection Register under the category of neglect was impacted by the COVID pandemic and lockdown measures. The closure of schools and work from home guidance did result in the level of professional oversight of children not being what it normally would be. While support measures were put in place to protect vulnerable children who were already known to services the limitations imposed by COVID did result in some supports not being as accessible to children, young people and families. The impact of this hidden harm is likely to become evident to agencies in the months/years ahead.

Given the continuing priority the Child Protection Committee has placed on the need to recognise and respond promptly to neglect, the Neglect multi-agency thematic group has been re-established. This ensures we are well placed to ensure learning from local and national reviews is fully incorporated into our ongoing workforce development programme and ensuring our practice guidance, systems and processes reflect best practice.

Data in relation to neglect is routinely reported to the Child Protection Committee ensuring variations in trends are responded to promptly.

Following the appointment to the Child Protection Committee's Learning and Development post we have reviewed the professional learning offer to staff across the partnership in relation to many of these child protection concerns/factors.

The partnership has undertaken an audit of child protection cases where disability was a factor. The invaluable learning from this audit is being used to inform and develop our Child Protection Improvement Programme. In particular, it has highlighted the need to ensure staff have the necessary skills to ensure the voice of the child is more clearly heard within an investigative process.

The regular data provided to the Child Protection Committee continues to highlight the nature of child protection concerns. This ensures the Child Protection Committee remains alert to changes in trends as well as emerging concerns.

Updated National Child Protection Guidance was published in September 2021. This reinforces the need for a strength-based approach to child protection practice, ensuring the child's voice and rights are at the heart of intervention.

Additionally, language around child protection has evolved to ensure it reduces stigma and promotes participation from families. "Write Right About Me" is a significant partnership improvement agenda to future-proof how we write about children and families. The number of families identified as not engaging with plans is significantly below the national average and highlights positively on our use of strength based practice. The Scottish Government anticipates that partnerships will have implemented the revised guidance by March 2023. The Child Protection Committee is driving forward the implementation of the National Guidance and is receiving regular updates on progress by agencies (individually and collectively).



The Promise (published Feb 2020) similarly highlights that planning for children should seek to build on family strengths to address aspects of concern. In addition, it promotes the use of trauma informed practice for all staff. The roll out of training in relation to trauma informed practice is ongoing and will be delivered at a level appropriate to roles. This will further equip the workforce to deliver support in a strength based manner.

Our local partnership secured funding to support the roll out of “Safe & Together” training to staff. Part of this includes upskilling a few staff to become trainers in this accredited programme ensuring its long term viability. This approach will ensure we have a workforce that recognises the impact of domestic abuse, including emotional abuse and coercive control, and how to effectively support and protect victims and children who are exposed to this form of abuse.

### Supporting children to remain in their community

Over the past two years the number of looked after children in Aberdeen City has reduced by circa 10%. This is above the national average.

The Promise reinforces that where it is safe for children to be cared by their family they must remain. Our data indicates that over the past two years the numbers of children and young people cared for in family or kin placements has remained stable and continues to be a priority for partners.

Ensuring brothers and sisters are placed together or in close proximity of each other as well as the impact of being placed outwith the city are drivers that support the need to develop supports that ensures more children remain within their family and local community.

Development of kinship supports has been enhanced to promote and sustain care by kin. Engagement with Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA)/Children’s Hearings Scotland (CHS) is ongoing to ensure closer alignment to support family based care but also ensuring that statutory measures are only utilised where necessary. In addition, planning is underway to develop enhanced supports for children on the edges of care within local schools.

The number and % of young people aged 16+ remaining in local authority care continues to increase.

Delivery of continuing care, which enables young people to remain in their care placement up to the age of 21, promotes their discharge from care at time appropriate to the needs of the young person.

Our data indicates that all young people aged 15 have an appropriate pathway plan. This ensures early planning for routes out of care at a point appropriate to the needs of the young person.

We have increasingly developed our Westburn Road facility to be a setting where agencies can have a presence making it easier for care experienced young people to access key supports in an environment they are familiar with and feel safe in. Specifically, a Housing Officer post is now part of the throughcare service and is positively contributing to planning and early resolution of tenancy issues.

Discussions remain ongoing with other agencies including employment and money advice services to have a presence within Westburn which will further enhance the support offer for care experienced young people.

## IMPROVING HEALTH AND REDUCING INEQUALITIES

Use of Mind of My Own (MOMO) app continues to grow for both young people in local authority care as well as staff across the partnership. This app enhances the ability of young people to express their views and contribute to their planning. It also allows the service to engage with young people around key issues including with health and wellbeing.

The Scottish Government in the past year has identified specific funding for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to bolster support to young people aged 16+ with care experience being one of the groups for whom this funding should be targeted. Engagement with care experienced young people has informed the use of this money to best meet their needs. It is, however, recognised that this remains an area where further improvement is needed.

### Fit Like Family Wellbeing Hubs

The Fit Like Family Wellbeing team was developed to offer early help to children, young people and their families to support emotional distress and early signs of mental health problems to improve overall wellbeing. The Hubs are a collaboration of Health, Education, Social Work, Community Learning and Development, Children 1st and Alcohol and Drug Partnership working together with families. The Fit Like Team has been operational for 18 months, together the team has developed an integrated whole family approach building on the family strengths with the purpose of preventing escalation and keeping children safe with their families where this is possible.

