

Our vision is
for Aberdeen
to be an
ambitious,
achieving,
smart city.

Aberdeen City Council

Annual Report 2012 -13



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Aberdeen the Smarter City

Our vision is for Aberdeen to be an ambitious, achieving, smart city. We will ensure all citizens are encouraged and supported appropriately to make their full contribution.

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Welcome

With the official re-opening of Marischal College on 24 September 2012 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, yet another milestone has been passed in the history of this extraordinary and important city.

The building was officially opened in 1906 by her great grandfather, King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, and after a period when the building was no longer maintained and in use, we're delighted to have restored, reopened and created a civic heart for the city in this historical and iconic Aberdeen building.

Our Marischal College project was completed on time and £20million under budget. It has provided an opportunity to totally transform the way we present our services and you can read more about these in this Annual Report.

The move to Marischal is just one of the milestones that took place in 2012 and I'm delighted that our annual report gives us the opportunity to showcase the varied range of services provided by the Council for our 215,000 citizens, visitors, businesses and communities.

This Annual Report is a way of presenting 'what we do' – the services we provide, where we have improved and where we will continue to strive for further improvement. Throughout this guide we have highlighted some of the wide variety of services provided by the Council. Some you will be aware of, some may be new.



They add up to a comprehensive network of support, infrastructure, services, projects and developments that have been developed and designed to fulfil and deliver the priorities for Aberdeen.

Every minute of every day the Council's numerous teams deliver vital services, support and transactions that enable this important economic city to flourish. In recent years we have received considerable external recognition for the way we manage our finances, business planning, regeneration and development programmes, carbon reduction schemes and new build programme for affordable housing.

Everything we do is built upon sound financial planning and this annual report demonstrates how we have delivered services over the previous twelve months and, in these times of economic austerity, how we continue to concentrate on the most important areas that will have the greatest impact across our city.

Valerie Watts

Valerie Watts
Chief Executive,
Aberdeen City Council
September 24 2012.

Understanding the Council's Finances

Careful financial management and the emergence of the five-year business plan, Aberdeen - the Smarter City has put solid foundations in place for us to transform the way we work and to enable us to afford our future obligations to deliver high quality, essential services for our customers.

Strong financial foundation

2012 was the year we consolidated our financial position through our innovative priority-based budgeting approach. This has enabled us to prepare for future demands and challenges. It is a year when we worked together across all Council services to develop the detailed plans

that will enable us to not only to live within our means, but also to go further and review our services across the Council to identify ways we can do things better, make services more efficient and deliver the services our customers will require of us in the future.

Actual performance against budget of the Council

	2011/12 Budget £'000	2011/12 (Surplus)/ Deficit £'000	(Favourable)/Adverse Movement £'000
General Fund	0	(3,909)	(3,909)
Housing Revenue Account	0	(420)	(420)
Common Good	268	(714)	(982)

Balances (Prior to earmarking sums) at 31 March 2012

	1/4/11 Balance £'000	Movement in year £'000	Transfers £'000	31/3/12 Balance £'000
General Fund	(35,466)	7,044	-	(28,422)
Housing Revenue Account	(6,877)	(546)	420	(7,003)
Common Good	(67,183)	(6,670)	-	(73,853)

“Aberdeen City Council is the epitome of fiscal prudence that others would do well to emulate”

P&J, 25 August 2011



Ready to deliver

We look forward to the financial Challenges with this track record of success in delivering true efficiencies and not cuts. Our programme of priority-based budgeting has been widely welcomed with Audit Scotland promoting Aberdeen City Council's priority-based financial management as an exemplary model for the rest of Scotland's public sector. The watchdog body featured the financial forward-planning in a major report Scotland's Public Finances – Addressing the challenges. This was reported in the local media, with the Press and Journal commenting how the Council has turned around its financial planning following a critical Audit Scotland report in 2008 to become “cited by that very same organisation [Audit Scotland] as the epitome of fiscal prudence that others would do well to emulate” (P&J editorial, 25 August 2011).

The excellent quality of work has also been recognised by the Finance Secretary of the Scottish Government, John Swinney MSP, when he praised the turnaround of Aberdeen City Council's financial position.

Finally, across the organisation the scale and impact of the priority-based budget project has been acknowledged by the Corporate Management Team and Councillors. The delivery of the project has been praised on many levels – from Council meetings to directorate management teams.

Beyond 2013 we will still face significant challenges. We need sharp financial focus to manage the 16% reduction in our funding that is necessary to fund the additional financial obligations. I am confident that Aberdeen City Council is in good financial shape to meet this challenge.

Stewart Carruth

Stewart Carruth,
Director of Corporate Governance

The Annual Report and Aberdeen the Smarter City

2012/13 was the year in which Aberdeen City Council launched a vision for a smarter city. It was also a year where the Council, along with all public sector organisations, faced significant challenges and a year where we maintained financial stability and went even further to deliver priority services for our citizens.

