

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Cluster:</u>	City Development and Regeneration
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<u>Title of Update:</u>	International Travel 2024/25 – Annual Service Update
<u>Author:</u>	Jen Lawie
<u>Chief Officer:</u>	Julie Wood
<u>Email Address:</u>	jlawie@aberdeencity.gov.uk

UPDATE:

In response to item 11.1 (v) of the decision sheet of Finance and Resources Committee, 30 January 2024, this annual service update has been prepared to share relevant trip report excerpts from all overseas activity approved at the same Committee for 24/25.

It should be noted that the proposed travel at 11.1 (ii) (c) was not undertaken, replaced with alternative event attendance as approved at Finance and Resources Committee, 5 November 2024, 11.1 (a) and Finance and Resources Committee, 12 February 2025, 11.2 (a).

Event	World Energy Congress - Rotterdam
Date	23 - 24 April 2024
Attendees	Lord Provost, David Cameron; Jim Johnstone, Service Manager
Overview and Outcomes	<p>The World Energy Congress is the world's longest-established energy event. The 26th World Energy Congress in Rotterdam was themed "Redesigning Energy for People and Planet" and covered 60+ sessions, convening 200+ speakers and 7000+ international energy stakeholders. The event was co-hosted with Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy.</p> <p>Aberdeen participated in speaking opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities in the Lead – Place Based Action. • Mayor's Roundtable <p>Aberdeen attended meetings and sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayoral meeting of Aberdeen, Stavanger and Esbjerg. Outcome: to continue to collaborate and strengthen influence of European members of the WECP through project engagement and facilitation of B2B connections. • Conference Opening Ceremony and Welcome • Reception of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, the City of Rotterdam and the Port of Rotterdam

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field Trip for participants of Mayor's Roundtable to Rotterdam green energy sites
Future attendance	<p>This event is targeted at high level attendance, connecting policy makers and government with private sector.</p> <p>Where there is option to attend WEC events digitally this is recommended, to stay abreast of these developments and maintain influence.</p> <p>If an event is being hosted in a key European location (ie an existing international partner or project partner city), and there is the opportunity for side-line engagements and meetings, then there is merit in attending in person.</p> <p>However it is suggested that overseas travel priority remains with World Energy Cities Partnership engagements over the World Energy Council.</p>

Event	World Energy Cities Partnership AGM, Stavanger
Date	22 – 25 August 2024
Attendees	Lord Provost, David Cameron; Julie Wood, Chief Officer
Overview and Outcomes	<p>Member cities of the WECP meet twice a year at its AGM and working group meetings.</p> <p>The theme for the 2024 AGM was “Pathways to Energy Transition: Our Energy Future is Renewable and Hybrid” and the statutory meeting was accompanied by a 4-day itinerary of programmes and workshops which presented many speaking opportunities, as well as knowledge building and identifying areas for collaboration. Over 50 international delegates were in attendance.</p> <p>To maximise the impact of attendance, Aberdeen representatives from University of Aberdeen - Professor Alfonso Martinez-Felip and Maren Mitchell, PhD student, and ORE Catapult - David Findlay, also joined Lord Provost and Julie Wood speaking at the event.</p> <p>Aberdeen participated in speaking opportunities: .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H2 - CCS Technology Market and Innovation Outcome: the city's H2 strategy and progress was shared to a global audience, and related multidisciplinary research and innovation happening at University of Aberdeen was highlighted. Onshore and Offshore Wind, Supply Chain, Innovation and Local Employment Outcome: Aberdeen's pipeline of offshore wind development was shared, creating opportunities for international prospects and collaboration. Attractive Cities and Innovation Ecosystems Outcome: promotion of Aberdeen internationally, showcasing our energy infrastructure, skills landscape and investment zone to attract new businesses and talent. Mobility and Masterplanning