A “family first” approach means that the child is seen in the context of their whole family and support, practical and emotional, is offered to children and adults to build resilient, safer families. The emphasis is on trusting relationships that create safe spaces for children and families to address what’s at the heart of their difficulties and distress. This can often mean addressing children’s and adult’s trauma. The Fit Like multidisciplinary joined up approach means children and their key adults receive tailored, wrap around support.

In the first 5 months of operations The Fit Like Family wellbeing team received 230 Requests for Assistance. Of those requests 198 (86%) families went on to be offered direct help for family wellbeing support. 33 (14%) families were signposted to Universal/ Community supports or were currently engaged in multi-agency support plans with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and/or Social Work Services.

Of those 198 families, 123 (62%) have moved on from the Fit Like team and no longer requiring multi agency early help. 58 families have continued to engage in support throughout 2021-2022.

For the period 1-April 2021 – 30st March 2022 the Fit Like Family Wellbeing Team received 629 Request for Assistance of those requests 441 (70%) families went on to be offered direct help. 174 (28%) families were signposted to Universal/ Community supports or were currently engaged in multi-agency support plans with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and/or Social Work Services.

Of those 441 families, 144 (33%) have moved on from the Fit Like team no longer requiring multi agency early help.

Based on a sample of 105 families whose cases were closed to the Fit Like family Wellbeing Team:

- 77% of families reported that there was improvement following engagement, with 50% fully reaching the goals that they set out to achieve.
- 95% of families engaged with the Fit Like team have not identified a need that would require mental health treatment for a mental health disorder from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
- 95% have not required an onward referral to children’s social work.

## Education

We have recently launched the ACC Health & Wellbeing site which provides a consistent resource for supporting the health and wellbeing curriculum. Signposting to wellbeing resources continue to be provided through the parent and carer newsletter on a monthly basis, the parent hub and the Educational Psychology hub. An increase in partnership working and focus on PEPAS (Physical Education, Physical Activity & Sport) is taking place.

Lets in schools and learning centres were limited to the use of outdoor spaces only from August 2020 to April 2022, due to COVID restrictions. Indoor lets resumed on 18th April 2022. All schools continue to use Pupil Equity Funding to prioritise literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. A comprehensive evaluation of the wellbeing of learners will be presented to Committee in September.

The Summer of Play programmes over the Summer (2021) and Easter (2022) holidays provided free holiday activities, such as sports camps, music, art, and outdoor activities in order to improve the wellbeing of children and young people over the summer and easter holiday periods. 20,051 bookable opportunities were made available through the Summer (2021) and Easter (2022) of Play.

Considerable work has been undertaken to support positive wellbeing in schools, this continues to be a key focus across all schools. All schools engaged with the SHINE survey to help us assess and plan how best to continue to meet the needs of our children and young people at both school and Local Authority level.

## SUPPORTING CARE EXPERIENCED AND LOOKED AFTER 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.*

There have been significant staffing issues in relation to the MCR Pathways programme which have impacted on the number of young people the programme has been able to support this academic session. 84 young people are being supported in 21/22 compared to 112 in 20/21.

The target set for engagement of those in the MCR Group 1 (care experienced) category by June 2022 was 90%. The current data shows that for June 2022 86% of those young people who are available\* to take part in the programme are engaging.

The Sport Aberdeen Supported Physical Activity for Care Experienced (SPACE) programme supports care experienced young people more widely in addition to those who have a bespoke education support pathway and an increasing number of young people are benefiting from the programme.

Cohorts of care experienced learners change significantly and tend to be small in number. As a result it is very difficult to draw firm conclusions from trend data. Different approaches to supporting those who are Looked After and on the edge of care will be explored through two pilots operating across two Associated Schools Groups from August 2022 as we work to implement The Promise. This will help build on the positive reduction in the number of exclusions in this group and focus on providing wider family support. Exclusions of care experienced young people dropped to 27 in 21/22 (correct at the time of writing in June '22) from 421 in 19/20 and 194 in 20/21.



## IMPROVING PATHWAYS AND UNDERSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

A reduction in the attainment gap is evident although there is still more to be done. The relative size of some secondary schools hampers their ability to offer a sufficiently broad range of pathways. This is being addressed through the city wide development of ABZ Campus with the first change in June '23 likely to see a further 23 courses on offer across the city. This will be further developed through a locality model in phase 2 of the programme. The programme focusses on the needs of individual groups including those who are looked after and with additional support needs.

By working in collaboration with the Integration Joint Board, we will fund six places on Project Search for session 22/23 to ensure that young people with complex needs are able to access suitable pathways into employment.

ABZ Works was launched successfully in September 2021, the site outlines the range of pathways available into growth sectors.



All schools have engaged with families to clarify pathways and young people and families have also benefited from Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) events to highlight potential routes for young people. A new process was established to identify young people in need of more intensive support to secure a positive destination. This approach has broadened the range of partners and approaches used.