Aberdeen – The Smarter City will leave a legacy for future generations and within this Annual Report you can see the foundations for this vision are already being laid. As well as being a valuable record of the Council’s achievements for the year



Councillor Barney Crockett, Council Leader

the Annual Report presents the wide range of services delivered by Council staff; areas of success, improvement and achievement and we commend the dedication, commitment and drive of all our teams in delivering these services.

This Annual Report sets out case studies, examples of best practice and future planning achieved by the Council in 2012-13.



In May 2012 the emergence of our draft five year business plan has underpinned the council vision of Smarter Aberdeen.

To realise this vision of a Smarter Aberdeen our work and the services we deliver will support an ambitious, achieving, smart city which:

- develops an economy based on knowledge and innovation;
- encourages more efficient use of greener resource which generates a competitive economy;
- uses technology and data to enable informed decisions to be taken;
- enables citizens to interact in a city where there is a sense of place; and
- encourages a form of governance which engages its citizens.

Throughout this Annual Report case studies, examples of innovation and details of many aspects of the services we deliver are presented against the Strategic Priorities of Smarter City Vision. These are detailed below:

Strategic Priority	Definition	Examples of what we are doing to support The Smarter City Vision
Smarter Living Quality of Life	Challenging inequality and positively promoting wellbeing building on cultural and physical activity.	Encouraging older people to take up physical activity (p12)
Smarter People Social and Human Capital	Focusing on education including lifelong learning and nurturing a city of learning with a city-wide workforce which can grow and diversify the economy.	Encouraging excellence through Science in Schools (p14)
Smarter Environment Natural Resources	Sustaining the environment by maximising the use of low-carbon technology in our infrastructure and housing. Managing our waste and promoting our streetscape and green space.	Building state-of-the-art new homes (p17)
Smarter Economy Competitiveness	Recognising the importance of sustaining a competitive economy with clear financial parameters which attracts people to invest, live, work and export from.	Working towards ensuring the economic future of the city (p18)
Smarter Mobility Transport and ICT	Promoting the transport links to and from the city which are sustainable. Maximising digital connectivity for the benefit of all people and the development of business in the city.	Superfast Broadband (p21)
Smarter Governance Participation	Acknowledging the role that citizens can play in the evolution of the city.	Encouraging and supporting equality (p23)



Our Plan in Action

Aberdeen City Council is a large, complex and diverse organisation.

From nursery schools to looking after our older people and from road repairs through to registering births, our 8500 staff provide over 500 services and complete many millions of transactions in every year to serve the citizens, businesses and communities of Aberdeen.

The Council is committed to providing the very best service in everything we do and has created this annual report as a benchmark for ourselves for future years and also to present and compare our achievements, areas of improvement, areas of growth and specialisms with organisations across the UK.

This Annual Report is a record of our activity, service delivery and achievements over the previous twelve months. Benchmarking information has been included to demonstrate areas where we are leading the way, areas where over the previous year we have measured

significant levels of improvement and areas which we have identified where we still need to improve and how this will be done.

Over the past twelve months the Council has received seventeen awards and commendations from UK-wide award programmes. This provides an invaluable benchmark of our teams and services and presents areas where we are at the cutting edge of service delivery.

We will continue to build upon these foundations as we seek to improve in everything we do.



Smarter Living

We are working to improve the lives of the people of Aberdeen through supporting active, healthy and fulfilling lifestyles; by supporting and enabling people to live independent lives; through the provision of quality homes and by actively seeking to reduce levels of inequality in the city.

During 2012 over £48 million was invested in repairs and improvements to our tenants homes. The **Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)** figures provide a measure of our quality of homes we provide for our tenants.

Last year 81.2% of these properties met all categories of the Standard, an increase on the 59.2% of the previous year. There are five elements to SHQS and a property must meet all of these before it can meet the Standard as a whole:

1. **Tolerable standard** – 99.8% compared with 99% in 2010-11
2. **Free from serious disrepair** – 99.4% compared with 2010-11
3. **Energy Efficient** – 98.3% compared with 91.5% in 2010-11
4. **Healthy Safe & Secure** – 99.6% compared with 90% in 2010-11
5. **Modern facilities & services** – 82.9% compared with 2010-11

We are on target for all our houses (100%) to be SHQS compliant by 2015, with the exception of some agreed exclusions (see charts below).

What we do: Encouraging participation in arts and culture

In 2011-12, we encouraged our citizens to participate in arts and culture. The Council works with partners to create learning opportunities, encouraging all citizens to realise their potential and get involved in the arts. Last year we offered over 15,000 local cultural learning opportunities and involved over 500 people per a week in cultural activity. We have raised over £750,000 in external funding over the past five years that has enabled us to organize over 1000 workshops annually.

What we do: Supporting Active Lifestyles - Gym and tonic

Aberdeen City Council, like many other public sector organisations is rising to the challenge of supporting and assisting a growing older population.

The Council has created a specialist wellbeing team to support and assist older people to live as independently as possible through developing and providing a range of social, leisure, health and wellbeing opportunities. Physical activity at any age is well known to proactively prevent illness and promote health and wellbeing. For older people it can also play an important role to offset early stages of dementia, promote mental wellbeing and help prevent falls.

