

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance Policy and Resources
DATE	16 February 2016
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Aberdeen Japan Strategy Annual Report
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/16/005
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to bring before Elected Members an annual report on progress with the delivery of the Aberdeen Japan Strategy approved at Finance Policy and Resources Committee on 18 February 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the activity delivered in Year 1 of the 2-year Strategy (2015) and the proposed next steps for Year 2 (2016);
- b) Accept one further (final) report in January 2017 at the conclusion of the Strategy period, detailing the activity delivered in Year 2 (2016) and evaluating the impact of the Strategy overall.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no additional budget available to support the delivery of the Aberdeen Japan Strategy, therefore all activities to date have been resourced from within existing budgets.

This will continue to be the case in 2016 and, where appropriate, partnership working with other organisations and external funding will be used to further support the ongoing delivery of the Strategy. The amount of activity will also depend on other team/service priorities and the staffing and budget resources available and will be strictly focused on areas where impact can be maximised.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

The Finance Policy and Resources Committee on 20th February 2014 decided to "approve the commissioning of a wide-scoping study by external specialists to develop and deliver an Aberdeen-Japan strategy to further develop trade, tourism, academic and sporting links at a cost not to exceed the sum detailed by the Vice Convenor with a report back to the next meeting of the Committee".

Following delays in procuring an appropriate external specialist, in February 2015, Finance Policy and Resources Committee approved the Aberdeen Japan Strategy and the Economic Development team was tasked with implementing it.

Activities delivered since February 2015 include

1) hosting inward business and Government delegations throughout the year from:

- Hitachi
- Japan Smart Community Alliance
- Japan Local Government Centre
- Kagoshima
- Mitsui
- Panasonic
- Toyota

2) an Economic Development officer attended the 11th International Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Expo in Tokyo in March 2015 to build on Aberdeen's hydrogen transport sector development as part of the H2 Aberdeen Strategy.

3) The Chief Officer for Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership participated in the 2015 Japan Local Government Centre Study Tour to Yamanashi and Tokyo to learn about the Japanese approach to care for its ageing population.

Next Steps in 2016

Planned activities in 2016 include:

1) one Economic Development officer is scheduled to attend the 12th International Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Expo in Tokyo in March 2016 to further develop Aberdeen's hydrogen sector (approved in the 2015/2016 International Trade and Investment Plan at Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee on 13 January 2015).

2) hosting a seminar for local businesses interested in the trade opportunities with Japan, particularly around technology development and renewable energy

Depending on the outcomes of the forthcoming feasibility study on the future use of Glover House, further activities may be planned and Committee will be kept informed.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience – The Strategy aims to benefit local businesses by enhancing their awareness of trading opportunities with Japan and facilitating their connections with key decision-makers in Japanese companies, while building a strong, multi-faceted relationship between Aberdeen and Japan.

Improving Staff Experience – The staff involved in hosting Japanese delegations or working on overseas trade missions gain valuable experience of working with a diverse range of internal (Elected Members, senior officers) and external (businesses, trade associations, Government personnel, diplomats) customers.

Improving our use of Resources – To date, careful planning has enabled all activities to be funded from within existing budgets and officers will seek to continue this while seeking external funding and support from partner organisations to cover any additional activities.

Corporate – The contents of the report relate to delivering the economic development aspects of the **Single Outcome Agreement**:

National Outcome 1 – We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe

National Outcome 2 - We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people

Local Outcome – Anchor the Oil and Gas Industry

Local Outcome – Diversification of the Economy

The contents of the report also relate to delivering the economic development aspects of the Administration's **Smarter Aberdeen** vision.

At the time of writing (January 2016), the **Regional Economic Strategy** and **City Region Deal** are being finalised. In both cases, internationalisation is a key theme and the Aberdeen Japan Strategy provides an important additional framework for business development opportunities with Japan in technology development and renewable energy.

Public – Neither an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment nor a Privacy Impact Assessment is required for this report. There may be some public interest in the Council's work with Japan.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Overseas visits are risk assessed on a case by case basis.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen Japan Strategy (Finance, Policy and Resources Committee, 18/2/2015)

International Trade and Investment Plan 2015/2016 (Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee, 13/1/2015)

International Trade and Investment and Funding and Partnerships Plan 2016/2017 (Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee, 20/1/2016)

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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