## REDUCING OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR

The number of young people charged with an offence has increased from 777 in 2020/21 to 1120 in 2021/22, the period 2020/21 included the COVID lockdowns and, therefore, the increase in the number of young people accruing charges was expected over the last year as children and young people returned to education and communities. The numbers for this period are similar to those pre-pandemic.

Work is currently ongoing to maximise the number of children who receive an Early and Effective Intervention (EEI) disposal. A short life working group is currently developing local processes and guidance on EEI. The aim of the guidance is to ensure that all relevant parties understand the EEI process in the city, who is eligible and maximising children being diverted from formal justice processes.

We have seen an increase in joint referrals in the period 2021/22 (91 compared to 57 in 2020/21) however, numbers of young people subject to Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO) on offending grounds remain very low. A check on 11/07/2022 showed there were three young people in this category. Of the offence referrals received by the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) very few progress to a hearing on offence grounds.. In the period April 2021 – June 2021 76 offence referrals were received by SCRA for 61 children only 3 of these referrals progressed to a hearing.

There is the presumption that children jointly reported will be held by the reporter and we continue to see this being the case. Workforce development was undertaken late 2021/early 2022 on joint reports with a focus on outcomes for 16/17 year old who were more likely to be held by Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS). This has seen a reduction in 16/17 year olds jointly reported to COPFS/SCRA being retained, as was the intention of the workforce development.

As well as Early and Effective Intervention (EEI), we are also focused on delivering effective interventions in targeted areas to reduce instances of anti-social behaviour. There are currently two improvement projects ongoing through the LOIP charter under SO9 addressing Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) – “increase by 50% the number of 10 to 16 year olds in target areas of the city who access youth community activity by 2023” and “reduce instances of public space youth anti-social behaviour as a result of appropriate and effective interventions in targeted areas by 10% by 2022.”

## 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

## PEOPLE (ADULTS) HIGHLIGHTS



**150 staff members** trained in domestic-violence informed family practice



Average homeless journey has **reduced by 38 days**



**692** affordable housing completions



**12% decrease** in those presenting as homeless which repeat within 12-month period



**3.7% decrease** in homeless applications



## PROGRESS MADE DURING 2021/22

### REDUCING OFFENDING AND CONVICTIONS

#### Youth Work

Mastrick Outdoor Hub provides a safe space for young people to meet and take part in a range of diversionary activities. The Hub continues to have a positive impact on reducing antisocial behaviour in the area. As an offshoot of the Hub, a youth group has been set up in Mastrick Community Centre and is supported by ACC Youth Workers. Work is ongoing to determine how this provision could be extended further.

Youth Workers are supporting the volunteers at Northfield community centre who have set up a drop-in youth group for secondary school age pupils. The popularity of the drop-in has led to it now running 2 nights per week.

An evening club for Primary 6/7 pupils who attend Kirkhill and Abbotswell primaries has been set up to improve the offer to children and young people living in this neighbourhood. The club is supported by Youth Workers and takes place in Kincorth community centre.

#### Early Intervention and Prevention from Drugs and Alcohol Misuse

In the second year of the Alcohol and Drug Partnership Young People's Wellbeing Hub programme, we have continued to focus on prevention and early intervention. A holistic approach was implemented to promote health and well-being directing supports to various areas of young people's lives beyond just a direct focus on substance use and harm reduction. As a result of our relational approach, young people have been supported to reduce their level of use, improve their knowledge of the long-term health risks and make informed decisions, but also look at other areas of their lives that impact their choices. For some, this has included exploring relationships, looking at family connections and friendships, discussing sexuality and sexual relationships. For others, mental health has been the main focus, devising coping strategies for anxiety and dealing with the pressures of exams and social situations. We have supported young people to think positively about their futures, helping them achieve their academic goals and plan their next steps.

In total, 56 young people have been referred from across Aberdeen to the Alcohol and Drug Partnership Service. 27 young people are now closed to the service, 28 are open cases and 1 person is waiting for allocation to a Wellbeing Coach. Most young people were referred through the Wellbeing Hub programme (37- 66%), 5 young people (9%) were referred through Assertive Outreach Service, 12 young people were referred directly through Foyer or Alcohol and Drugs Action (ADA) (21%) and 2 young people were referred through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) (4%).



Substances being used and other issues identified at point of referral

- 30% of young people reported no substance use
- 70% of young people reported substance use, of which 38% reported poly substance use (including alcohol)

Alcohol is the most common substance being used at point of referral this was reported by 36% of young people with the next most reported substance at point of referral being cannabis, this was reported by 34% of young people referred. The main other issue continuing to be identified by young people at point of referral is concerns or difficulties around their mental health (59%). Other difficulties reported were parental substance use, non-fatal overdose, and concerns around education. Often more than one issue could be identified.