Having successfully applied for funding, the team have introduced three sets of specially designed gym equipment. Tailored for older workouts the Technogym:

- encourages older people (65+) to take up physical activity;
- give opportunities for those with dementia to use the equipment;
- encourages care homes to increase levels of physical activity amongst residents;
- challenges any stigma that prevents people taking up the activity;
- encourages community engagement and
- uses the equipment with a long term aim of decreasing falls amongst older people.

Over one hundred people have tried the Technogym, the average age of the participants is 80 and the oldest is 102!

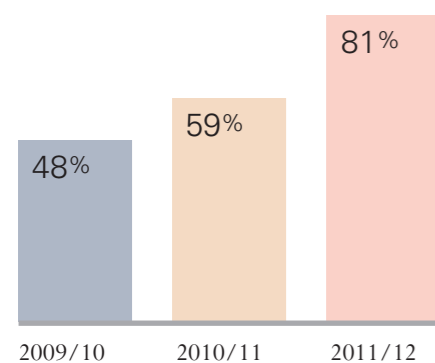
The gym users have highlighted the social benefits of getting together for regular exercise classes - meeting other people and enjoying the opportunity to try something new.

Our plan in action.

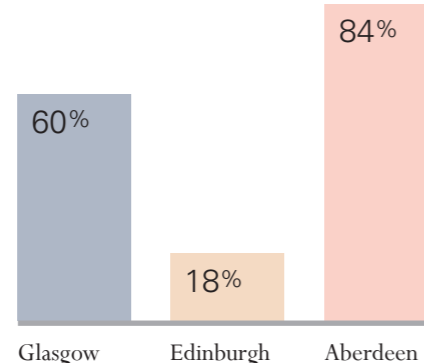
Helping people stay in control of their lives is at the heart of Smarter Living. When people do need extra support, we always aim to care for them in the way that suits their individual needs. In 2012, 87% of social care clients agreed that they had support that was flexible and put them in control. This has risen by 20% over the last two years.

Over the next decade the number of people over 65 is expected to rise by 50%. It is important that the Council and our partners support older people to remain healthy and active. Through our 50+ Festival we are able to encourage citizens to take part in and enjoy activities and entertainment. Last year over 5000 people enjoyed the Common Good Fund in this specific festival for people aged over 50 who reside in the City of Aberdeen.

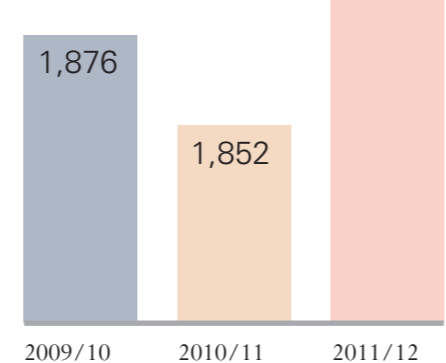
The percentage of Council housing stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard



The percentage of buildings from which the council delivers services that are suitable for, and accessible to disabled people 2011/12



The number of visits to/usages of Council funded or part funded performance venues per 1000 population



Education is a key priority for Aberdeen.
We strive to provide high quality,
lifelong learning for all of our citizens.

Smarter People

We believe that by developing the right skills and knowledge we will sustain and grow our communities and economy.

We have made significant investment to modernise our school buildings over the last few years. Over 21,000 pupils are currently enrolled and in 2011/12 all of our schools and pre-schools, which were inspected, received positive reports. 86% of our young people leaving school go to a job, further education or training.

What we do:

Encouraging excellence through science in schools - Science in the City

Aberdeen is a world energy city, at the cutting edge of new developments within the oil and petrochemical industries. A critical factor that will ensure this vital role remains within the city is with the development of the next generation of scientists. Many international businesses with bases in Aberdeen have begun working with local schools to raise the profile of science in education.

In 2011, the teaching of science in Aberdeen schools was identified as having three key strengths:

- Business partner involvement
- The city is home to Satrosphere, one of four science centres in Scotland
- The prestigious British Science Festival will be held in Aberdeen in September 2012

To build on these opportunities, whilst also supporting science teachers within schools two key appointments have been made: a Quality Improvement Officer, to develop a strategic approach for science in schools and a Science Curriculum Development Officer.

They were given three main aims:

- To raise the profile of science and technology in primary schools
- To understand the changing needs in the secondary sector
- To enhance partnership working

What we do:

Raising the profile of science & technology in primary schools

The two new roles are able to support and assist teachers in both primary and secondary schools and to expand the delivery of science lessons through links with external organisations and locally-based businesses. For example, in 2011 the first Science Summer School was held with 14 teachers taking advantage of the opportunity to attend a five day event at the Satrosphere Science Centre.

To assist with the development of new roles each primary school nominated a science co-ordinator to enable a communication network to be built, both city-wide and within area schools groups (each secondary school and all feeder primary schools). This means science information could be sent directly to all interested parties, for sharing within their schools.

