



Business Charter for Aberdeen City Council

June 2020

Introduction

This is a time of great uncertainty for businesses. The full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the wider economy is still unfolding and will continue to do so for some time. However it is already clear that the response by local government requires a different approach to any taken previously in the face of threats to the wellbeing of our City and its citizens.

Already we see that the impacts are wider and deeper – affecting all businesses, people and places across the city. The measures we take must therefore embrace a whole system approach to stimulate every aspect of our economy – learning, leadership, innovation, supply chains infrastructure investment, and environment.

A more inclusive approach will contribute to the aims of both the Regional Economic Strategy and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, and will in turn benefit business and people.

The Council, and the wider public sector partners, have an important role to play in responding quickly to the immediate needs of businesses as they emerge from lockdown. This Charter sets out a clear and simple framework for the Council and businesses to adjust to a new economic reality.

Vision

Our collective vision is of a city that is central to UK and Scottish prosperity. Aberdeen is a place where all people can prosper and a great place to do business with renowned skills and expertise alongside a first-class cultural offer. We will continue to create opportunities for a strong and diverse company base that allows our people, of all ages, to flourish.



Business Charter

This clear vision can be achieved and sustained through lasting and meaningful partnership between the Council and business. For businesses wishing to actively support and develop this vision, the Council, in playing its part, sets out its Charter for Business and invites you to participate.

Our Charter expresses our support to businesses in Aberdeen:



Care

- We will support and connect you using our online services.



Accessible

- We will communicate with you, be approachable and listen to you.



Responsive

- We will be open and honest with you about what we can and can't do, and the reasons for this. We will aim to deliver the best services possible for you.



Empowered

- We will learn and improve from you.
- We will listen and act on your feedback, whether it's a complaint, comment or compliment.



Key Principles

We will deliver on our Charter by meeting the key principles of Planning and Infrastructure, our City Centre and Business Support:

Planning & Infrastructure

1. We will provide a dedicated project manager for all pre-applications and applications who will coordinate across council services, ensure the accuracy and fairness of all advice given, consistently record the outcomes of all pre-applications, consider all factors affecting an application and advise if further work is needed prior to giving final advice.
2. We will seek to minimise the risks and uncertainties to businesses and developers in the planning process for complex proposals and major applications, through a development team made up of appropriate council services, which will ensure an integrated response to development proposals.
3. We will keep you informed of progress with your application so that no decision should take business by surprise.

City Centre

4. We will capitalise on the investments by the Council in the city's tourism, culture and leisure sector, promoting the uniqueness of the city's arts and culture offer.
5. We will support, promote and encourage investment in business infrastructure, including property, housing, the city centre, roads, active travel and digital connectivity.
6. We will help all business and investors find business premises by working with appropriate council services and Invest Aberdeen activity.

Business Support

7. We will ensure that local people are benefitting from the ambitious plans for our city by using our spending power in a tactical way, to prioritise economic recovery.
8. We will provide advice to new businesses, with the support of Business Gateway, relating to the requirements of Environmental Health and Trading Standards legislation and support businesses through start-up, operation and expansion phases.
9. We will continue to promote contract opportunities from all public sector spend to SMEs, including third sector organisations, through various events, which will be critical to economic recovery.
10. We will support businesses to invest in Developing the Young Workforce by including training and community benefit clauses for major works, goods and services, by way of our purchasing power.
11. We will endeavour to adhere to the principles set out in the construction Charter signed by the Council on 31 May 2018. The Council expects all construction contracts to achieve the highest standards in respect of employment status, health and safety, standards of work and training and understands the necessity of timely cashflow to our suppliers.
12. We will endeavour to process all valid applications for licences as efficiently as possible and utilise delegated powers where legislation permits.



Your Pledge

To realise our vision and charter we need you to pledge your support:

Our People - employment standards and career development

1. Support our ambitions for Aberdeen City as a place where all people can prosper, ensuring that no one is left behind. You can do this by providing employment opportunities for those furthest removed from the labour market, where possible, and working with the Council through your corporate social responsibilities in supporting people into jobs.
2. Work with the Council in adopting the best employment standards which adhere to the principles of fair work and pay and join us in our Guaranteed Interview Pledge for all care experienced children.
3. Work with our schools in supporting young people, school leavers and career development by Developing our Young Workforce.

Our Place - quality, environmental standards and energy commitments

4. Provide us with good quality plans and supporting information about your proposals which are accurate, to the point and responds to the advice of relevant officers, as required by our regulatory processes.
5. Follow our guidance and procedures which are designed to ensure an efficient and fair process that allows us to determine planning applications as effectively as possible and in line with Development Management Customer Charter.
6. Ensure the use of processing agreements to allow planning applications to be efficiently project managed with clear time scales.
7. Support the Council in maintaining the public realm and supporting the upkeep of standards.
8. Demonstrate a commitment to reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption by supporting the Council's energy transition and its Net Zero Vision.

For more information please contact
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