

## Appendix A- Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts Summary of Progress 2023/24

Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts are city-wide strategies for reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Aberdeen Adapts Framework were co-created. City net zero and adaptation actions are being delivered by a range of organisations and partnerships. This summary represents progress and key updates over the 2023/24 period across headings of Circular Economy, Buildings & Heat, Energy, Mobility, Natural Environment, Adaptation & Resilience, and Empowerment & Communication.

Work to refresh Governance progressed in 2023 including updated membership of the Aberdeen Net Zero and Adaptation Board to increase representation to reflect the themes of Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts.

### Circular Economy

- In December 2023 the NESS Energy from Waste facility began accepting full capacity of non recyclable waste, which is around 150,000 tonnes per year for Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, and Moray Councils combined.
- In August 2023 the 'Re-use Shop' project at Hazlehead Household Waste & Recycling Centre launched its Big Paint Give-Away to celebrate its first birthday. The "Re-use Shop" sells good quality pre-loved items for re-use.
- Published a Zero Waste Scotland Circular Economy output report, consolidating ideas for a local circular economy work programme from industry, education and community representatives.
- Launched a 'Lend and Mend Hub' at Central Library, June 2023, allowing residents to repair, reuse, and upcycle everyday items.
- A Regional Circular Economy Business Officer engaged with 35 city organisations.
- Participated in a James Hutton Institute Circular Economy: people, behaviours and skills, Project Advisory Group.

### Buildings & Heat

- Up to 2023/24, a total of 3,631 domestic connections and 30 public buildings have been connected to the district heating network. This is a total which includes council and non council properties.
- Torry Heat Network public drop-in event held June 2023, and underground main distribution pipes installed.

- 93% of Council Stock Housing was rated Energy Performance Certificate energy rating of “C” and above.
- Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 adopted by the Council.
- RGU Digital Innovation Lab established focusing on digital solutions for energy retrofit and engagement in place based initiatives.

## Energy

- Planning application approval in June 2023 for the erection of a Hydrogen production and vehicle refuelling facility, solar farm and underground solar grid connection for the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub, a Joint Venture with bp.
- Energy Transition Zone Masterplan approved, and planning application submitted for the Energy Transition Zone.
- Increase in planning applications for Solar Panels, Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure and Battery Storage in the city.
- Commencement of the H2 Twin Cities initiative between Aberdeen and Kobe, Japan, supported by the UK and Japanese governments.
- In November 2023, the University of Aberdeen’s Just Transition Lab presented the findings of its multi-disciplinary investigation 'Just Transition for Workers and Communities in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire: Indicators and Scenarios'.
- ABZ Skills Pipeline launched to create a programme of linked opportunities with multiple employers for young people across Aberdeen schools. The Council will work with employers, initially in the energy sector, to strengthen educational links and help pupils learn about the industry, careers, and the various routes into them.
- Continued operation of X-Academy supporting growth in skills for the renewable energy workforce.
- RGU Energy Transition Institute published “Powering up the Workforce: The future of the UK offshore energy workforce” in September 2023, which examines the opportunities for the workforce from an energy transition.
- Scottish Schools Hydrogen Challenge inter-schools final held at the Aberdeen Science Centre March 2023, with Aberdeen City represented by Cults and Oldmachar Academies.

## Mobility

- Work continued on Aberdeen Rapid Transit through the Scottish Governments Bus Partnership Fund with the ongoing development of a range of corridors across the city. This included the completion of the investment in the upgrade of South College Street and the City Centre bus priority measures which saw increased bus patronage and decreased journey times.

- Commenced work on the regions' Active Travel Network Review; a partnership between NESTRANS, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils to create a plan for the future development and investment in the active travel network.
- Installed 15 sedum roofed shelters across the city with funding from NESTRANS, bringing the total to 30. Compared to traditional bus shelters, these act as 'stepping stones for nature' and are self-powered by solar panels.
- Installed 6 secure bicycle storage facilities adjacent to 6 multi-story housing blocks, which accommodate 120 bicycles in total. Funded using £120,000 of Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) funding.
- Launched a public and stakeholder consultation on the draft version of the next Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy (LTS) which looked at actions and outcomes to meet transport needs. The consultation was open from November 2023 to January 2024. Results will be reported back to committee in June 2024.
- As of January 2024, the city Big Issue ebike scheme has 200 available ebikes, with 66 parking zones across the city. The bikes have covered almost 300,000km, saving an estimated 48 tonnes of Co2 – the equivalent of 27 roundtrip flights from Aberdeen to New York since the launch in November 2022.
- Improved active travel infrastructure, including fully segregated cycle facilities, was delivered as part of the South College Street improvement.
- Powered up more publicly available electric vehicle charge points at Summer Street and Virginia Street car parks, along with replacement units in Chapel Street car park and Exploration Drive.
- Aberdeen hosted:
  - The HyTrEc2 Final Conference in May 2023 which saw over 50 attendees from European partner cities and local public and private sector partners.
  - The HECTOR project Final Conference in October 2023 which successfully brought the project to an end.
  - The Scottish Hydrogen Fuel Cell Association annual conference in October 2023 which at the Aberdeen Art Gallery and P&J Live.
- Launched 6 hydrogen cargo bikes in the city which are being used by Aberdeen City Council Environmental Services, Camphill School, Royal Mail and Norco.
- Retrofitted 19 Council fleet vehicles (trucks, tippers, road sweepers and tractor) enabling them to operate as dual-fuel (hydrogen-diesel).
- Continued growth in membership numbers for the Enterprise Car Club in Aberdeen.
- Continued operation of 15 Hydrogen Buses and wider bus decarbonisation, and 2 Hydrogen refuelling stations.
- Hosted 31 visits at the Aberdeen's two hydrogen refuelling stations with a total of 388 visitors.