Aberdeen has the first 15 schools in Scotland to enrol for the Primary Science Quality Mark (PSQM) and this has been generously sponsored by BP. All schools sign up for Bronze, Silver or Gold level and start by assessing their current science provision along with a development plan on how to improve and achieve their award. All of the schools reported they became very involved with science activities, increasing opportunities for their pupils and raising their enthusiasm.

Another innovative scheme was launched, called the Sixth Year Science Ambassador Award, which encouraged S6 science students to work with local primary schools. Offered at Bronze, Silver and Gold level, the ambassadors helped in classes and science clubs, organised talks and debates and helped to encourage and enthuse pupils in science. Everyone involved in the scheme benefited and the ambassadors received their awards at the Science Celebration Event in June.

Aberdeen-based firm, Intertek, sponsored a city wide science fair for primary schools pupils. Pupils were asked to investigate an area of science they were interested in and to present their findings. Schools sent forward their top three projects to the city final, held at the Natural History Centre. Joint first prize was awarded to pupils from Mile-End and Milltimber schools, while second and third prizes were won by teams from Woodside Primary.

Our plan in action.

Our Environmental Services Team entered in to a partnership with **Foyer Works** to deliver seasonal garden maintenance labour. Foyer Works was able to offer the service at the same cost to the local authority as previous businesses but with the added value of providing employment for young people who were previously long-term unemployed. The six month pilot saw 10 young people receiving full training before being employed within various teams across the city. At the end of the project two employees were taken on full time.

Our award-winning **Bridges Project** has seen the Council's Countryside Ranger Service play a vital role in reducing wilful fires at popular city beauty spots. The groundbreaking work has seen the local authority team up with the Scottish Prison Service to improve the skills, self-esteem and employability of inmates at HMP Craiginches.



Aberdeen is a clean and attractive city and we will keep it that way.

Smarter Environment

We are investing in new technologies to increase energy efficiency and reduce our carbon footprint. At the same time, we want to support our citizens to save money and eliminate fuel poverty.

What we do:

Moving families out of fuel poverty

It is estimated that 70% of the residents in high rise multi-storey blocks in Aberdeen are living in fuel poverty. Due to the height of the multi-storey buildings expensive electric heating was installed when the blocks were constructed. As the buildings were built of materials that provided poor insulation and draft proofing this made the situation worse.

The question, therefore, faced by Aberdeen City Council was how to provide affordable warmth for tenants living in high rise blocks?

The solution has been to look long term and the Council has embarked on an award winning programme that will provide locally generated heating to its high rise blocks. This efficient fuel production system has also been supported with a programme of over-cladding the concrete blocks to insulate and add greater draft proofing.

2012 saw the first tranche of this combined programme installed into 198 homes in Seaton, Aberdeen. This work is due to be completed by the end of 2012. The second set of improvements will be the 156 flats in the Torry area. This work is due to be completed by the end of 2013.

Following the completion of this programme the high rise blocks will:

- be regenerated;
- have a long term future;
- be fuel poverty proofed; and
- provide comfort, comparable with newly constructed properties.

What we do:

Building state-of-the-art new homes

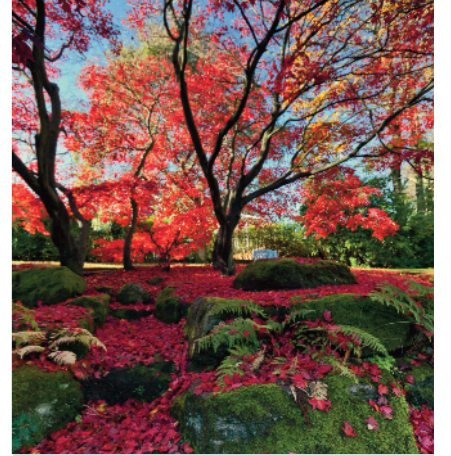
Aberdeen City Council's new family housing will help to re-generate areas and provide much needed affordable and sustainable accommodation within the city to strengthen community spirit and enhance neighbourhood identities.

The new build programme, at sites across the city will provide 90 badly needed state-of-the-art, cost efficient and high quality family homes. All of the new houses are conveniently located within walking distance of amenities, transport links and local schools ensuring and helping to create sustainable communities for the future.

These highly efficient family homes have been designed encompassing a range of six renewable energy sources which will greatly reduce the overall running costs. The elements that have been included are as follows:

- Air Source Heat Pumps
- Solar Panels
- Photovoltaics
- Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery
- Gray Water Recycling (for the flats)
- Rainwater Harvesting (for houses)

Other elements which were incorporated within the developments were also designed to make heating and lighting as cost effective and fuel efficient as possible and include siting the houses to face south wherever possible, super insulating the buildings including walls, floors, roofs and ceilings and triple glazed windows. All building materials were selected to provide as low an environmental impact as possible.



