

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Anti-Poverty and Inequality
DATE	11 March 2026
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Report on Visit to the Tillydrone Community Flat, Tillydrone Community Campus and Wallace Tower
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/ 26/043
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Michelle Crombie on behalf of Isla Newcombe
REPORT AUTHOR	Matthew Lee, Anti-Poverty Officer
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.3 and 1.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide the Committee with a report following the visit to Tillydrone Community Flat, Tillydrone Community Campus and the Wallace Tower on 28 January 2026.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the report; and
- 2.2 Thanks all those at Tillydrone Community Flat, Tillydrone Community Campus and the Wallace Tower who welcomed the Committee and provided an informative and interesting visit.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Tillydrone Community Flat

- 3.1.1 Tillydrone Community Flat is a local community-based organisation that offers support services and activities aimed at supporting residents and strengthening community connections in Tillydrone.
- 3.1.2 The Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee visited Tillydrone Community Flat to find out about the work it is doing for and with the local community. This visit is part of a wider programme of engagements the Committee is making to organisations supporting people in poverty across the City.

3.2 Issues Raised and Actions Required

- 3.2.1 During the visit, Committee members held a discussion with Fiona Young, Community Development Worker, and Sarah Jack, Administrator/Benefits Advice Worker.

3.2.2 The discussion highlighted issues that Tillydrone Community Flat has encountered:

3.2.3 **Funding and demand for services**

Tillydrone Community Flat receives funding from the Fairer Aberdeen Fund. It has two paid part-time members of staff, plus volunteers, who facilitate around 7200 service accesses per year. Demand for support has risen significantly in recent years. As a result, Tillydrone Community Flat is experiencing increasing pressure on its services.

Actions

- Completed – Tillydrone Community Flat has been invited to apply for additional funding available from an underspend in the Fairer Aberdeen Fund.
- Completed – Officers will continue to share the Council's monthly External Funding Newsletter that provides updates on opportunities for organisations and businesses in Aberdeen. It includes information on current grant programs, application deadlines, upcoming workshops, and tips for writing successful grant applications. The newsletter aims to help organisations find and apply for funding to support their projects and objectives. [Organisations can sign up here.](#)

3.2.4 **Employability support**

The flat offers general employability advice but there is no formal employability scheme operating there currently. Pathways hold drop-in sessions in the Community Campus and people looking for support to get into employment are directed there.

Actions

- Completed – Officers will signpost the employability services available from ABZ Works to support Tillydrone Community Flat having additional capacity to help people with employability queries.

3.2.5 **Choice-based letting and housing stock**

The organisation noted that both they and people seeking support from them find the online system for choice-based letting difficult to navigate. They also highlighted issues with the quality of the Council housing stock in Tillydrone, particularly in terms of problems with damp and mould.

Actions

- Ongoing – Tillydrone Community Flat staff have been offered an in-person session on the use of the Choice Based Letting system. This session will include an opportunity for feedback shared previously by service users to be discussed and response provided around any future changes that could be considered.
- Ongoing – As outlined in the Local Housing Strategy 2025-2030, Aberdeen City Council will prioritise a sufficient supply of housing to meet the varying needs of the people of Aberdeen and improve energy efficiency of existing homes across all tenures to help to alleviate fuel poverty.

3.2.6 **Partnership working**

Tillydrone Community Flat undertakes partnership working with a range of organisations. A housing officer attends weekly and the Financial Inclusion Team offers a fortnightly drop-in service. Additionally, the flat engages with Grampian Regional Equality Council and has used No Recourse North East Partnership's 'myth buster' material to promote community cohesion.

3.3 **Tillydrone Community Campus**

3.3.1 The Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee also visited Tillydrone Community Campus on 28 January 2026.

3.3.2 Tillydrone Community Campus is a multi-purpose community facility that provides a range of services to support residents in the Tillydrone area.

3.4 **Issues Raised and Actions Required**

3.4.1 During the visit, Committee members met Marie Strang, Project Coordinator at the Community Campus; Aileen Davidson, Chairperson of the Tillydrone Community Campus Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO); and Trustees Jane Fullerton and Anne Knight.

3.4.2 The discussion highlighted a number of matters relating to the Tillydrone Community Campus:

3.4.3 **Licence to Occupy**

The charity is seeking a Licence to Occupy several rooms within the Community Campus building. The charity views obtaining a Licence to Occupy as a way to gain more flexibility and autonomy over the services offered at the Community Campus.

