

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	November 1 2016
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Aberdeen In Bloom
REPORT NUMBER:	CHI/16/230
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Committee of the success achieved by Aberdeen in this year's Beautiful Scotland and Britain In Bloom campaigns.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- (i) Acknowledges Aberdeen's awards in this year's campaigns and gives thanks and congratulations to all those that took part and helped make Aberdeen's campaign such a successful one.
- (ii) Agrees that Aberdeen should take part in the 2017 Beautiful Scotland campaign and or Britain In Bloom if asked to take part.
- (iii) Agrees for Environmental Services to continue to support and develop community partnerships and projects.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental Services will continue to pay the administration fee for all formal In Bloom entries to Beautiful Scotland. The total cost of this is currently less than £1000.

Where possible Environmental Services will assist with the funding of community based projects. This will only be undertaken when the

project sits on land within the service's responsibility and will take the form of match funding or grant top ups.

There are no further financial implications as a result of this report and all In Bloom work undertaken is within existing budget levels.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Environmental Services staff undertake implementation of all works associated with the In Bloom programme.

There are several positive implications from participating in the In Bloom campaigns.

In Bloom actively engages with and gets direct participation of Aberdeen's citizens in the sustainability / environmental agenda in Aberdeen. The campaign delivers benefits across the City at very little cost to the Council and helps communicate and support grass root actions and behaviour change towards a more sustainable city. It helps to meet our environmental objectives for a clean city, reducing carbon emissions and instils community pride, community cohesion and active citizenship. Participants see not only cleaner and greener environments, but also reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour, renewed economic activity and pride of place.

There are no other direct implications arising from this report in terms of any legal, resource, personnel, property, equipment, and sustainability and environmental, health and safety and/or policy issues.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Beautiful Scotland Awards 2016

Beautiful Scotland is an environmental campaign in Scotland for communities who are working to improve and enhance their local area. The Beautiful Scotland campaign has been running for over 50 years and until recently was known as "Beautiful Scotland in Bloom".

Entrants in the [Beautiful Scotland campaign](#) compete for prestigious trophies within 11 different categories. These are based on electoral roll population size, ranging from Wee Villages to Cities, and there are additional prizes for outstanding effort in specific areas, such as biodiversity, waste and tourism.

The communities are visited by trained volunteer judges who assess the work that has been done and award points accordingly.

It is important to note that the campaign is not just for the green-fingered, as the judging focuses on 3 main themes, namely Horticultural Achievement, Environmental Responsibility and Community Participation. The cleanliness of the area, the level of graffiti and the sustainability issues, such as recycling, are all taken into account and contribute to the entrant achieving either a Bronze, Silver, Silver Gilt or Gold medal.

The best entry in each category receives a trophy and entrants also compete for special awards in areas such as Biodiversity, Sustainability and Community Involvement.

The campaign is a programme of [Keep Scotland Beautiful](#) and is run by an Advisory Group consisting of representatives of entrant groups,

Beautiful Scotland has 50 years' experience of supporting groups within communities all across Scotland to improve and enhance their local environment.

5.2 RHS Britain in Bloom Awards 2016

Organised by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), Britain in Bloom is one of Europe's largest horticultural campaigns, involving over a thousand communities each year and creating lasting improvements to local environments for the benefit of residents, workers and visitors.

Since 1964 Britain in Bloom has been part of the UK's cultural and horticultural landscape, impacting millions of people. Last year alone the campaign involved more than 200,000 volunteers across the UK, donating 4.4 million hours to projects that benefitted the wider community.

The ongoing popularity of the Britain in Bloom campaign can be understood through the real and lasting benefits that it provides to those taking part.

Participants see not only cleaner and greener environments, but also reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour, renewed economic activity and pride of place.

The RHS believes that Britain in Bloom, as a community-driven horticultural campaign, will continue to create lasting improvements which reach beyond the green spaces and in to the far corners of society. Despite the inevitably tough economic times ahead, the campaign is well placed to continue serving the UK's communities, and is an invaluable source of ideas-sharing and inspiration for all those taking part around the country.

The RHS Britain in Bloom UK Finals brings together the highest achievers from all of the 16 regions and nations participating in the

campaign. A total of 72 Britain in Bloom finalists vie for Gold, Silver Gilt, Silver or Bronze medals, category winner awards and discretionary awards for achieving excellence in particular fields, expectations are high and the judging is rigorous. Put simply, the judges are looking for the best and they are seeing the best from across the UK.