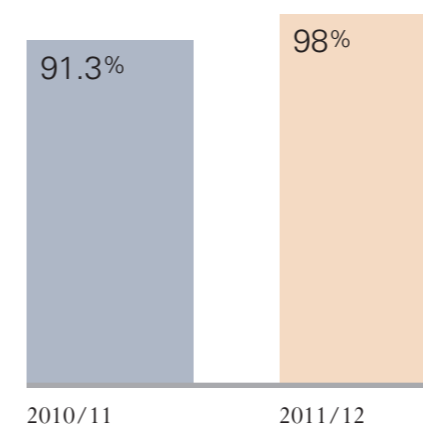
Our plan in action.

Aberdeen has more accessible "green space" than any other city in Scotland. Our teams work to provide a safe, attractive **streetscene** and encourage a clean and healthy environment by the removal of urban debris from the City's public areas of streets, car parks, footpaths, amenity areas, traffic islands, market areas, lay-bys and beaches. Last year approximately 1,800,000kg of litter was cleaned from the streets every month by a dedicated team using the good old-fashioned broom and litter picker through to modern mechanical street cleaners.

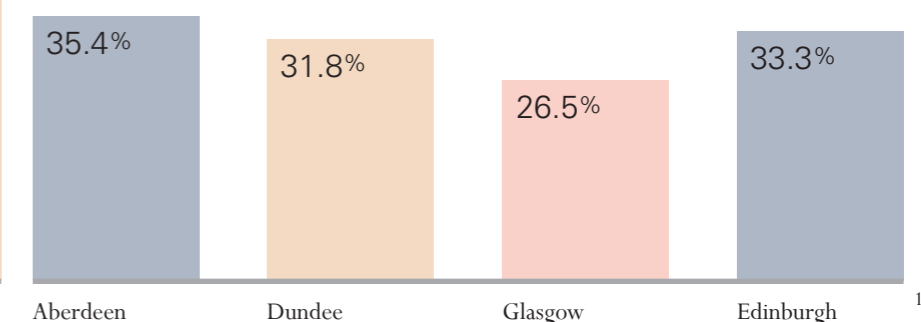
To encourage wider use and access for our parks the Council successfully received £2.56 million Heritage Lottery Funding for the restoration and improvement of **Duthie Park**. Work began early 2012 and will be completed 2013.

We have worked to increase the amount of the city's waste that is **recycled** instead of sending it to landfill. In 2011-12 Figures from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Sepa) showed Aberdeen recycled more waste (35.4%) than their city council counterparts at Dundee (32.8%), Edinburgh (35.1%) and Glasgow (26.8%). Only Stirling (54.8%), recycled more than the Granite City.

The percentage of the Council's housing stock which meets the SHQA criteria for 'energy efficient'



The percentage of household waste recycled or composted 2011/12



Aberdeen is one of the world's major energy cities and contributes enormously to the economy at a Scottish, UK and global level.

Smarter Economy

We will build on this develop and promote the city as a place to invest, live, work and export from. We will also work to ensure that Aberdeen's wealth benefits all of its communities. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per head of population in Aberdeen City and Shire is the second highest in the UK (after central London) and the 13th highest of 317 European regions.

The area also benefits from bucking the Scottish trend with low unemployment rates. Oil and gas production sectors alone, account for around 20,000 jobs directly (over 90% of the Scottish industry), with an additional 20,000 estimated jobs in related and support businesses.

During 2011, 2,066 tourism visits to Aberdeen recorded with expenditure of £362 million attributed to this industry during the period.

What we do:

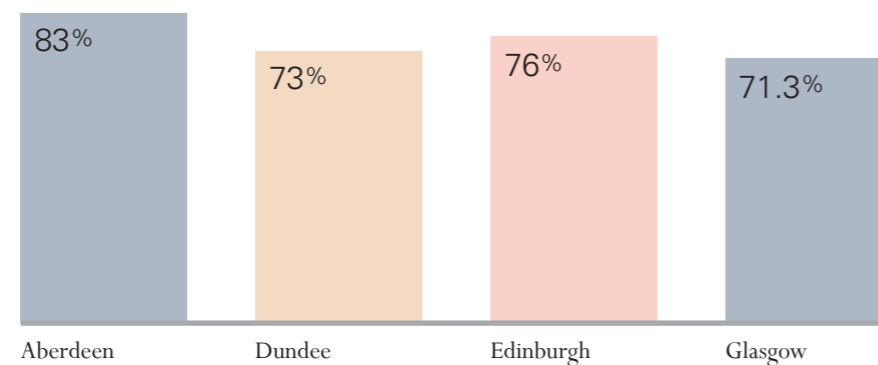
Ensuring the economic future of the city and shire

In addition to Oil and Gas, other industries also play a significant role in the region's economy including food and drink, with firms in the whisky, bakery, canned, meat and seafood industries. Tourism is also important to both city and shire as is the emerging life sciences and health service industries.

To capitalise and fully realise the potential of all these different elements the Council along with many partners works hard to drive sustainable economic development for the city and Aberdeenshire.