	<p>Outcome: knowledge sharing around Masterplans as blueprints for transformative regeneration and the role such planning has in driving sustainable transport solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Collaboration Outcome: Speakers from University of Aberdeen joined together with educational institutions from Groningen, Halifax, Calgary, Esbjerg, and Stavanger to share energy research comparisons and opportunities to involve young people in the green energy transition. Mayor's Roundtable Outcome: In addition to network statutory proceedings, the Mayor's Roundtable serves as an opportunity for the Lord Provost David Cameron to represent the city's green energy progress to member cities, and for group discussions as to the role of cities in addressing the complex challenges to achieving net zero.
Follow-up Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Aberdeen, together with Groningen, Stavanger and Esbjerg, are submitting a joint funding call following the opportunity to meet in Stavanger. Launching in Autumn 2024, the collaborative funding call known as "EIT HEI Initiative", will have a strong focus on enhancing the quality and competitiveness of European higher education and supporting business creation. Total budget is estimated to be EUR 1.34 million per project to implement their activities. Increasing communications with WECP Marketing support – providing an updated directory of relevant Aberdeen contacts; updating webpage content on Aberdeen; agreeing a schedule to share social media posts on Aberdeen updated Liaison with Esbjerg to promote activities and opportunities
Future Attendance?	<p>Attendance at the AGM itself, either in-person or virtually where this option is being facilitated, is a requirement of ongoing WECP membership.</p> <p>Stavanger's inclusion of a wider itinerary was very valuable as it encouraged knowledge-building, set incentives for projects and activities that promote sustainable economic development and provided an opportunity for Aberdeen to learn from the success and challenges of other member cities.</p> <p>Inviting additional attendees to represent the city and a 'Team Aberdeen' approach underlined our commitment to international investment and trading opportunities in support of the energy transition. Feedback from all attendees was very positive.</p>

Event	Hydrogen project-related travel - European Hydrogen Week, Brussels and JIVE/REVIVE Demand Aggregation Workshop, Groningen
Date	18 – 21 November 2024; 3 – 4 December 2024
Attendees	Councillor Christian Allard, Co-Leader (European Hydrogen Week only); Claire Stevenson, Team Leader
Overview and Outcomes	European Hydrogen Week is an annual exhibition and conference event that brings together key players in the hydrogen industry, including policymakers, researchers, and business leaders. This year featured a diverse lineup of key speakers from various sectors including the CEO of Hydrogen Europe and the H2 Valley Coordinator from the Clean Hydrogen Partnership. More than 220

exhibitors demonstrated their groundbreaking technology and market-ready products to the more than 9000 attendees.

The JIVE/REVIVE workshop provided an in-depth review of findings and lessons learned from the operational data collected and analysed throughout the projects to inform future activity and development.

Aberdeen attended meetings with:

- WECP partners Aberdeen, Groningen and Stavanger
Outcome: updates on their individual hydrogen initiatives and next steps.
- Dr Alasdair Allan, Minister for Climate Action
Outcome: opportunity to discuss the complexities of the Aberdeen Hydrogen programme, highlight our success and request support for continuing activities.
- Sarah English, Head of Scotland Europa
Outcome: renewed connection with the organisation
- Martin Johnson, Director of the EU Directorate, Scottish Government
Outcome: bring SG's presence in Brussels up-to-date with latest on the H2 Aberdeen programme
- MEP Gonzales Casares and MEP Pellerin-Carlin, members of the European Parliament Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE)
Outcome: introductory meeting to build a relationship between ACC and MEPs who are likely to be aligned with a number of Scotland's policy positions, and keen supporters of an ambitious and just transition to net zero. Dr Allan was present and able to give an overview of Scotland's high level ambitions while Cllr Allard could demonstrate Aberdeen's progress as commitment to these
- France Hydrogène – SDI – Hydrogen Scotland
Outcome: discussion on collaboration opportunities between France and Scotland following an MoU signed between France Hydrogène and Hydrogen Scotland in January 2024.
- Elogen
Outcome: introductory meeting between ACC and Elogen who produce hydrogen from renewable energies using proton exchange membrane (PEM) electrolysis. Facilitate by SDI, opportunities for investment in Aberdeen discussed.
- Antonio Aguillo Rullan, Clean Hydrogen Partnership
Outcome: provision of guidance to support an H2 Valley Bid in 2025.
- Nel Hydrogen; Air Liquide
Outcome: opportunities for investment in Aberdeen discussed.
- Scottish Development International
Outcome: introductions between ACC's Project Team and SDI colleagues to knowledge share and ensure Aberdeen's projects and progress can be well-represented in priority trade and investment markets

Adjacent to the itinerary, ACC were invited to present at the Vanguard Initiative – sharing lessons learned with the Vanguard Initiative's Hydrogen Pilot .

