

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Housing and Environment
DATE	20 May 2014
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Housing and Environment Business Plan Performance and Actions
REPORT NUMBER:	H&E/14/045

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present committee with key performance measures and progress of key improvement work within the Housing and Environment Directorate.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Provide comments and observations on the performance information contained in the report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct implications arising out of this report, although a number of comments are made on the use of resources.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other direct implications arising out of this report regarding legal, resource, personnel, property, equipment, sustainability and environmental, health and safety; although a number of comments are made on the use of resources.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

This report presents members with key performance measures and progress of key improvement work within the Housing and Environment Directorate.

This report also comprises of a progress report from the Director.

Performance information and Actions progress are input and updated through Covalent, the corporate performance reporting system, by the relevant lead officers. The data is reviewed and managed within the Directorate by the Director and Senior Management Team.

Within the report the following symbols are used:

Performance Measures

Traffic Light Icon



On target or within 5% of target



Within 5% and 20 % of target and being monitored



Below 20% of target and being actively pursued



Data only PI as there is no target set

6. IMPACT

The performance reporting framework is integrated with the Council's ambition of being a top performing Council which delivers on the Community Plan and the Administration's Policy Statement.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

N/A

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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Director's Progress Report
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12/03/14 – 20/05/14

Training day - On 3 April a training day with a difference took place at Kittybrewster depot. After a couple of tradesmen discovered boa constrictors (snakes) in an abandoned flat, managers thought it would be worth-while to have a specialist come to Kittybrewster and enlighten people into the dangers and myths surrounding these creatures. Nick Martin from the charity Creatures Great and Small attended with various tarantulas, snakes and lizards and undertook talks to staff. In the afternoon there was a “drop-in” session where anyone could come in past and listen to Nick.

Tenant day - On 3 March 2014, a tenant engagement event was held in the Council Chamber. This was a chance for invited tenants to hear of the new changes building services were planning and get their opinions on such changes. The tenants got the chance to vote for new changes, ask questions, and be part of the new decisions. The feedback we received after the event was positive and an excellent way for the tenants to understand the processes that go on behind the scenes.

Guest Speaker - Kieron Stewart, operations manager of Building Services, has been invited to speak at a conference in London to represent ACC's adoption of technology to progress a Smarter Working Environment. Kieron has recognised that the main area of improvement had to be the intelligent use of IT with a view to speeding the flow of information around the organisation, and enabling the capturing of the relevant information upon which sound business decisions could be founded. Speaking at this conference is an excellent way for others to see how ACC have embraced new technology and hopefully encourage others to do the same.

North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together Group (NETRALT) - NETRALT Group which includes 3 Local Authorities and 7 Housing Associations held their 2nd Housing Café on 29 March 2014. There were tenants, residents and officers from all over the North East at this event and the Menu was enjoyed by over 75 participants. The theme for this café was the new buzz word in housing Scrutiny – there were 5 menu options including the Sharing Platter, Dish of the day and each diner had to choose two items. The Menu Items or Workshops were facilitated by tenant & resident members of the group who presented on scrutiny in their organisation. We were delighted to welcome two West Lothian tenants as well who helped with the Mystery Shopping workshop. It ended with a proof is in the pudding - scrutiny in practice with all participants tasting different kinds of Shortbread – great fun was had by all but it also showed how easy it is to “scrutinise”.

Best Bar None Awards - Two licensed premises in Aberdeen were successful in the annual national Best Bar None Awards. Best Bar None recognises excellence in management towards improving community safety. The Garage won the Night Club category and G Casino won the Specialist Entertainment category.

Big Lottery Funding - Aberdeen Cyrenians in partnership with the homeless service have been successful in securing big lottery funding of £470,364 over 5 years through the 'Becoming a Survivor' initiative which provides support to individuals experiencing domestic abuse. The project starts in July 2014, with an aim for referrals to come via the homelessness service and self referral to Aberdeen Cyrenians, recruitment is ongoing and support will be ready to start in October 2014 following an induction process.