#### Domestic Abuse Staff Awareness

The Safe & Together Model aims to help change the conversation about how we work with families impacted by domestic abuse perpetrators' behaviours. It is an internationally recognised suite of tools and interventions designed to help child welfare professionals become domestic abuse-informed. Continuously refined through years of experience of implementing the model globally this evidence-based practice can help improve competencies and cross-system collaboration. The Safe & Together Model, as a systems change framework, offers language, thinking and practices that help increase accountability for perpetrators as parents, reduce victim blaming and improve outcomes for children and families. This child-centred model derives its name from the concept that children are best served when we can work toward keeping them safe and together with the non-offending parent - the adult domestic abuse survivor. The Safe & Together Model provides a framework for partnering with domestic abuse survivors and intervening with domestic abuse perpetrators in order to enhance the safety and wellbeing of children.

Funding for Safe and Together Training was awarded to Aberdeen City Council in October 2021 from the Delivering Equally Safe Fund. This has allowed us to train up to 150 staff members on domestic-violence informed family practice. 110 staff undertook Safe and Together Overview training in February and March, with 40 staff currently in the process of undertaking the Safe and Together Core E-Learning training and a further 5 staff members from Children and Families Social Work and Justice Social Work due to undertake Safe and Together Certified Trainer Course in September this year, allowing us to train staff further on Safe and Together Core and Overview training.



A Domestic Abuse Awareness Raising Tool has also been added to ACC Learn in June 2022, to date 65 staff have completed this. The intention is to make this mandatory training in as many services/teams as possible.

In June 2022, 18 staff have undergone an in-depth Train the Trainer. This includes staff from Housing, Libraries, Social Work, Family Learning and People and Organisational Development. This will allow trained staff to deliver further training to colleagues and a further 20 staff volunteered to undergo further training to become Domestic Abuse Champions. Domestic Abuse Champions will provide training, guidance and advice to their colleagues, teams and services where necessary and appropriate.

As well as the training to staff we have also held 3 awareness sessions with students and young people between October and March. Across all sessions, an average of 68% of students at the end of the session reported an increased awareness of local support services. Since October 2021, when our information services commenced, we have seen an increase each month in the number of young people accessing domestic abuse support with a high of 30 in March 2022. In the last 6 months there has also been an increase in the number of young people receiving support for domestic abuse (and an increase across all age groups) as well as increase in reporting to Police.

#### HOUSING ACCESS AND SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE AND DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE

Aberdeen City Council continued to support households experiencing homelessness during 2021/22. This year greater improvements were seen as services recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The time that a household experienced homelessness in Aberdeen reduced from 143 days to 105 days. This is the key performance indicator of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and demonstrates the overall service improvements.

There was not a large decrease in the number of people requiring homelessness assistance, this reduced from 1464 applications to 1410. At the same time a key target of reducing the number of repeat homelessness presentation was met, with only 3.9% of homeless presentations coming from this group, down from 49 households to 43.

The Private Sector Landlord scheme, whereby the Council rented from other Landlords to provide additional temporary accommodation stock, has now completely closed, with the last property handed back to its landlords.

This has been achieved while continuing to reduce the overall stock of temporary accommodation and changing the type of accommodation that is offered to people experiencing homelessness.

There is now only one modern hostel at 80 West North Street which provides self-contained en-suite accommodation, and the rest of our temporary accommodation is made up of temporary furnished flats in our communities. The overall stock reduced from 473 units on the 31 March 2021 to 395 on 31 March 2022.

The Rapid Rehousing approach aims to reduce the gaps between the demand of new homeless applicants and the supply of homes we have across the city to fulfil our duties to them. Over the last year we were again able to reduce this gap by a ratio of 7%. The number of households we had a duty to rehouse was 240 on 31 March 2022 down from 340 at the same point in 2021.



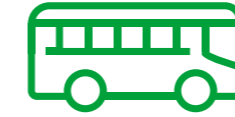
# PLACE

## 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



**£12 million** awarded to ACC from Scottish Government to support and deliver the **bus priority infrastructure**



**LEZ boundary approved** by Scottish Ministers



**7 Green Flags** awarded



**Over 20,000** trees planted



**Go ABZ** discover function launched in December 2021 with **22 trail guides** to encourage people to explore the city

## REDUCING EMISSIONS AND ADAPTING TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

### Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap

A refresh of Aberdeen Adapts: Climate Adaptation Framework was approved by Council in February 2022. This has aligned the approach for adaptation with the net zero approach for Aberdeen, picking up on mitigation and adaptation synergies, co-benefits and interdependencies.

In February 2022, Council approved a [Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap](#), a strategic route map which sets out a journey for the city of Aberdeen to get to Net Zero by 2045. It is accompanied by 6 enabling strategies: [Buildings and Heat](#), [Mobility](#), [Energy Supply](#), [Circular Economy](#), [Natural Environment](#) and [Empowerment](#). These documents were co-created in partnership, with direction through a Leadership Board, developed through a Net Zero Delivery Unit and will be co-delivered. Governance is composed of representatives from public, private and community sectors, recognising the cross cutting and interdependent climate challenges faced and indicating commitment to develop solutions. Each of the 6 enabling strategies was developed by a different lead organisation, gaining from their expertise and local insights.