Follow-up Action	<p>Scottish Development International</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop relationship with key SDI colleagues to ensure they are aware of Aberdeen's hydrogen activities and can share at the many events they attend. <p>Scotland Europa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the membership is fully developed and used with regular check-ins with Scotland Europa and other key members. <p>Clean Hydrogen Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up meetings scheduled in support of a H2 Valley application in 2025. <p>Elogen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elogen are particularly keen to discuss e-SAF and so follow up links will be made with Aberdeen airport. <p>Elogen, Air Liquide, Nel Hydrogen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contacts to be passed to Invest Aberdeen should any follow-up or additional information be required.
Future attendance?	<p>This year there was a 'Team Scotland' stand that ACC were welcome to use as a base – this was essential in ensuring appropriate presence and publicity of the activities already underway in Scotland, including Aberdeen. Feedback has been provided to try and improve upon this for next year's event.</p> <p>It is clear from key bodies including the European Commission and Clean Hydrogen Partnership that presence in Brussels at these events is required in order to further our relationship with EU partners and secure EU funding. If Aberdeen submit a H2 Valley bid in 2025, attendance at this event will be key to showcase the programme to the EU and potential partners.</p>

Event	High Wind Conference, Stavanger
Date	04-05 March 2025
Attendees	Robin Dillaway, Project Officer
Overview and Outcomes	<p>The 5th annual High Wind Conference, hosted by the City of Stavanger, the ONS Foundation and the Stavanger Chamber of Commerce. The one day conference was supplemented with an additional day of themed workshops.</p> <p>Scotland was well represented at the event, with Scottish Government attendees Ragne Low, Deputy Director of Offshore Wind Programme and Investment; and Lorne Finlayson, Head of Ports & Harbours Infrastructure and Community Benefits for Offshore Wind. Both joined a panel during the main conference.</p> <p>Aberdeen attended meetings with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atle Blomgren, Norwegian Research Centre (NORCE) <p>Outcome: interest in refreshing a 2011 comparative study on the oil and gas sectors in Aberdeen and Stavanger for the renewables sector.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frida Knudsen, Vargronn Outcome: Vargronn shared news of its new satellite office in Aberdeen alongside Flotation Energy, partners in the GreenVolt project • University of Stavanger Outcome: UiS has developed a one-year study programme on offshore wind and offers opportunity for Aberdeen institutions to consider collaborative learning opportunities. • Signe Winther Jensen, Program Manager, Education Esbjerg Outcome: understanding of the role of Education Esbjerg as facilitator between the private and public/academic sector in Esbjerg, and a key entry point for Aberdeen institutions looking for partners or research opportunities. • Frederik Frank Greve, Green Ducklings Outcome: learnings from the Port of Esbjerg's expansion to accommodate offshore wind activities <p>In addition to the conference and meetings, events allowing for networking attended include a Speakers' Reception; student seminar; and a Training, Education and Certification workshop.</p>
Follow-up Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link in Vargronn and Flotation Energy with future inward delegations as an example of inward investment in offshore wind • Facilitate continued communication between Stavanger academic institutions and Aberdeen, to develop and refresh shared research projects; training programmes or consider funding opportunities. Skills shortages are a shared challenge and there is interest in hosting an in-person event adjacent to future activity around this area. • Public and political support of offshore wind in Norway is waning, potentially creating an opportunity for Scotland to attract companies working in this area – knowledge to be shared with partners • Support of Aberdeen PhD students to attend the conference in future
Future attendance?	<p>Given the close ties between Aberdeen and Stavanger, and similarities between industries, this is a valuable event to attend to broaden networks, connect students and future workforce and identify areas for collaboration.</p> <p>Where an Elected Member can also attend, a speaking opportunity at the Conference could be facilitated to maximise impact of attendance.</p>