Actions

- Ongoing – Officers are supporting the charity to get a Licence to Occupy, with potential to explore a Community Asset Transfer in future.

3.4.4 **Youth space**

One of the rooms within the Community Campus is used as a youth space, providing young people in Tillydrone with a place to connect with each other.

Actions

- Pending – Officers to highlight the youth space within the Community Campus to the Children's Service Board as an example that aligns with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026–36 proposals to develop safe, co-designed spaces for young people.
- Pending – Officers to organise the removal of fixed tables within the youth space to improve accessibility and flexibility of use. The date set for this to happen is 2 March.

3.4.5 **Transport links**

Older residents, including people living in care homes, have visited events staged at the Community Campus previously. There was a suggestion during the discussion that access to transport had made this more difficult recently.

Actions

- Completed – Officers to clarify the exact nature of this problem and investigate if Aberdeen City Council can offer further assistance.

3.4.6 **Sharing information in the community**

Representatives of the charity and Committee members discussed the importance of people having access to information about what is happening in their communities.

Actions

- Completed – Officers to cascade a request for volunteers to contribute to the Tilly Tattle: a community magazine supported by SHMU.

3.4.6 **Community cohesion and perceptions of Tillydrone**

Trustees of the charity stressed the importance of community cohesion and their view that the Community Campus helps to correct negative perceptions of Tillydrone. These comments echoed the views expressed at the Community Flat, emphasising the importance that people in Tillydrone place on community cohesion.

3.5 **Wallace Tower**

- 3.5.1 Committee members concluded their visit to Tillydrone at the Wallace Tower in Seaton Park, now owned by the Tillydrone Community Development Trust following a Community Asset Transfer from Aberdeen City Council. Members received information from Jane Fullerton, Secretary of Tillydrone Community Development Trust and Linda Barclay, Trustee of Tillydrone Community Development Trust, on the recent improvements to the building and the Trust's plans to develop further community space in the tower's upper floors. The Trust are currently seeking funding to complete the work.

Actions

- Completed – Officers will continue to share the Council's monthly External Funding Newsletter that provides updates on opportunities for organisations and businesses in Aberdeen.
- Ongoing – Officers to continue to highlight funding opportunities, and some support has recently been secured from the Localities PB process.

- 3.6 See Appendix 1 for full overview of the visit.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	None	None	L	Yes
Compliance	None	None	L	Yes
Operational	None	None	L	Yes
Financial	None	None	L	Yes
Reputational	None	None	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	None	None	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

Council Delivery Plan 2024	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	There is no proposal in this report
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	There is no proposal in this report
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	There is no proposal in this report

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Michelle Crombie, Strategic

	Lead, Prevention and Community Empowerment on 3 February 2026.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 N/A

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Overview of Visit to Tillydrone Community Flat, Tillydrone Community Campus and the Wallace Tower

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee
Visit to Tillydrone Community Flat, Tillydrone
Community Campus and the Wallace Tower

Date: 28 January 2026

Attending:

Councillor Allard
 Councillor Blake
 Councillor Buchanan
 Councillor Davidson
 Councillor Hutchison
 Councillor Macdonald
 Councillor van Sweeden
 Dr Rachel Shanks, External Adviser
 Donna Hutchison, External Adviser
 Michelle Crombie, Aberdeen City Council
 Susan Thoms, Aberdeen City Council
 Matthew Lee, Aberdeen City Council

The Committee visit included three venues within Tillydrone, all offering facilities for local residents. The Committee began their visit at 10am at Tillydrone Community Flat, then visited Tillydrone Community Campus, and the newly reopened Wallace Tower.

At each venue committee members met with staff, committee members, trustees and volunteers. There was an opportunity to hear about the services and for them to raise issues and concerns that are affecting the community.

Tillydrone Community Flat

Committee members met Fiona Young, Community Development Worker, and Sarah Jack, Administrator/Benefits Advice Worker. Additionally, Committee members undertook a tour of the flat to see the numerous services it offers to local residents.

Tillydrone Community Flat is a local community-based organisation that offers support services and activities aimed at supporting residents and strengthening community connections in Tillydrone. It receives funding from the Fairer Aberdeen Fund, which provides core funding for the flat's activities.