### Council Climate Change Plan

This was the first year of implementation of the Council Climate Change Plan approved in March 2021 alongside a Project Register of over 100 emission reduction and adaptation actions for Council assets and operations. Key actions progressed included:

- Project Doric housing retrofit initiative.
- Completion of new Council homes at Wellheads, built to high levels of energy efficiency with connection to combined heat and power plant; and construction commenced of further Council homes with building to Gold Standard.
- Expansion of Torry Heat Network, with work commenced to connect to the Energy from Waste Plant.
- Replacement primary school at Milltimber.
- Climate Change/ environment is now embedded in the Council Policy and Committee Report template and guidance.
- Climate risks are embedded across the risk management process.
- An overall Council carbon budget has been approved and is being rolled out on a phased basis.
- A Green Workplace section of the staff intranet has been established.
- Senior Managers and elected Members Carbon Literacy Training sessions commenced.

### Reduce road congestion to improve air quality and reduce emissions

Following 2 rounds of public and stakeholder engagement and the conclusion of the formal objection period, Low Emission Zone (LEZ) plans were submitted to Scottish Ministers in early 2022. Following the approval from Scottish Ministers in May, Aberdeen City Council has introduced a LEZ in Aberdeen City Centre from 30th May 2022 with a 'grace' period until May 2024 before enforcement starts.

The LEZ has been introduced to address dangerous levels of air pollution in the city centre, mainly nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), which is caused by road traffic. The Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Where an exceedance is considered likely the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of the objectives. Aberdeen City currently has 3 AQMAs (City Centre, Anderson Drive and Wellington Road). The aim of the LEZ is to reduce pollutant levels in the city centre to such an extent the city centre AQMA can be revoked. The [Annual Progress Report \(APR\)](#) summarises the work being undertaken by Aberdeen City to improve air quality and any progress that has been made.

## DEVELOPING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

### Development Plan

The development plan currently consists of the Strategic Development Plan and Local Development Plan.

The purpose of the development plan is to set the framework for new developments, and planning applications are assessed against the provisions (land allocations and policies) of the development plan.

The 'Aberdeen Local Development Plan – Proposed Plan 2020' has reached the last stage in its review process and was submitted to the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division of the Scottish Government in July 2021. After the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division reviewed the level of engagement and participation carried out and completed on the 'Aberdeen Local Development Plan – Proposed Plan 2020', the Examination in Public commenced on 05 January 2022.

### Open Space

As part of the Aberdeen City Open Space Audit, a public consultation was carried out in February and March 2022. This consultation asked members of the public that live, work, or visit Aberdeen to provide their opinions on open spaces within the city. The consultation was carried out in two parts, one of which sought the general views on open spaces across the city, and the second which allowed users to select open spaces which are important to them from an online map and give feedback on specific spaces. The consultation which closed on the 20th March received a total of 1,363 responses and will add community value to the audit. Work is now ongoing to analyse these responses.

In conjunction with Nestrans, a Core Path Network Survey has been undertaken to assess the Core Paths across the City. When the survey and report is complete this will help inform priorities for path improvements and provide baseline information to feed into a future Core Paths Plan Review.

Aberdeen's Habitat Mapping has been updated and is now available on the internal Geographic Information System. This means we have access to the most up-to-date habitat / biodiversity data to best inform decision making.



Green Times is a quarterly digital magazine showcasing the latest environmental news such as volunteering, funding, and learning opportunities across Aberdeen City. Green Times subscription has increased by 3% in the previous year to 3,511 subscribers in total. Article submissions are provided by various community and friends of groups, schools, council services, partner organisations and more.

### Waste and Recycling

There has been a slight reduction in waste arisings since 2020, it is not clear what the reason for this is, however, COVID has had an impact on waste arisings nationally and this potentially may be the initial spike that we saw in waste arisings beginning to settle as the pandemic eases and people's activities return to a more pre-COVID position.

Improved markets for refuse derived fuel offtake have meant that a higher tonnage of material was diverted from landfill in 2021 and sent for energy from waste instead, this will have resulted in a positive carbon impact, however, this is calculated by SEPA and the data is not yet available but we expect an improvement on the 2020 figure.

The Council measures a number of internal waste streams as part of the annual Climate Change return submitted for Scottish Government. The 2020/21 return was approved in November 2021 and includes data on mixed recycling (264.9 tonnes), glass recycling (1 tonne), food composting (204.27 tonnes), waste electronic and electrical equipment recycling (3.5 tonnes) and reuse (2 tonnes), paper recycling (26 tonnes), general waste 3R schools (136.4 tonnes). Internal waste data is still being collated for 2021/22. As the above data does not reflect all Council waste streams, work has also commenced on a review of the Council internal waste baseline to determine where additional waste streams and data can be brought into this process. This will be progressed in 2022/23.

Funding was secured in early 2022 to upgrade the existing re-use facility at Hazlehead Recycling Centre and open a new, on-site shop meaning local people now have direct access to donated goods. This will reduce the need to transport materials elsewhere and encourage more people to get involved. Participation in re-use dropped during 2021 due to challenges diverting the material to a partner for re-use, these issues were related to the pandemic. However, the new re-use shop and associated opportunities should see figures improve. Further work is underway to review the bulky uplift collection service with a view to recovering more items from that also. Additional resource has also been secured to assist with communication and promotion of waste and recycling services. This has allowed enhanced communications campaigns to be developed to further encourage householders to recycle more.