Event	CERAWeek, Houston
Date	10 – 14 March 2025
Attendees	Councillor Christian Allard, Co-leader; Julie Wood, Chief Officer
Overview and Outcomes	<p>The WECP Board Working Group meeting takes place within the wider CERA Week 2025 activity, and valuable opportunities are facilitated for WECP members to participate in panels, sessions and side-line activities in front of high-level, global and ambitious delegates.</p> <p>Based on feedback from 2024 attendance, the Aberdeen delegation attending CERA Week in 2025 was expanded beyond ACC representation to include:</p>

- Mark Anderson, Chief Acceleration Officer and TechX Director, Net Zero Technology Centre (NZTC)
- Dr. Alf Martinez-Felipe, Senior Lecturer in Chemical Engineering, University of Aberdeen
- Sarah Hillyear, Head of Business Development, Robert Gordon University
- Chris Moule, Head of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Robert Gordon University
- Sarah Moore, Chief Executive, Peterson Energy Logistics
- Christine Dodds, Finance Director, Peterson Energy Logistics
- Lara Pedrosa, Student, Robert Gordon University
- Erin Koon, Student, Robert Gordon University
- Alex Sinclair, Student, Robert Gordon University

In addition to the statutory WECF Working Group engagements, events and meetings attended included:

- Marisa Buchanan, Senior VP, Strategic Corporates & Partnerships, bp
Outcome: continued commitment of bp to renewables and energy transition, including the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub
- SDI Luncheon with GlobalScots, themed on FDI
Outcome: introduction to the GlobalScots network, a source of support and connection to businesses looking to establish in international markets
- Professor Brian Korgel, University of Texas Energy Institute
Outcome: possibility of collaboration between University of Texas and University of Aberdeen, to be followed up by the universities directly
- Haotian Wang and Matteo Pasquali, Rice University
Outcome: possibility of collaboration around innovation goals between Rice University and University of Aberdeen, to be followed up by the universities directly
- Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment, Jeff Starling
Outcome: discussion of synergies between being transitioning cities, and the impact of the current US Administration's oil and gas focus on the momentum of establishing green projects

Councillor Allard represented Aberdeen at two panel sessions:

- 'Cleantech Trailblazers Dinner Panel Session: Global Energy Innovation Ecosystems'
- 'Future Cities on the Move: Innovative Pathways for Sustainable Urban Mobility'

Other panels where members of the Aberdeen delegation or Scottish and UK government representatives included 'Coming Free: Solutions to un-stick CCS FIDs'; 'Industrial Low-carbon Hubs: Towards high-impact emissions reduction'; 'Europe at Crossroads: Innovation, energy and competitiveness' and 'Multi-Disciplinary Solutions: Collaborative Approaches to Energy Challenges'.

Additional events attended, allowing for networking and key contacts to be made, included the Shell Evening Reception, Canadian Energy Showcase, the WECF Cleantech Trailblazer Dinner, the British Consul General Evening Reception and the WECF Mayors' Reception.

Follow-up Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debrief 121s to be conducted with all representatives of Team Aberdeen for feedback and suggestions as to how to build on this presence in 2026 – potentially to include wider academic mission; formal trade delegation or additional private sector representatives • Debrief with the WECP Secretariat around presence at CERA Week, sideline activities and the speaking and panel opportunities • Debrief sessions scheduled with SDI around Scottish presence and DBT around UK presence at CERA Week in the future • Explore further collaboration with European cities in WECP • Early liaison with key contacts and moderators of panels to secure additional speaking opportunities • Support a visit from Oklahoma Department of Energy and Environment to Scotland in Summer 2025
Future attendance?	<p>CERAWeek remains the anchor event for the WECP working group meeting so future attendance will be required given Aberdeen's involvement in the WECP and the importance to Aberdeen of this membership.</p> <p>The event was well attended by fellow WECP cities and countries based around the North Sea. It's a good touch-base to maintain and progress our international relationships and develop cross North Sea Energy Transition initiatives. An example is the continued support from Stavanger, Esbjerg, and Groningen for the NE Scotland H2 Valley application to Horizon Europe.</p> <p>Our larger delegation at CERAWeek this year increased our ability to reach more people and organisations and identify more opportunities for the city. The potential to build on this and maximise impact of attendance exists.</p>