ACSEF is a public-private partnership that brings together Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, Scottish Enterprise, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Skills Development Scotland and VisitScotland with representatives from business and the universities to ensure a collaborative approach to growing the economy and enhancing quality of life. This role supporting the continued economic growth of the city and the area is seen as a vital one for the Council.

The percentage of people economically active



What we do:

Increasing international trade and investment

Aberdeen City Council's International Trade and Investment Team supports the Aberdeen business community by maintaining a portfolio of close business relationships with government, economic development agencies and industry bodies. The team's remit is to provide the advice and information to get businesses involved in international trade activities or exploit further international trade opportunities for those already exporting.

The International Trade and Investment Team is able to provide assistance which includes:

- Promotion of overseas business opportunities
- Workshops and Courses to prepare companies to undertake international trade
- Overseas missions and learning journeys
- Hosting Inward trade missions
- Seminars and trade clinics
- Local export networking opportunities
- Company specific market research
- Published market information



Our plan in action.

In 2012 **Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group (AREG)** and its members engaged in developing a sustainable renewable energy sector in the region and promoting these capabilities across Scotland and worldwide. Projects include the development of the European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre off the coast of Aberdeen in partnership with the Vattenfall Wind Power UK and project facilitator SECEC (Scottish European Green Energy Centre).

One effect of Aberdeen's continued strong economic performance is the relative buoyancy of the housing market. This, however, brings the challenge of making sure quality housing is available for all. Over the last three years the Council has supported the development of 512 "affordable" homes within the city. In April 2011 work began on the third phase of the Council's **new-build housing programme**. A total of 31 family homes were built at Oldcroft Place, Stockethill. All properties have been designed to be environmentally sustainable, good quality homes.

The **Aberdeen City and Shire Export Survey** is conducted on a biennial basis and the 2010 Survey was released in May 2011. The Survey covers energy and non-energy industries and helps to inform the services which we provide, particularly in identifying those businesses who are not involved international trade and supporting their decision-making processes in undertaking that innovation in their business development.

Smarter mobility means being well connected both physically and digitally.

Smarter Mobility

We are working to improve the city's internal transport networks, encouraging cycling and walking, and its road, rail, ferry and air links to the rest of the UK. We also aim to maximise digital connectivity to support our communities and businesses.

What we do: Telecare

Telecare is a service that enables people, especially older and vulnerable people, to continue to live independently in their own homes.

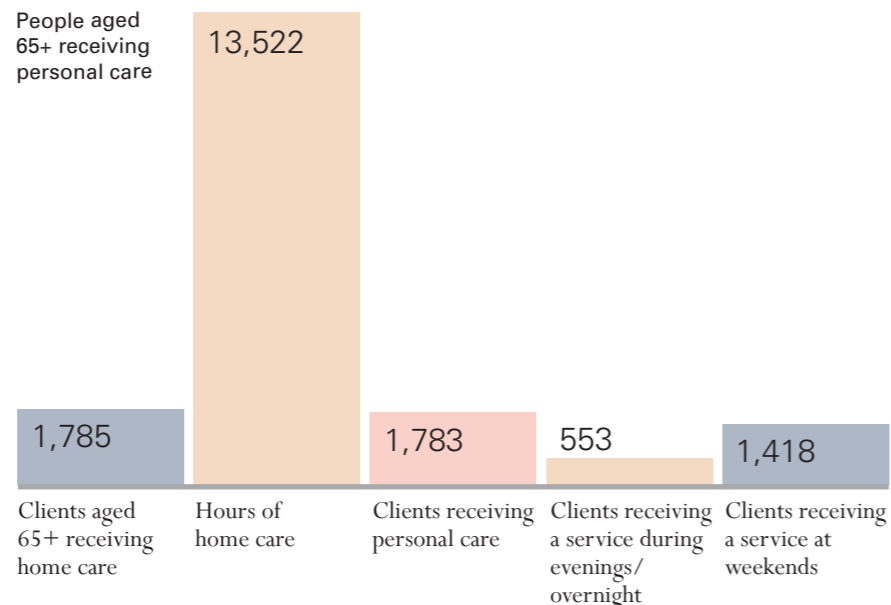
Telecare works by monitoring a person's health and wellbeing using a variety of unobtrusive sensors and detectors such as heart monitors. This often takes place remotely and this very discreet monitoring means the service can be used by all age groups.

The remote monitoring service has been found to be particularly useful to:

- people who are becoming increasingly frail and are at risk of falling
- people who have little support and may need the reassurance the service provides;
- people struggling to cope at home and may be regularly admitted to hospital;
- people who need support when dealing with environmental risks in the home such as fire or flood;
- people with special needs such as learning difficulties;
- people with cognitive difficulties such as failing memory;

Telecare can offer a safer environment that can prevent a user having to go into hospital, or to allow an earlier and safer discharge from hospital/care home.

Telecare can support people at home, providing an enhanced feeling of safety and security for both the user and their carer as well as providing a response in an emergency 24 hours a day.



What we do: Superfast broadband

In 2012 Aberdeen City Council successfully bid for a share of the £50million Super Connected Cities funding.