5.3 Aberdeen In Bloom 2016 - Growing Smarter, The Granite City.

Aberdeen's in bloom campaign, 'Growing Smarter' is a 365 day campaign and covers In Bloom initiatives involving a wide range of people from within local communities. The overall aim is to ensure that the communities come together with the goal of enhancing their surroundings and creating a better environment.

The campaign includes all the inspiring and fantastic work done across the city by both our own staff and the many in bloom partners and volunteers.

This year Aberdeen was chosen to represent Scotland in the Britain in Bloom finals and the Beautiful Scotland finals.

In addition to running our own campaign we also support in every way we can the in bloom community groups that run their own campaigns, Dyce, Culter, Cove and Powis.

Beautiful Scotland judges visited Aberdeen on the 2 August, with Britain in Bloom judges visiting later the same week on the 5 August. Both sets of judges were taken on a tour of green spaces around Aberdeen.

The judges met Aberdeen City Council officers and a number of the 100+ community groups which have shaped the city's entry into the awards this year.

They were taken on a tour around many of the city's green spaces including Duthie Park, Union Terrace Gardens, Walker Dam, Hazlehead Nursery and Seaton Park.

Then judges were impressed with the colour and varieties on show at Johnston Gardens, Rubislaw and Queens Terrace Gardens and of course our Winter Gardens.

Several groups welcomed the judges at Duthie Park and others said goodbye at St Machar Cathedral with photographic displays of their work. These community groups included: Friends of Hazlehead, Friends of Duthie Park, Garthdee Fields Allotments Association, Nether Loirston Growers Association, Cove in Bloom, Culter in Bloom, Brighter

Bucksburn, DA Recovery Project, Friends of Seaton Park, Dyce in Bloom, and Powis Residents.

Other horticultural achievements included the Garden In Bloom competition, displays of spring bulbs such as crocus and daffodils, window boxes, street planters, sponsored roundabouts and beds, hanging baskets, school butterfly and bee friendly planters and the schools' Design a Bed competition.

The community groups include schools, churches, community gardening clubs, third sector organisations, community clean-ups, wildflower seed sowing, parks, and Aberdeen's Spring Flower Show.

Projects showing environmental responsibility included East Tullos Burn, wildflower strips on the A90, the return of the red squirrels, the RSPB Dolphin Watch scheme, the Scottish Seaside Awards and our Clean Up Aberdeen campaign, including the very successful 24 hour Glitter Pick.

Seaton Park was seen as a highlight as the judges viewed the newly completed wetland area and walked the formal gardens. The judges were particularly impressed with the work that had been done in the park and across the city to repair the damage caused by storm Frank earlier in the year.

Other areas of particular mention included the team's various links to business sponsorship and its partnership with Aberdeen Inspired, in particular the work on the St Nicholas Centre rooftop garden.

The judges were very impressed by the overall campaign and made particular reference to the commitment of Aberdeen as a city, to the campaign, and its support of community groups. The judges stated that the city had 'reinvented' itself and that the community engagement / partnership focus was very evident and welcomed.

The Britain In Bloom judges were very impressed with the wide range of partnerships, groups and volunteers involved – from individuals to corporate teams. The judges also commended the efforts of the city council to reward their community partners and volunteers through celebration and networking events.

Many positives were taken from this year's campaign that can only benefit and add to Aberdeen's overall greenspace and environment. The campaign provides a fantastic opportunity for everyone involved to celebrate In Bloom.

Our 2017 campaign is already under way and we are very confident of further success and good news stories for Aberdeen.

Details of campaigns and participation in awards will continue to be reported to Committee.

5.4 Awards - The Outcome

Britain In Bloom Awards

Aberdeen was awarded a Gold award and won the City category at the prestigious Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Britain in Bloom UK Finals Awards held in Birmingham.

Duthie Park also won the RHS Public Park Award (Given in Memory of David Welch) which is presented to the park designed for horticultural excellence, with appropriate planting, high standards of maintenance, including infrastructure, conserving wildlife, cleanliness, features of interest and community involvement.

The city was also honoured by RHS judges who awarded it the 'RHS Britain in Bloom Award for Overcoming Adversity', in recognition of the way Aberdeen pulled together to bounce back after the devastation wrought by Storm Frank.