### Improving Resilience to Flooding

The city has been divided into catchment areas and Surface Water Management Plans are being developed in partnership with SEPA and Scottish Water. ACC contributed to and commented on the North East Flood Risk Management Plans which were published by SEPA in December 2021. We are now working on Local Flood Risk Management Plans to be published in December 2022.

A joint project for renaturalisation of the Denburn is being carried out with SEPA, a morphology study and hydraulic modelling have been completed. Sensors and water level gauges have been installed in the Peterculter area and along the Denburn and a platform is being developed to enable public access to the data. Signs have been installed at all priority trash screens with contact details for reporting blockages or damage. A joint project with Scottish Water is also ongoing for the Merchant Quarter area.

A pilot project is being developed between ACC, Scottish Water and SEPA as part of their Sustainable Growth Agreement to assist with the vision to “drive innovation in managing rainwater and wastewater drainage in ways which can significantly reduce flows to the combined sewer, increase resilience and contribute to place”.

### Aberdeen City Climate Change Conference for Young People

Session 2021/22 saw the establishment of the first ever Aberdeen City Climate Change conference for young people. Young people from across the city, under the stewardship of their elected Pupil Climate Change President, explored a range of issues associated with our work to achieve Net Zero. The establishment of a Climate Change Pupil Group comprising young people from all secondary schools will enable our young people to directly inform the decision making of the Council to ensure that decisions take account of what matters to young people most.

### Tree Planting

In 2021/22 we worked in partnership with communities, including schools and businesses, to plant trees across Aberdeen. Our community tree planting saw over 20,000 trees planted, including 2500 trees in Seaton (supported by Northstar Shipping), 7000+ trees on Riverside Drive, Dyce and 8000+ trees at Fernielea. The main species planted include Scots Pine, Hazel, Holly, Norway Spruce, Sycamore, Beech, Blackthorn, Larch, Oak, Alder and Rowan.

More than 500 street trees were also planted, which brings much needed greenery to our urban areas. We have planted more trees in the last year than we have for many years which was accomplished with the help of the local communities who assisted us planting the trees.

There are also other tree planting initiatives across the city:

### Queen's Green Canopy Champion City

Thousands of trees have been planted in Aberdeen as part of a nation-wide initiative to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

The Queen's Green Canopy is a unique tree planting initiative which invites people from across the United Kingdom to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee' to create a legacy in honour of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and Aberdeen has been selected as one of the initiative's Champion Cities. The Champion City programme has been launched to celebrate some of the nation's outstanding cities which have trees as a central part of their plans for green spaces.

Being a Champion City is a great honour as we are one of only 20 cities across the whole of the UK to be awarded this.

In Aberdeen, there has been a programme of tree planting throughout the 21/22 season which includes:

- Planting up Fernielea open space with 8,000 trees and shrubs. Our Queens Green Canopy premier site and launch. Very successful consultation undertaken in March which saw overwhelming support for planting trees in the area. Planting completed early April 2022.
- Street tree planting for 2021/22 aligned to Queen's Green Canopy. 500 street trees planted across city. Planting has been ongoing since January and completed in April 2022.
- 70 oak trees have been made available to our schools and community groups for planting. Good response with 40 groups already signed up and planted.
- All our formal parks (Duthie Park, Hazlehead Park, Victoria Park etc) have planted a Queen's Green Canopy tree.
- Queen's Green Canopy as very much a headline in our Beautiful Scotland campaign for 2022. To be included throughout tour and campaign.
- Theme for our School Garden Competition is Queens Jubilee. Excellent response from schools across Aberdeen with winners selected from Cornhill, Loirston and Quarryhill. Beds to be planted in May.
- Clean Up Aberdeen to be linked ie clean up our woodlands. To be included through 2022 campaign. Specific woodland clean up event for later in 2022.
- Queen's Green Canopy aligned as part of our tree planting programme to Aberdeen City Council's Climate Plan and Spaces for Nature work. Work has already started on this.
- We are to launch our own tree nursery at Hazlehead in 2022. Growing our own Queen's Green Canopy trees for years to come!
- We aim to plant a legacy tree at Hazlehead Park later in 2022 as part of the Queens Jubilee celebration.

Further initiatives and projects are planned for the 2022/23 season. Further information on The Queen's Green Canopy is available at the [The Queen's Green Canopy webpage](https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/outcomes-acc).

### Woodside Wee Forest

The first Wee Forest has been planted in Aberdeen thanks to the joint efforts of Aberdeen City Council's Environmental Services team, NatureScot, and pupils and staff of Woodside Primary School.

The Woodside Wee Forest will join a group of 20 such forests across Scotland which are being planted.

Led by NatureScot, the programme aims to give people the opportunity to help tackle the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss by creating and caring for their own forest in their own neighbourhood.

To create each forest, around 600 native trees will be planted by "Wee Foresters" in an area the size of a tennis court. Volunteer keeper teams will look after the forests over the long term and schools will use the forests for outdoor learning.