Low cost Home Ownership - Two 3 bedroomed low cost home ownership properties have been completed at Cove by Scotia Homes as part of their contribution to our affordable housing policy. A further 32 Langstane Housing Association properties have just been completed; 18 of these properties are social housing and the remaining 14 are mid market rent. Donside Village has also officially been completed providing 146 social rented properties and an additional 121 affordable homes. The delivery of affordable homes for the city is central to the council's Strategic Infrastructure Plan which aims to achieve a 'Step change in the supply of housing' by 2017.

Duthie Park Award - Playspotter has been created as a web based portal by two local people to help users find places to play near them, and to read real reviews from other users. The group covers all Major Parks and Play Areas in Scotland and Northern Ireland (over 5000 of them). Duthie Park has been selected as the 'Top Major Park' for Play in Aberdeen and is one of the first winners of a Playspotter Picks Award. The Award recognises the Award Winning Play area and the restoration work done within the Park. The high quality of play provision in general within the Park has also been noted and will be highlighted in the Group's web page www.playspotter.com.

The Macmillan Nurse Rose - A rose specially-created to honour the work of a leading cancer charity was planted in Aberdeen's Hazlehead Park. The Macmillan Nurse Rose, which was first introduced at 1998's Chelsea Flower Show, was developed to raise awareness of Macmillan Cancer Support. Aberdeen Lord Provost George Adam was joined by representatives of the charity in the Queen Mother Rose Garden in Hazlehead Park to plant the last of the 180 flowers, which boast large, white rosettes sometimes flushed peach. The blooms were donated to the Council by Macmillan Cancer Support and the planting project has been supported by the Friends of Hazlehead. A plaque commemorating the project was also unveiled.

The RSPB Dolphin Watch Project - The RSPB Dolphin Watch Project based at the Torry Battery was launched on 11 April. The Dolphin Watch staff are working in partnership with the Countryside Ranger Service to raise awareness of the dolphins and other coastal issues such as marine litter. Dolphin watch was pioneered in 2013 and dolphins were seen on 87% of the days the project was running last year. Many people, locals and visitors alike, saw dolphins for the first time, and hopes are high that even more people will experience their acrobatic displays and charismatic charm this year. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/RSPBNorthEastScotland.

Environmental Health – The Dog wardens and Pest Control officers have been working with the Marketing Team to raise the profile of the services. Feedback from members of the public suggested not everyone was aware

that these services were available and what they offered. Several tweets have been issued informing the public of who to contact should they be aware of a stray dog or if they lose their own dog, details of the pest control service was also highlighted in a separate tweet.

Environmental Protection – The Team are expanding the air quality monitoring that they currently undertake as there has been increasing concerns about health impacts from fine particles (<2.5ugm-3). These particles are formed directly from various sources such as factories, domestic stoves and traffic or are formed by chemical interactions in the atmosphere and can cause irritation of the respiratory system and can exacerbate existing health conditions. In April a pm2.5 monitor was installed at Union Street to provide real time monitoring information, this will give additional air quality information especially in relation to traffic.

UKAS - The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) carried out their annual surveillance audit of the services provided by Aberdeen Scientific Services Laboratory (ASSL). The purpose of the audit was for UKAS to assess the continued conformity of the lab to both the requirements of ISO 17025:2005, and also the Drinking Water Testing Specification (DWTS) produced by the Drinking Water Inspectorate. As part of the audit, all aspects of the work of the lab came under close scrutiny, from sample registration to final reporting and certification. Several members of staff were also required to demonstrate their competence in carrying out analytical methods. The visit was a notable success and the assessment team were impressed by the overall quality of work being produced and with the experience and competence of the staff involved. As a result, accreditation to both ISO 17025:2005 and DWTS was maintained for another 12 months. The laboratory has now held UKAS accreditation for over 20 years.