The flat has around 7200 service accesses per year. Although the flat caters to a range of cohorts, working-age single men and single-parent households are a considerable proportion of the service user base. Building relationships with service users is a key goal and the informal or 'unofficial' nature of the flat is a draw for people who visit it.

Over time, the flat has moved from delivering adult learning to providing support services. The increasing complexity of people's circumstances and the changing landscape of the social security system has driven increased demand for help from the flat. It is common for people to request crisis support because they have experienced a benefit sanction.



Tillydrone Community Flat is a partner in Food Poverty Action Aberdeen, and receives food through CFINE. Each week, the flat provides between 75 and 100 food parcels to a variety of groups, including people who have no recourse to public funds. People can get one parcel per fortnight and can access food that conforms to their cultural and religious needs. Food insecurity is a problem that leads people to visiting the flat. Often, access to food is the first step towards deeper engagement between staff and service users.



The flat has a community room, which provides a warm space for people to meet and interact with others. There is also a computer available for people to access online services. The community room helps to tackle social isolation and digital exclusion.

The flat works in partnership with Aberdeen City Council staff. A housing officer attends weekly and the Financial Inclusion Team offers a fortnightly drop-in service.

Tillydrone Community Campus

Committee members met Marie Strang, Project Coordinator at the Community Campus alongside Aileen Davidson, Chairperson of the Tillydrone Community Campus Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), and Trustees Jane Fullerton and Anne Knight. Members received a tour of the building and were able to see the various rooms that the charity intend to run after the Licence to Occupy process is completed.

Tillydrone Community Campus is a multi-purpose community facility that hosts classes, volunteer groups and events. Classes are free to people living in the AB24 postcode area, which includes Tillydrone.

The campus also has a café, run by a local resident and volunteers, which offers low-cost food. The café operator offers a main course and pudding for £5 every fortnight. Customers also have a 'pay it forward' option where they can buy a hot drink for themselves and pay for someone else to get a free drink subsequently.



Members of the charity have helped to get the building into its current form. The charity is in the process of obtaining a Licence to Occupy the community areas within the campus. Having a Licence to Occupy will provide greater flexibility over the classes and events run within the building. Currently, Aberdeen City Council organises the timetable and booking system for activities. The Council is supporting the charity with the Licence to Occupy process.

Marie and charity members highlighted specific classes available at the Community Campus, including fortnightly talks on health and wellbeing funded by NHS Grampian, Make Do and Mend, and a forthcoming Repair Café.

Charity members underlined that the Community Campus is one of a number of community facilities located in Tillydrone, contributing to a keen sense of local pride. The Campus offers classes to people who do not have English as a first language as part of wider efforts to reduce social isolation and foster community cohesion.



The Wallace Tower

The Wallace Tower is a seventeenth-century building located originally in Nether Kirkgate. It was moved to Seaton Park in the 1960s and had fallen into disrepair after lying empty for over 25 years. For many years the local community wanted to have it reopened for community use. Tillydrone Community Development Trust has implemented plans to redevelop the building through a Community Asset Transfer.

The ground floor of the building is now open and operating as a café, following community consultation on its use. Since opening in December it has been very popular with local residents and visitors to Seaton Park. Contingent on securing funding, the Development Trust plans to undertake further work on the upper floors, providing additional community space for activities and events.



The Trust is keen to provide free spaces for the community, working in partnership with other local organisations, and to add benefit to the facilities already available in Tillydrone. They see the Wallace Tower as a positive element in developing community capacity and improving perceptions of the area.



Issues raised

Tillydrone Community Flat

- Demand for services is increasing.
- Organisations are experiencing increasing pressures
- Employability support – capacity in communities could be increased
- Housing – there are issues with damp and mould in some properties
- Housing – the online system for Choice Based Lettings is difficult to navigate

Tillydrone Community Campus

- Licence to Occupy in progress to provide more flexibility over spaces
- Youth space – issues with use of space due to unsuitable furniture
- Access to transport affecting older people attending events
- Provision of information on activities and support available for residents
- Community cohesion and perceptions of Tillydrone

The Wallace Tower

- Tillydrone Development Trust have received support from Aberdeen City Council in obtaining a Community Asset Transfer of the Tower to enable them to undertake development of the ground floor
- Funding is being sourced to complete the upper floors to provide more community space
- Perceptions of the Tillydrone community can be negative, and the Trust hopes that the development of the Wallace Tower can improve this and add to the community facilities available

Officers are looking into these issues and actions are listed in the cover report.