Aberdeen, which represented Scotland, was one of only four areas from across the UK chosen to compete in the City category of the awards. Aberdeen's medal, the highest available, confirms its position as one of the greenest and most beautiful cities in Britain.

Beautiful Scotland Awards

Aberdeen received a resounding 11 awards at the 50th annual Beautiful Scotland awards.

Aberdeen City Council, Dyce, Cove, Culter, Powis and Aberdeen Inspired were presented with awards which recognised the hard work carried out to clean up, green up and beautify Aberdeen.

The awards, which were hosted by the City Council and held at the city's Beach Ballroom.

Aberdeen received a Gold Award and was named as the City Category overall winner, and it was also presented with the David Welch Memorial Award for Something Special for the exceptional David Welch Winter Gardens in Duthie Park.

It also received the Discretionary Royal Horticultural Society Scotland Award for Overcoming Adversity in recognition of the rejuvenation undertaken at Seaton Park following storms and flooding in late 2015 and early 2016.

Powis Residents Group received a Silver Gilt Award and was named as the Flatted Community Category overall winner. The group were also presented with the Discretionary Jim Murdie Trophy for Sustainability recognising its innovative approach to community gardening, including reusing and recycling materials to create features enhancing their green space.

The other Aberdeen award winners were:

- Aberdeen Inspired - Silver Gilt Award
- Culter in Bloom - Silver Gilt Award
- Dyce in Bloom - Silver Gilt Award
- Cove in Bloom - Silver Award

The event, which brought almost 300 delegates from across Scotland together in the city to receive their awards, saw George Anderson of the BBC's Beechgrove Garden present almost 50 accolades - recognising the significant number of entrants into the gold anniversary competition.

The many awards and success of our campaign is due recognition for all the hard work of the many partners, community volunteers, schools and Environmental Services staff, who all contribute greatly to the campaign, throughout the year.

The service is very proud of what has been achieved this year and the awards have allowed Aberdeen to showcase to the whole of the UK the horticultural excellence and community participation which makes Aberdeen such a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience –

Our Growing Smarter campaign enhances public and private green space. Aberdeen has a history and tradition of having fantastic green spaces and our campaign allows everyone involved to embrace and celebrate this.

Our involvement with communities and partners has been recognised across the UK and Aberdeen is now seen as leading the field in this area.

Improving Staff Experience –

This project contributes to staff development and knowledge. The staff feel part of something very special and it gives teams a lift to be involved.

Staff enjoy the partnership working and community engagement involved at a local and national level. It increases collaborative working with other council services and external organisations and encourages information and knowledge sharing to contribute to the success of this campaign and other similar city wide projects and initiatives.

Improving our use of Resources –

The growing and sharing aspect of the campaign ensures that materials are shared and any funding put to where it is needed the most. The campaign attracts grant funding and this allows for investment in our green spaces.

The project also increases the capacity of staff to learn new skills.

Corporate

Contributes to the following sections of Aberdeen: The Smarter City –

- We will embrace the distinctive pride the people of Aberdeen take in their city and work with them to enhance the sense of well-being here, building strong communities which look out for, and look after one another.
- We will challenge inequalities wherever they exist and bring our communities closer together.
- We will promote Aberdeen as a great place to live, bring up a family, do business and visit.
- “Promote and improve opportunities for physical activity and sport to enable Aberdeen’s citizens to lead more active, healthier lives.”
- “Provide a clean, safe and attractive streetscape and promote biodiversity and nature conservation. We will encourage wider access to green space in our streets, parks and countryside.
- Assist the Council in delivering the Single Outcome Agreement’s National Outcome 12 “We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and enhance it for future generations” and will contribute to several other outcomes including No.6 “We live longer, healthier lives”, No. 7 “Tackling inequalities” and No. 10 “We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need”.
- The report contribute towards the delivery of the Aberdeen Open Space Strategy 2011-2016 particularly in delivering objective 2 and action 2.4 of the Strategy action plan.

Other corporate and service initiatives that the project will contribute to will include:

- Beautiful Scotland / Britain in Bloom 2017

Public

This project is all inclusive to all members of society and it is thought that an “Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment” is not required.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

This report is seen as a benefit to all, the assessment of risk associated with this report is very low.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

In Bloom Bulletin Report August 2016.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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