The 600 plants, which include alder, cherry, Scots pine, crab apple, holly, juniper, elder, willow, oak, rowan, and hazel trees along with dog roses, broom, gorse, blaeberry, heather, hawthorn, and blackthorn, have been planted by staff and pupils in a grassy area across Clifton Road from the school with help from the City Council's Countryside Rangers.

Pupils contributed many fantastic designs for the project and the overall winner demonstrated excellent design principals which will fit the Wee Forest ideals.

The trees, shrubs, and wildflowers will start small but will grow into a beautiful place for nature and people in the Woodside area.

#### Woodside Primary School created a fantastic film to accompany the launch of the wee Forest.

This is a fantastic project, and it is thanks to the efforts of everyone involved that generations to come will enjoy the benefits of these native trees which have been planted in this green space.

Looking ahead to 2023, we're hoping to increase the number of trees planted again and are looking into grant funding to support this.



### PROMOTING GREENSPACE AND PLAYING AREAS

#### Royal Horticultural Society Community Awards 2021

Aberdeen received the top award 'Outstanding' in the Green Solution category for our Working Wetlands, Working with Wildlife & Nature submission, creating more green space for nature.

We also received the 'Achievement' Award for Craster, in the Nourishing Your Community Awards. This project is working with schools to grow their own food. The awards link to the Council's green space / food growing ambitions and show the service to be on the right track locally and nationally.



### 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 2021.

- 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!

It is a tremendous achievement to be awarded Green Flags. There have been obvious challenges these last two years, 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.

#### Keep Scotland Beautiful - Beautiful Scotland

Aberdeen's campaign, Aberdeen Communities Together is a 365-day campaign involving a wide range of people from within local communities. The overall aim is to ensure that the communities come together with the goal of enhancing their surroundings and creating a better environment.

We include all the inspiring and fantastic work done across the city by both our own staff and the many in bloom partners and volunteers.

Aberdeen won a Gold Medal for the city but more significantly the service also won the Wright Award for Sustainability. This is for our work on wetlands, woodlands and wildlife. All this work aligns to the ACC Climate Plan.

In addition to running our own campaign, we will also support in every way we can the in-bloom community groups that run their own campaigns, i.e. Cove, Bucksburn, Culter and Powis.

As part of the Beautiful Scotland, It's Your Neighbourhood initiative, Environmental Services supports many community groups and volunteers in their community green space / environmental projects. Aberdeen continues to lead the way in this initiative, and we had 28 It's Your Neighbourhood groups involved in 21/22. More than any other Scottish council.

Across the city our work with community partnerships continue to grow. The service now has more than 150 collaborations in place including volunteers, communities, businesses, schools, third sector organisations and companies. Thousands of volunteer hours spent in Aberdeen's parks and green spaces.

### Keep Scotland Beautiful Beach Awards 2021

2021 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.



### Clean Up Aberdeen 2021

Clean Up Aberdeen is part of Keep Scotland Beautiful's national mass-engagement campaign Clean Up Scotland.

Clean Up Scotland aims to involve one million people in action against litter and mess. It is a national coalition of organisations and people from all places and back grounds who want Scotland to shine and work towards making Scotland the cleanest country in Europe.

Clean Up Aberdeen continues to be a success. 2021 saw a record number of clean ups, 496, completed with over 2000 volunteers involved.

Since January 2021, 450 litter picking tongs have been distributed to our brilliant clean up champions. These have been given to individuals and their friends, families and small groups, exercise groups, community centres, child minders, schools, and businesses. We now have more individual volunteers helping to keep the city clean than ever before.

Aberdeen City Council is fully committed to supporting both the local and national campaigns.

## ENCOURAGING ACTIVE TRAVEL

### Active Travel

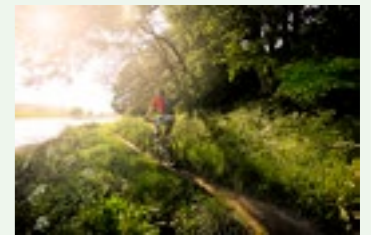
Implementation of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan was paused while temporary Spaces for People (SfP) measures were in place in the city centre to enable safe physical distancing during the pandemic. A number of these measures have now been removed and work is ongoing as part of the City Centre Masterplan to design and implement preferred permanent public realm improvements for Union Street Central and surrounding streets, which are likely to have significant benefits for people walking, wheeling and cycling. Options for improvements to East and West Union Street have also been developed and will be subject to consultation prior to a preferred option being recommended to elected Members for consideration.

A number of multimodal transport corridor studies are underway, looking at opportunities for improving walking and cycling connections on key corridors in and around the city.

The City Voice survey 2021 was carried out between August and September 2021 and asked a panel of respondents questions about various aspects of Aberdeen, including travel. It is also opened up to the public more widely. The total number of questionnaires received was 549. Further questions were asked in 2021 compared with 2020 to better understand travel behaviour.

The Hands Up Survey Scotland (HUSS) was carried out in September 2021 and asks school children about their typical travel to school. This is carried out annually.