The planned introduction of hugely improved broadband speeds and 4G wifi will have a major impact in the city and parts of Aberdeenshire and could increase access speeds ten-fold in the space of a few years. Superfast Broadband provides huge benefits for companies, individuals and public services, including health and education.

Many large businesses seeking to locate in the region's major business parks and development corridors require access to world-class ultrafast digital infrastructure to enable them to compete on an international basis. Without the broadband provision Aberdeen could run the risk of declining competitiveness

It is expected that the provision of ultrafast broadband across the city will help to accelerate economic growth and create employment; provide access to faster and more flexible digital infrastructure; support the delivery of education services; and enable more cost-effective delivery of public services including tele-medicine and social care.

Our plan in action.

The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) is a new road being developed to improve travel in and around Aberdeen and North-East Scotland. Backed by the Scottish Government, the road is being developed by Transport Scotland - the national transport agency - in partnership with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire councils. The AWPR is one of a number of transport projects planned to help improve road safety and accessibility, reduce congestion and grow the local economy - ensuring North-East Scotland remains a competitive business location.

Road traffic is the main source of pollution and the Council aims to improve air quality through the implementation of the **Air Quality Action Plan 2011**. However, clean air isn't just the responsibility of the City Council: everyone can play their part by changing travel behaviour.



Smarter Governance

Through smarter governance we seek to develop a sense of community based on openness, fairness, reciprocity and responsibility. We encourage and support citizens to participate in the design of services, listen to them and encourage active citizenship to promote civic pride.

What we do:

Budget planning with our partners

Beginning in 2010 and running every year since, Aberdeen City Council replaced traditional financial planning with priority-based budgeting (PBB). Led by the Council's Corporate Governance project team PBB operated at an impressive scale reviewing more than 200 Council services. A vital part of this programme was listening to our citizens, partners, local and business communities to find out what they wanted from the Council.

Engaging with our stakeholders was critical to the success of PBB and a new way to ensure we engaged and listened. As with the whole PBB process, this detailed approach had never been carried out before and included:

- questionnaires distributed to 1000 citizen panellists;
- a further 1100 questionnaires circulated through Council 'open doors';
- featuring the questionnaire in a special budget supplement in the Evening Express and
- face-to-face briefings with business leaders, academics, community leaders, voluntary and public sector partners;
- a series of directorate business planning meetings;
- Chief Executive Budget Briefings for 350 line managers with all staff given the opportunity to discuss the draft business plan with their director or line manager;
- publishing the draft PBB report and business plan on the Council's website and social media channels and seeking comment.

The outcomes from this community engagement played a vital role in prioritising our services and became the foundation of our five-year business plan. This activity will continue across the Council for future years.

What we do:

Encouraging and supporting equality

One challenge faced by Aberdeen City Council, and all local authorities, is the lack of adequate site provision for Gypsy/Traveller communities in the area.

Gypsy/Travellers are a distinct ethnic group within the city and historically this group has faced a high risk of disadvantage and discrimination. During last year there were greatly increased tensions and the potential for more serious conflict over unauthorised encampments in the area.

As a result the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Gypsy/Traveller Working Party was created to identify and resolve a number of key issues and to achieve lasting improvements, including measures to improve community liaison and mediation.

In April 2011 the Grampian Gypsy/Traveller Cross-Community Dialogue Day was attended by over 70 delegates including 20 Gypsy/Travellers.

Specific objectives were identified to:

- encourage better community relations;
- improve awareness of the needs of all communities;
- discuss obstacles to alternative provision for Gypsy/Travellers;
- increase understanding of the working group and what it might mean for the area.

The Dialogue Day is regarded as the turning point in relations and has been credited as bringing increased understanding and constructive communication to the table.

With financial assistance from Scottish Government we have increased capacity at our Clinterty site for short stay travellers and this as well as other measures taken have reduced tensions between the settled and traveller communities. This has been mirrored in a reduction of negative media coverage and letters and phone calls of complaint. This has also resulted in savings in legal costs, staff time involved in evictions and in clean-up costs after some Gypsy/ Travellers had moved on. Savings have also been achieved by Grampian Police as there is now less reason for intervention.

Gypsy/ Travellers now have a voice and place at the decision-making table and improved access to education, health and accommodation services with less risk of homelessness and stress related mental health issues arising from living with the impact of potential evictions and harassment.

Our plan in action.

Smarter governance has been achieved through a series of projects and by working closely with our partners. One element of this is **City Voice**, a jointly run panel of Aberdeen residents who are contacted on a regular basis and asked for their views on a range of issues.

The Aberdeen Civic Forum is an established part of **Community Planning** in the city. (Community Planning is the process where the main providers of services in the city come together to agree an overall plan for development). This Civic Forum has produced the Community Plan for the economic, social and environmental actions that are required to make Aberdeen a successful city.

Smarter governance also refers to specific areas such as the Council's 22,700 tenants. **Tenant Participation** is about tenants having real opportunities to contribute to and influence all decisions relating to their homes.