- Hosted an open day at the Cove hydrogen refuelling station for Climate Week North East in April 2023 with a total of 31 participants.

### Natural Environment

- Continued management of 25 wild spaces around the city controlling 4 key invasive plant species which are non-native to the UK (INNS) by the ACC Countryside Ranger Service.
- 500 volunteers worked with Countryside Rangers giving 1,500 hours of their time.
- As part of Aberdeen's Flagship Parks for Pollinators project:
  - Planted over 4,700 wildflower plugs.
  - 335 people participated in "Bio-blitz" events – these events combined wildlife activities such as bug hunts, moth trapping and pond dipping with species recording in our city parks.
- Buglife secured funding from the Nature Restoration Fund for a "B-lines Project", to create, restore and enhance 20 hectares of wildflower habitats in the city for pollinators.
- Aberdeen was awarded 9 Green Flag Awards in July 2023, recognising the quality of parks and green spaces.
- With funding from Scottish Government's Just Transition Fund, a feasibility study was carried out Spring 2023 for a new Just Transition Hub within the grounds of the James Hutton Institute campus.
- 184 groups were active in community improvement.
  - 75,000 crocus and 75,000 muscari bulbs distributed to 107 groups in October and early November.
  - Duthie Park volunteer gardening group "Parkforce" has been running for 10 years and average 1,000 volunteer hours per year.
  - Clean Up Aberdeen – 204 community clean ups including 2834 participants. 2687 bags filled.
  - Meadow-in-a-Box – a project to increase biodiversity, wildflowers and pollinators. 100 planters made by HMP & YOI Grampian, and wildflower seeds from NatureScot were distributed to over thirty schools and several care homes and sheltered housing complexes.
  - Crates to Places - Refurbished art gallery packing crates were used as vegetable planters by Ukrainian guests at Aberdeen Airport Hotel, Dyce.

### Adaptation & Resilience

- In 2023, work commenced to re-naturalise a section of the Den burn, following the award of Water Environment Fund money via SEPA to design a burn that will be

more biodiverse, built sustainably to help meet the council net zero goals whilst allowing the burn to adapt to a changing climate.

- The Council secured £125,000 from the Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Resilient Communities Fund. This will be used to support community resilience including supplying power packs to the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership to support the most vulnerable individuals reliant on medical equipment within their own property during a power outage.
- Around 100 people attended a Community Resilience Conference in October 2023. The event, jointly hosted by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils encouraged community groups to start or improve their resilience activities/arrangements.
- A 6-year North East Local Flood Risk Management Plan was published during 2022/23.
- Under the Local Flood Risk Management Plan, Aberdeen City Council will continue to develop the Surface Water Management Plans in consultation with SEPA and Scottish Water. It will continue with the next stages of current flood studies and the Preliminary study to undertake a strategic overview of the coastal protection.
- Enabling prompt response to flood alerts, the Council continues to operate a Duty Flood Officer rota.
- CCTV cameras have been fitted to monitor water levels at Maryculter Bridge on the River Dee and more are planned for other critical locations.
- Beach levels continued to be monitored monthly or more regularly if needed; these can vary naturally along the Aberdeen coastal front; low sand levels present a risk to the stability of the seawall and public access and safety.
- Continued participation in the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership, providing multi-agency coordination for response and recovery in emergency situations, including severe weather.
- North East Community Resilience Conference held at the Beach Ballroom October 2023 with speakers from Community Groups and Responders.
- Ongoing funding approved for a Property Level Protection Flood grant scheme open to eligible residential and commercial properties.
- Continued collaboration between SEPA, Scottish Water and Aberdeen City Council on a project examining sustainable options for storm water management included a stakeholder workshop and collation of project findings.
- Communities encouraged to create resilience groups in their local area. Existing community resilience groups continue in Cults, Milltimber and Bielside, and Bridge of Don and Danestone.

## Empowerment & Communication:

- Achieved 2 award wins for Net Zero Aberdeen including; Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Scotland "Best Plan" and RTPI UK "Excellence in Plan Making Practice".
- Aberdeen City Council scored joint second in Scotland in Climate Emergency UK Council Climate Action Scorecards.
- NESCAN Hub (one of two "pathfinder" local community climate hubs) was evaluated as part of a project to inform development of new climate action hubs across Scotland.
- 18 green, eco-friendly projects in Aberdeen received full or partial funding from Year 2 of the Just Transition Participatory Budgeting Fund after a public vote through NESCAN Hub.
- Child Friendly Placemaking – 4 animations aimed at children and young people were created explaining key city documents including the Local Development Plan, Beach and City Centre Masterplans, Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts.
- Making a commitment to Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts, there are now 100 signatories of the Aberdeen Climate and Nature Pledge – including 30 organisations and 70 individuals/households.
- University of Aberdeen MSc Sustainability Transitions Student Placements included research on Green Infrastructure and Climate Engagement.
- Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts stand at Wood. Sustainable Outreach Day.
- Engaged with community at an Aberdeen Climate Pledge Community Information Session webinar March 2023.
- North East Place and Wellbeing Network hosted it's second symposium focusing on the links between natural environment, place and health.