The Walking and Cycling index (WACI) information includes local walking and cycling data, modelling and an independent survey of 1,313 residents aged 16 or above in Aberdeen. The survey was conducted from June to August 2021 following COVID-19 travel restrictions across the UK being lifted. This was undertaken to better understand travel behaviour, barriers to active travel and perception of residents in Aberdeen to active travel. It will be carried out every 2 years. 2021 was the first year Aberdeen had been able to have a WACI.

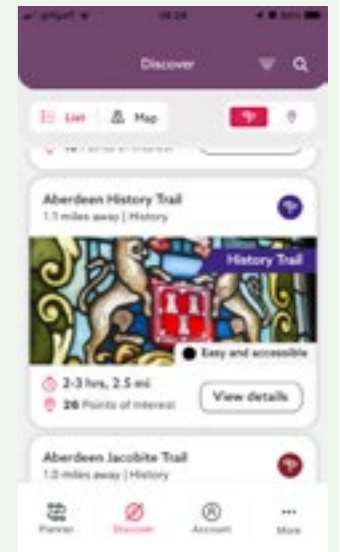


An I-Bike Officer – funded externally, employed by Sustrans, but imbedded within Aberdeen City Council – continued to work with school pupils in the Harlaw Academy cluster comprising of Harlaw Academy and feeder primary schools as well as supporting the Aberdeen Grammar School cluster. The role involves promoting active travel and equipping children with the necessary skills to feel confident in walking, wheeling and cycling. A further I-Bike officer, similarly funded, has recently been appointed to work with adults in a similar way to on-going work with school children and young adults.

### GoABZ App

The **GoABZ app** is the Council's Journey Planning App, it is a journey planning tool that adds layers of super-local, real time data and transport information for a more accurate and insightful Journey Planning experience. The idea is to provide information about different modes of transport and how you can use them to get from one point to another.

The GoABZ Discover function is a spin-off, accessed via the main app, which was launched in December 2021. The GoABZ Discover function helps to make walking more attractive and user friendly and encourages people to explore the city. It contains 22 trail guides covering many historical and natural gems around the city. The family-friendly guides and maps, are designed to encourage people to walk around our beautiful and historic city and discover – or rediscover – different aspects of the city. People can explore the city's highlights with more than 700 points of interest and as a smart travel planner, GoABZ can also help people get to and from the trails.



Items in the new trail guides include the remains of a motte and bailey castle, a pair of whale jaw bones in a park, where the author Nan Shepherd lived, and the whaling ship origins of the Rob Roy statue at Peterculter. Other items featured are Rubislaw Quarry which is one of the largest man-made holes in Europe, why Aberdeen became known as one of the worst places in the country for prosecuting Quakers (in the 1670s, just about every male adult Quaker was imprisoned at some point), and 4,000-year-old Bronze Age burial cairns.



## HOW WE DO OUR BUSINESS

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### CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Alignment of strategic plans for future customer services with digital opportunities and our use of data.
- Targeted improvement activity in key service areas to drive customer centricity aligned with the We Care Charter.
- Implemented integrated access approach with Housing Management and Police Scotland to streamline access to services and enhance partnership working.
- Embedded services provided in response to the pandemic into core service delivery model to support customers welfare and emotional needs.
- Service design approach adopted in cross functional redesigns which supported revised transformation blueprint and approach also embedded within commissioning cycle.
- Further digital service delivery and content development of chatbot to support a wider range of online service delivery.
- Continued work with services to improve the quality and speed of responses to customers.
- Focused and timely updates to website throughout the pandemic to support customer access to services and effective signposting.

### GOVERNANCE

- The implementation of effective civil emergency arrangements ensuring appropriate decision making was maintained during the pandemic to protect members, staff and customers.
- Further development of the Council's Risk Management Framework including the first review of the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.
- Completion of the 2020/21 Audited Accounts by June 2021.
- Review of Community Planning Aberdeen Membership, Leadership and Partner Representation.
- Completion of the Best Value Assurance process noting strong, effective and well-established governance arrangements receiving external recognition.
- Re-assessment of the Council's CIPFA Governance Mark of Excellence accreditation.
- Approval of proposals for creation of a joint venture to deliver the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub to contribute to the delivery of the city's vision to be a climate positive city.



## DIGITAL

- Further implementation and adoption of O365 was undertaken in 2021/22, building our enabling of effective mass remote working and digital interaction with customers throughout the pandemic.
- We delivered the largest device refresh in the Council's history.
- Digitally enabled online customer services.
- Strengthening the capture, flow and use of critical data.
- Expanded the use of PowerBi to provide improved reporting and use of data across all Council services.

## PARTNERSHIPS & ALLIANCES

- Co-location of Police Scotland staff within the Council's HQ, as part of broader Queen's Street redevelopment.
- Refresh of the Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Partnership Development Plan and Improvement Programme 2021-23.
- Integration of Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership Locality Planning models and development of 3 Integrated Locality Plans.
- Introduction of Locality Empowerment Groups and role of community connector to ensure community input into partnership improvement projects.
- Aberdeen Responsible Business Partners and Network. There has been an increase in responsible business partners from 3 in Jan 2021 to 16 in Jan 2022.