Aberdeen City Council employs two Tenant Participation Officers who are responsible for developing, promoting and supporting Tenant Participation within the city. Their remit includes listening to the concerns and views of tenants, providing information and training, giving practical advice and support and providing grant funding. In 2011 we were very pleased announce our tenant participation officers were presented with certificates of excellence by TPAS the Tenant Participation Advisory Service, in recognition of their achievements and work on behalf of tenants.



Serving our Customers

This final section of the Annual Report has been included to demonstrate how we value our customers and seek to improve services at all times underpins everything we do.

What we do: Creating better services in the civic heart of the city

Marischal College Customer Service Centre opened in June 2011. Since then we have served over 149,762 customers, a staggering statistic for a city with a population of 215,000.

Historically the services provided by Aberdeen City Council were developed separately. This meant that quite often customers had to visit different buildings, sometimes in different parts of the city, to receive all the information they needed. This was not only confusing but also meant we were not offering the best service possible.

With the refurbishment and restoration of Marischal College we were able to develop a state-of-the-art, comprehensive customer service centre, right in the heart of the city. This one stop shop was designed to accommodate all of the services that had been provided previously at different buildings into one single location.

We now provide Accord Card information and services; Access to Leisure and ACE membership; we issue parking permits and disabled badges for vehicles and provide a means for Council Tax payments, advice with housing benefit, support for people using the homelessness service and customers wishing to know about social care and wellbeing services. Finally, our registrar is also based in Marischal College for the recording of births, deaths and marriages.

It was important for us that we provided the best service possible. Initially we found that our customers had an average waiting time of 17 minutes and 54 seconds. We felt this was something we could improve on and now our customers have an average waiting time of just 11 minutes and 24 seconds. Whilst this waiting time has been reduced considerably, it is still something we would like to improve and we are working to ensure this is the case.

What we do: Looking forward with responsible financial management

Aberdeen City Council has evolved into a strong, capable organisation with balanced books and ambitious plans for the future. Beginning three years ago the Council decided that traditional budget reduction exercises of 'salami-slicing' simply wouldn't work in the current global economic climate. A more innovative and ground-breaking approach was introduced. Aberdeen City Council has:

- taken a radical and fundamentally new approach to planning its future;
- engaged with the people of Aberdeen to make sure they have their say;
- been open and honest as it changed the way services are delivered;
- realised that some services would not be available in the future;
- become a leaner organisation, seeking to work with others;
- encouraged better, more effective working with public, private and voluntary partners;
- enthused and encourage people and communities to make a real difference.

Financial planning and remodeling for an organisation as large and diverse as Aberdeen City Council was an ambitious and challenging project. The end goal has been the creation of a balanced priority-based budget (PBB) that ensures a stable and responsible approach to service delivery and earned the Council a unique position amongst Scotland's local authorities.

The Council's Five-Year Business Plan, has been built on the foundations of PBB. At the start of the PBB process Councillors approved £70 million of savings to be implemented during a five year period. Implementation began immediately and progress has been swift. Halfway through the first five years, with a balanced budget and financial controls in place, this longer term planning has ensured Aberdeen City Council remains on a firm financial footing and 'salami slicing' has become a thing of the past.



Our plan in action.

The Multi-Storey CCTV Control room operates a 24 hour, 7 days a week service in Tillydrone Housing Office.

The control room team provide a CCTV controlled access system to five multi-storey blocks and in addition they monitor cameras across another twenty and their immediate surroundings. The team now monitors a total of 200 cameras for the purpose of reducing anti-social behaviour such as violence, drug and alcohol related disorder, making the multi-storey blocks across the city a safer and cleaner environment for residents.

The system itself has proven to be very resilient and is quite unique in that the whole system is backed up remotely ensuring that in the event of a system fault access and safety for tenants would not be compromised.



Appendix 1

Aberdeen City Council Statutory Performance Indicators 2012/13

In September each year, every council in Scotland must publish its results for the Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) for the previous year. The SPIs are in two parts – the first part consists of 25 prescribed indicators that are defined by the Accounts Commission for Scotland. The second part consists of a set of SPIs selected by each council individually, according to the following themes and services:

SPI Themes:

- responsiveness to its communities
- revenues and service costs
- employees
- assets
- procurement
- sustainable development
- equalities and diversity

SPI Services:

- benefits administration
- community care
- criminal justice social work
- cultural & community services
- planning (both environmental and development management)
- the education of children
- child protection and children's social work
- housing & homelessness
- protective services including environmental health, and trading standards
- roads and lighting
- waste management services

These SPIs present a basic view of how we are performing on a range of services and in comparison against other councils in Scotland. Our SPIs for 2012/13 will be published in September 2013 on our website at:

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/council_government/performance/performance_indicators/prf_StatutoryPI.asp

The information is also published on **Audit Scotland's Performance Indicators** website <http://audit-scotland.gov.uk/performance/>

For information about this Annual Report, to receive a copy of the Council's Five Year Business Plan or for any other queries please contact Comms@aberdeencity.gov.uk or telephone Victoria Livingstone on 01224 522921.

